

Hiroshima: American and Japanese Perspectives

CCSU Honors Program
Honor 250 Western/World Culture III, Spring 2003
Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:15

*Hiroshima and Nagasaki-now-I think, have very little to do with the past.
How we chose to deal with them, I believe, may have everything to do with the future.
We are all fine Americans who should have known better about our own silent refusal to
confront the enormity of nuclear weapons.*

-Gar Alperovitz-

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:45-9:45 am and 12 noon to 1:00

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Books:

- Ronald Takaki. Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb (Little, Brown & Co., 1995)
- Laura Hein and Mark Selden. Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural conflicts in the Nuclear Age (M.E. Sharpe, 1997)
- Laura Hein and Mark Selden. Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States (M.E.Sharpe, 2000)
- Michael J. Hogan. Hiroshima in History and Memory (Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- John Hersey. Hiroshima (Vintage, 1946, 1985)

Articles and selected chapters as indicated in the Course Readings and Topics. Copies of these articles and chapters will be provided in class.

Source:

- Paul Boyer. By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age (University of North Carolina Press, 1994)
- John W. Dower. War without Mercy: War Race and Power in the Pacific War (Pantheon, 1986)

- John W. Dower. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999)
- Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz. *Hiroshima's Shadow* (Pamphleteer's Press, 1998)

LIBRARY RESERVED:

- Gar Alperovits. *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of An American Myth* (Knopf, 1995)
- Robert J. Lifton. *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (Random House, 1967)
- Robert J. Lifton and Greg Mitchell. *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial* (G.P. Putnam, 1995)

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS:

Hiroshima has played both a crucial and a complex role in postwar American thought and culture. In this course, we will first focus on one complex topic: the decision of using the atomic bombs against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We will examine the contested inquiry—Was it necessary to use the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the World War II?—from American and Japanese perspectives. Some of the issues related to the atomic bombings include the following: Whether science is the survivor of the modern world or whether it can be used for sinister ends? Is it moral to bomb civilians in the context of the total war?

In the second half of the semester, we will focus on the consequence of the use of the atomic bombs in its social context. What was the overall impact of the use of the atomic bombs on the American consciousness in the postwar period? How is the memory of Hiroshima constructed in Japanese and American culture? What are the contemporary issues of war responsibility in Japan? Who owns war memory? What are the history textbook issues in Japan and the United States? Examining these issues, we will discuss the implications of “silencing (or censoring) the history” to the contemporary societies of Japan and the United States and to the future.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation in TEAM groups - 10% of final grade
2. One in-class debate based on work done in TEAM groups - 20 % of final grade.
3. Oral history project and reflection paper – 30% of final grade.
4. Final reflection paper – 30% of final grade
5. Class participation – 10% of final grade

#1 The class will be divided into 5 teams for the preparation of the two debates. You are required to meet with your teammates on regular base every week and submit meeting reports by e-mail. Meeting reports should include attendance, agenda,

activities. Note that the groups discussions are not limited only to debate preparation. You should also engage in peer evaluation of your reflection papers and oral history project.

#2 There will be two debates (on **March 3** and **April 16**). Fifteen students (three teams) will participate in the first debate and other fourteen students (two teams) in the second debate. Three teams will debate on the three options in relation to using the atomic bomb against Japan. Three options will be provided in class. The time period for this debate is late July in 1945. The second debate will be the 60th commemoration of the end of the World War II (the Pacific War in particular). The team members will play roles of museum curators, who engage in planning of an exhibit of Hiroshima atomic bombing and related topics. Each team should present final proposal for the exhibit including a few examples of the text. The format and content for each debate will be discussed more in detail in class. You are advised to engage in extensive research on the assigned topics in your preparation.

#3 For Oral History Project, you are required to conduct an interview of a WWII veteran (preferably a Pacific War veteran) and write a paper including a summary of oral interview of the war veteran and your critical view on memory (private memory vs. collective memory) and history. The paper should be a maximum of twenty pages but not less than fifteen pages. In counting the pages, do not include the bibliography. The guidelines for this project will be provided in class. You must submit your paper (two copies) in class on **April 23**.

#4 Final Reflection Paper for the course is due on **May 14**. Please submit two copies of the final paper. This will be a fifteen to twenty pages_(not including the bibliography) paper. More details will follow as the semester progresses. We will be reading and discussing a great deal of material during the semester, both from Japanese and American perspectives. The aim of this paper is to allow you to explore your reactions to this varied and diverse material. Your paper will involve investigative research using the primary and secondary sources.

#5 Since intensive reading and active class discussion are integral in this course, diligent preparation of readings, punctual attendance, and quality participation in class are of the essence. Inadequate preparation, tardiness, and unexcused absences will reflect negatively in your final grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in reduction of your final grade.

