

Hiroshima: American and Japanese Perspectives

CCSU Honors Program
Honor 250 World Culture III, Spring 2002
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 11:45-1:45, Tuesday 1:00-3:00, Wednesday 12 noon to 1:00 and
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Ronald Takaki. Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb (Little, Brown & Co., 1995)
 - 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)
- Additional reading material as provided in class

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 on March 11th and March 13th based on work done in TEAM groups - 15 % of final grade.
3. Oral history project and reflection paper – 30% of final grade.
Conduct an interview of a WWII veteran (preferably a Pacific War veteran) and write a paper including a summary of oral interview of a war veteran and your critical view on memory (private memory vs. collective memory) and history. The paper should be a maximum of fifteen pages but not less than twelve pages. In counting the pages, do not include the bibliography. The due date is **April 17th**.
4. Roundtable discussion on May 1st – 5 % of final grade
5. A final reflection paper for the course is **due on May 15th**. Please submit **two** copies of the final paper. This will be a fifteen to twenty page(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. This is worth 30% of final grade.
6. Class participation – 10% of final grade
Class participation is a vital part of this course. It is crucial for you—and your grade—as well as for your fellow classmates, that you come to class **ON TIME** and **PREPARED**. Student’s final grade may be raised or lowered up to ten percent based on their participation. This includes participation in discussion, attendance, and punctuality with assignments. Missing more

than three classes (three un-excused absences) will result in reduction of your final grade.

COURSE READINGS & TOPICS

(Adjustments will be made as we go along.)

January 23: **Introduction (Video: Banzai-Japan Strikes-December 1941)**

No assigned reading.

January 28: **Overview of decision to use the atomic bomb (Video: Hiroshima-The Decision to Drop the Bomb)**

No assigned reading.

January 30: **The decision to use the atomic bomb—what we now know (Part I)**

-Takaki, chapters 1 through 4, pp.3-68.

February 4: **The Decision to use the atomic bomb—what we now know (Part II)**

-Takaki, chapters 6 and 7, pp.101-152.

February 6: **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 11: **The rational for the official narrative and the moral responsibility for using the bomb.**

-Gar Alperovitz, “Main Elements of the Official Rationale” in Alperovitz’s *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* (Knopf, 1995), pp.515-530

February 13: **Morality in Total War.**

-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”

February 18: No Class (Holiday)

February 20: **Racialization of the Pacific War (Part I)**—Political cartoons and video (The Propaganda Wars: Japan and the U.S. and the Battle for Hearts and Minds)

No assigned reading.

February 25: **Racialization of the Pacific War (Part II)**

-Takaki, chapter 5, pp.69-100

February 27: **Last three months to Japan's surrender (CD-ROM)**

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

March 4: **Ground Zero-August 6, 1945 (Hibakusha's drawings—slides)**

-John Hersey, Hiroshima

March 6: **Early Critics: Morality is questioned**

-Michael Yavenditti, "John Hersey and the American Conscience"

-Mary McCarthy, "The "Hiroshima" New Yorker"

-Norman Cousins, "The Literacy of Survival"

-Edgar R. Smothers, S.J. "An Opinion on Hiroshima"

all in Kay Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz, *Hiroshima's Shadow* (Pamphleteers's Press, 1998)

March 11: **Students Debate (part I)**

"Was it necessary to use the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?".

March 14: **Students Debate (Cont.)**

March 18: **Social issues of Hibakusha (Film: Black Rain)**

No assigned reading.

March 20: **Film. Cont. and Discussion**

No assigned reading.

March 25 & March 27: No Class (Spring Recess)

April 1: **Memory and History in Japan: Victim Consciousness**

-John W. Dower, chapters "Shattered Lives" and "Kyodatsu: Exhaustion and Despair" in Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*

(W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), pp.33-64, pp.87-120.

-Monica Braw, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Voluntary Silence" in Laura Hein and Mark Selden's *Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in The Nuclear Age* (M.E. Sharpe, 1997), pp.155-172.

April 3: **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.

April 8: **History and Memory in America: Media**

-Tony Capaccio and Uday Mohan, "How the U.S. Press Missed The Target" in Bird and Lifschultz's, pp.364-375

-The War of the Op-Ed Pages, in Bird and Lifschultz's, pp.376-414

April 10: **Memory and History in America: Hiroshima Myth**

-Paul Boyer, "Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory" in Hogan's, pp.143-167

-Samuel J. Walker, "History, Collective Memory and the Decision to Use the Bomb", in Hogan's, pp.187-199.

April 15: **Memory and History in Japan: War Responsibility**

-John W. Dower, "Three Narratives of Our Humanity" in Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *History Wars* (Metropolitan Books, 1996), pp.63-96.

-Seiitsu Tachibana, "The Quest for a Peace Culture: The A-Bomb Survivors' Long Struggle and the New Movement for Redressing Foreign Victims of Japan's War" in Hogan's, pp.168-186

April 17: **Censoring History**

-Laura Hein and Mark Selden, "The Lessons of War, Global Power, and Social Change" in Hein and Selden's, pp.3-52

April 22: **Textbook Issues in Japan**

-Gavan McCormack, "The Japanese Movement to "Correct" History", in Hein and Selden's, pp.53-73

-Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo's Textbook Lawsuits" in Hein and Selden's, pp.96-126

April 24: Textbook and Historical Memory in America

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

-David Hunt, “War Crimes and the Vietnamese People: American Representations and Silences”, pp.173-202

April 29: Guest Speaker (Tentative) (or Film: Regret to Inform)

May 1: Students Roundtable Discussion

May 6: Hiroshima Legacy (Film: A Journey from Hiroshima)

No assigned reading.

May 8: Discussion on “A Journey from Hiroshima”