

# **Hiroshima: American and Japanese Perspectives**

CCSU Honors Program  
Honor 250 Western/World Culture III, Spring 2004  
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 11:00-1:45, Wednesday 11:00-1:00,  
Friday 11:00-12:00 and by appointment

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Ronald Takaki. Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb (Little, Brown & Co., 1995)

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)

Richard H. Minear. Hiroshima Three Witnesses (Princeton University Press, 1990)

Kenzaburo Oe. Hiroshima Notes (Grove Press, Originally published in Japan in 1965)

## **LIBRARY RESERVED:**

-Gar Alperovits. The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of An American Myth (Knopf, 1995)

-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 savior of the modern world or whether it can be used for sinister ends? Keeping this inquiry in mind, we will examine atomic scientists' movement, morality of developing nuclear weapons, ethical issues evolved in the nuclear age. The course will also examine how the American culture was affected by the nuclear age in the Cold War period. In the second half of the semester, we will focus on the meaning of Hiroshima, studying the atomic bomb literature. This topic includes our imagination of ground zero and nuclear holocaust.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Reflection paper - 20% of final grade
2. Group Presentation and individual paper - 35 % of final grade.
3. Final reflection paper – 35% of final grade
4. Class participation – 10% of final grade

#1 First Reflection Paper is due on **February 25**. This will be a seven to ten pages (not including the bibliography) paper. The topic of the paper will be “Was it necessary to use the atomic bombs to end the war?”

#2 For your group presentation, you should engage in research related to selected topics (to be announced in class) and group discussion outside classes. Each group will have 20 minutes presentation followed by 10 minutes class discussion. Each member of the group should take an equal responsibility for the presentation and preparation for leading the class discussion. First two group presentations will be on **March 29**, and other two group presentations will be on **May 5**. A five pages paper on the topic of the presentation must be submitted on these dates.

#3 Final Reflection Paper for the course is due on **May 19**. 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 should involve investigative research using the primary and secondary sources.

#4 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 26: **Introduction to the course** No assigned reading.
- January 28: Overview of Japan's modern history: **The Passage to Japan's Pearl Harbor Attack** No assigned reading
- February 2: **The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb—what we now know**  
-Takaki's book Chapters 1, 2 and 3, pp.3-52
- February 4: **Coming Cold War**  
-Takaki's book Chapter 4, pp.53-68
- February 9: **Racialization of the Pacific War**  
-Takaki's book Chapter 5, pp.69-100
- February 11: **The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb—Diplomacy and Humanity**  
-Takaki's book Chapters 6 and 7, pp.101-151
- February 16: No Class (Holiday)
- February 18: Film Screening "**On the Beach**" No Assigned reading
- February 23: Film Cont.
- February 25: **Atomic Scientists**  
-Boyer's book Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, pp. 49-81
- March 1: **American Scientists**  
-Boyer's book Chapters 8 and 9, pp. 82-106
- March 3: **Atomic Energy**  
-Boyer's book Chapters 10 and 11, pp.109-130
- March 8: **Morality Questioned**  
-Boyer's book Chapters 16 and 17, pp.181-210
- March 10: **Ethical Issues in the Nuclear Age**  
-Boyer's book Chapters 18 and 19, pp.211-240
- March 15: **Civil Defense**  
-Boyer's book Chapter 26, pp.319-333

March 17: **Civil Defense**

-Boyer's book Chapter 27, pp.334-351

March 22 & March 24: No Class (Spring Recess)

March 29: **Group Presentation**

March 31: **U.S. Occupation of Japan 1945-1952**

-Selected chapters from Jon W. Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1999)

April 5: Film screening "**Bare Foot Gen**" No assigned reading

April 7: **Ground Zero and Aftermath**

-Minear's book Hara Tamaki pp.45-78

April 12: **Ground Zero and Aftermath**

-Minear's book Hara Tamaki pp.79-113

April 14: *Hibakusha*

-Minear's book Ota Yoko pp.153-177

April 19: *Hibakusha*

-Minear's book Ota Yoko pp. 178-197

April 21: *Hibakusha*

-Minear's book Ota Yoko pp.198-224

April 26: **Meaning of Hiroshima**

-Oe's book pp. 17-77

April 28: **Meaning of Hiroshima**

-Oe's book pp. 78-132

May 3: **Meaning of Hiroshima**

-Oe's book pp.133-183

May 5: **Group Presentation**

May 10: Film screening "**Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima**"

-Minear's book The Hiroshima Murals of Muraki Iri and Maruki Toshi: A Note pp.371-378

May 12: Discussion "What have we learned?" No Assigned reading

