HIST 399 - hiroshima: history, memory, and myth
Tristan Grunow
First Session – 6/25-7/19
Summer 2012

Meeting Time: M-Th, 4:00 PM to 5:50 PM
Classroom: MCK 214
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Office Hours: M-Th, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Course Description
Few events in history have provoked as vociferous and lasting a controversy as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. Now over sixty-five years since the atomic annihilation of the two cities in August 1945, scholars continue to question and debate the necessity, significance, and legacy of the bombings.

This class will participate in the discourse on the atomic bombings by discussing their complicated history, memory, and myth. The class will cover topics ranging from the development of the bombs to the decision to use them, the significance of the bombs to the final Japanese surrender, and postwar depictions and memory of the bombings. A primary focus will be on analyzing historiographical trends in the postwar study of the bombings, and examining the development of a collective memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Class days will consist of lectures and discussions focusing on the history of the bombings. The class will also view and discuss portrayals of the bombings and the experience of living with the bombs in both Japanese and American visual media.

Course Requirements
• Attendance is mandatory.
• Active participation in class discussions is encouraged.
• Readings should be completed before the end of week in which they are assigned.
• Be respectful of others’ opinions and viewpoints – this is a topic with many perspectives.

Course Materials
• Required Textbook: Michael Hogan, Hiroshima in History and Memory.
• All films viewed in class will be on Course Reserve in the Knight Library.

Grades and Evaluation
Students will be evaluated based on four criteria:
1. Attendance and participation in class discussions (20%)
2. Midterm (30%) – end of Second Week
3. Final Exam (20%) – end of Fourth Week
4. Final paper (30%) – Due by Friday of Fourth Week
Class Schedule

Week 1 – Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima

Readings:
- Dower, “Race, Language, and War in Two Cultures” (Blackboard)
- Drea, “Intelligence Forecasting for the Invasion of Japan: Previews of Hell” (Blackboard)

Monday 6/25 – Introduction to Course; August 6, 1945; August 9, 1945.
- Introductions – Instructor, Students, Syllabus
- Why Hiroshima? Why “Hiroshima”?
  - Why still study the atomic bombings? Why a whole class?
  - What about Nagasaki?
- August 6, 1945 and August 9, 1945
  - Warning about sensitive subjects, sensitive images
  - Disclaimer about objectivity – disaster still a disaster
  - Photo montage of cities, bombings, aftermath
  - Death tolls, Koreans, POWs, American Nisei citizens

Tuesday 6/26 – The Road to War and the War in the Pacific
- The Road to War
  - Perry and US expansionism in the Pacific
  - Meiji Restoration and Japanese wars in Asia
  - Declining JPN-US relations – “The Clash”
  - Manchurian Incident and 15 Year War – Marco Polo Br., Indochina
  - Hull Note, ultimatum, and the attack on Pearl Harbor
- The War in the Pacific
  - Campaigns in the Pacific – Guadalcanal, Saipan, Iwo, Okinawa
  - Japanese war crimes – Nanking, Bataan, Comfort Women, U-731
  - Firebombing and March 10 daikūshū
  - JPN citizens as combatants/civilians?
  - Operation Olympic
  - Ketsu-gō

Wednesday 6/27 – The Bomb Projects
- Japanese bomb projects – Ni-go, F-go and B-research
- The Manhattan Project

Thursday 6/28 – Film and Discussion
- Barefoot Gen
Week 2 – The Decision to Drop the Bomb

Readings:

• Bernstein, “Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory” (Hogan)

Monday 7/2 – The Decision to Drop the Bomb

• FDR and “unconditional surrender”
• Yalta and Potsdam
• Alternatives? Estimates?
• The Target committee – alternate targets/presence of POWs
• 8:16 AM in Hiroshima, and 11:02 AM in Nagasaki

Tuesday 7/3 – Midterm Exam

Wednesday 7/4 – No Class

Thursday 7/5 – Film and Discussion

 Gembaku no Ko

Week 3 – After Hiroshima

Readings:

 Asada Sadao, “The Shock of the Atomic Bomb and Japanese Decision to Surrender – A Reconsideration” (Blackboard)
 Bix, “Japan’s Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation” (Hogan)
 Hasegawa, “The Atomic Bombs and the Soviet Invasion: Which Was More Important in Japan’s Decision to Surrender?” (Blackboard)

Monday 7/9 – Aftermath, First Reactions, and Final Surrender

 Aftermath of the Bombings
  • Reactions by the Japanese; by the Americans
  • Reactions and rebuilding in the cities
 The Japanese Surrender Decision
  • Peace feelers, and mediation through Russia
  • The Shock of Hiroshima
  • The “Shock” of Hiroshima – reconsidered
  • The Russian Invasion
  • The 3-3 Split and the “Sacred Decision” of the 10th
  • Hiranuma, under SCAP, and the second decision to surrender
  • The radio message and the attempted coup – “Japan’s Longest Day”

Tuesday 7/10 – The Occupation and the Cold War

 The Missouri in Tokyo Bay
 MacArthur and SCAP
- The Constitution and Article 9
- The Tokyo Trials
- The Reverse Course
- The San Francisco Treaty
- The Lucky Dragon No. 5

**Wednesday 7/11** – Film and Discussion: Living with the Bomb
- *Ikimono no Kiroku*

**Thursday 7/12** – Film and Discussion: Postwar Perspectives
- *White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima*

**Week 4 – The Postwar: Cold War and the A-bomb in Memory and Culture**

*Readings:*
- Dower, “The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory” (Hogan)
- Boyer, “Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory” (Hogan)
- Walker, “History, Collective Memory, and the Decision to Use the Bomb” (Hogan)

**Monday 7/16** – The Bomb in Memory
- Depiction in film/literature/anime
- The bomb as a natural disaster
- Hellfire – Dower
- Victims as sacrifice? – Nagai Takashi
- Hiroshima saves world – surrender broadcast/Peace Preservation Park
- JPN victimology?
- Civilian culpability
- JPN revisionist history/textbook controversies
- Yasukuni shrine/comfort women issues
- Myths of the atomic bomb

**Tuesday 7/17** – A-bomb Historiography and Lingering Questions
- The Cold War and Atomic Diplomacy
- The Vietnam Era
- 1995 and the Smithsonian Exhibit
- Counter-revisionism
- The Russian Question

**Wednesday 7/18** – Film and Discussion: Nuclear winter
- *The Atomic Café*

**Thursday 7/19** – Debate and **Final Exam**