COURSE READINGS & TOPICS

(Adjustments will be made as we go along.)

January 21: **Introduction to the course** No assigned reading.

January 27: Film “Barefoot Gen” No assigned reading.

January 29: Film cont.

Overview of Japan's modern history: The Passage to Japan's Pearl Harbor Attack No assigned reading

February 3: Overview of Japan's modern history cont. No assigned reading
Film "Emperor Hirohito"

February 5: **The Decision to use the atomic bomb—what we now know (Part I)**

-Takaki, Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb, pp.3-68

February 10: **The decision to use the atomic bomb—what we now know (Part II)**

-Takaki, Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb, pp.69-152

February 12: **The decision to use the atomic bomb—what we now know (Part III)**

-Samuel J. Walker, "The decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update",
in Michael J. Hogan's, pp.11-37.

February 17: No Class (Holiday)

February 19: **Early Critics: Morality is questioned**

-Paul Boyer, "Atomic Weapons and Judeo-Christian Ethics: The Discourse Begins"
in Boyer's *By the bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn
of the Atomic Age* (University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 211-229.

-John Ford, "The Morality of Obliteration Bombing"

-Selected articles from K. Bird and L. Lifschultz's *Hiroshima's Shadow*

February 24: **Last three months to Japan's surrender**

-Herbert P. Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation" in Hogan's
pp.80-115.

February 26: **Racialization of the Pacific War**

Political cartoons and film "Japan and the U.S. and the Battle for Hearts and Minds"

-John Dower, "War Hates and War Crimes" in *War without Mercy*, pp.33-73

March 3: **Students Debate**

March 5: **Ground Zero-August 6, 1945** (Hibakusha's drawings—slides)

-John Hersey, Hiroshima

March 10: **Social climate in the U.S. occupation (1945-1952)**

Film "Japan under American occupation"

-John Dower, chapters 3 & 4 "Kyodatsu: Exhaustion and Despair" "Culture of Defeat", pp.87-202

March 12: **Victim consciousness in Japan**

-Monica Braw, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Voluntary Silence", pp134-152

March 17: **Social issues of *Hibakusha*** (Film "Black Rain") No assigned reading

March 19: Film. Cont. and Discussion No assigned reading

March 24 & March 26: No Class (Spring Recess)

March 31: **Memory and History in Japan**

-John Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory" in Hogan's. pp.116-142

-John Dower, "Triumphal and Tragic Narratives of the War in Asia: in Hein and Selden's (1997). Pp.37-51

April 2: **Memory and History in America: Censoring History at the Smithsonian**

-Michael J. Hogan, "The Enola Gay Controversy: History, Memory, and the Politics of Presentation", in Hogan's. pp.200-232

-Paul Fussell, "Thank God for the Atomic Bomb", in Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz's, pp.211-222.

-Paul Boyer, "Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory" in Hogan's. pp.143-147

-Michel Sherry, "Patriotic Orthodoxy and American Decline" in Hein and Selden's (1997)pp. 134-152

April 7: Censoring History at the Smithsonian

- Selected articles from Bird and Lifschultz's.
- “The battle of the Enola Gay” by Mike Wallace
- “Memory, Myth and History” by Martin J. Sherwin
- “Smithsonian Suffers Legionnaires’ Disease” by Stanley Goldberg
- “The War of the Op-ed pages (published in 1994 and 1995)”

April 9: Who to be blamed? Film: “Fat Man and Little Boy” No assigned reading

April 14: Film cont. No assigned reading

April 16: Students Debate

April 21: Censoring History

- Laura Hein and Mark Selden, “The Lessons of War, Global Power, and Social Change” in Hein and Selden’s (2000), pp.3-52

April 23: Textbook and Historical Memory in America

- James W. Loewen, “The Vietnam War in High School American History”, in Hein and Selden’s (2000), pp.150-172

April 28: Textbook and Historical Memory in America

- David Hunt, “War Crimes and the Vietnamese People: American Representations and Silences” in Hein and Selden’s (2000), pp.173-202

April 30: Memory and History in Japan: War Responsibility

- Daizaburo Yui, “Between Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima/Nagasaki: Nationalism and Memory in Japan and the United States” in Hein & Selden’s (1997), pp.52-72

May 5: Textbook Issues in Japan

- Gavan McCormack, “The Japanese Movement to “Correct” History”, in Hein and Selden’s (2000) pp.53-73
- Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo’s Textbook Lawsuits” in Hein and Selden’s (2000), pp.96-126

May 7: Conclusion

- Sadao Asada, “The Mushroom Cloud and National Psyches: Japanese and American perceptions of the Atomic-Bomb Decision” in Hein and Selden’s (1997), pp.173-201

