

01:565:215 "A-Bomb Literature and Film in Japan"
Rutgers University, Fall 2019

Syllabus

Instructor

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Course Description

In this course, we will be reading and discussing eyewitness accounts, short stories, a novel, and poems, by survivors and writers of the 1945 U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. All students will be asked to serve as discussion leader in class twice during the semester. We will also study films describing the history of the bombings and depicting the aftermath. All readings are in English translation.

By studying multiple genres (eyewitness accounts, fiction, poetry, and film), we will be able to examine from varied perspectives the ways atomic warfare has been represented in media. Ideally, each student in the class will develop an understanding of the limits of representation of the dehumanizing effects of atomic warfare, and learn to connect A-Bomb literature and film in Japan to political concerns about future use of atomic weapons.

Class meets TTh 7 (6:10-7:30) in Murray Rm. 114; total of 28 class meetings in 14 weeks.

Grading

Attendance/participation: 2 pts x 25 classes (50% total)
Discussion leader: 5 pts. x 2 times (10%)
Final paper: 40%
Total: 100%

Grade Scale

A 90-100; B+ 85-89; B 80-84; C+ 75-79; C 70-74; D 60-69; F below 60

Required Texts

1. Ōe Kenzaburō, ed. *The Crazy Iris* (Perseus, 1985) ISBN 9780802151841
2. Richard Minear, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* (Princeton UP, 1990) ISBN 9780691008370
3. Kurihara Sadako, *When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems* (UMichigan, 1999) ISBN 9780939512898
4. Ibuse Masuji, *Black Rain* (Kodansha, 2012) ISBN: 9781568364179

Learning Goals

“A-Bomb Literature and Film in Japan” 01:565:215 satisfies Core Curriculum goals:

- *21st Century Challenges (21C)* c. Analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.
- *Arts and Literatures (AHp)* Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

The course also satisfies the following Asian Languages and Cultures learning goals for Japanese majors and minors:

- Majors will be able to demonstrate substantial knowledge of Japanese literature and culture and pursue advanced study and/or employment in a capacity requiring such cultural knowledge. Minors will be able to analyze and interpret texts and relate relevant issues to other areas in the humanities.

See full statement of the Asian Languages and Cultures department’s learning goals at <https://sas.rutgers.edu/documents/curriculum-committee/532-sas-learning-goals/file> (p. 3)

Academic Integrity Policy

Violations of academic integrity will be punished by loss of all points for the assignment in which the violation occurred. Punishable violations include the following: submitting assignments that are not your own work; using the work of others without acknowledging the source (plagiarism); denying others access to information or material; and facilitating other student’s violations of academic integrity. See full statement of Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Attendance Policy

We meet 28 times over 14 weeks this semester. Each class is worth 2 pts. for attendance and participation. You are allowed three (3) unexcused absences during the semester; more than three unexcused absences will lead to a 2 pt. reduction in your score for each absence. Please contact me schalow@rutgers.edu in advance to request an excused absence. Excused absences earn 1/2 credit (1 pt), minus participation (1 pt).

Class Schedule

Unit I: The Atomic Bombings

Sept. 3 Tues. INTRODUCTION TO HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

No readings

Sept. 5 Thurs. HIBAKUSHA

Reading: *Hibakusha: Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (selected chapters) PDF

Sept 10 Tues. HUMAN ASHES

Reading: "Human Ashes," Oda Katsuzō, *The Crazy Iris*, 63-84

Sept. 12 Thurs. HARA TAMIKI (1905-1951)

Reading: "Hara Tamiki: Translator's Introduction," *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 21-40

Film: "Hiroshima: City of Peace" (Lorien Productions, 1994) 40 mins

Sept. 17 Tues. SUMMER FLOWERS

Reading: "Summer Flowers" (part 1) by Hara Tamiki, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 45-60

Sept. 19 Thurs. ŌTA YŌKO (1906-1963)

Reading: "Ōta Yōko: Translator's Introduction," *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 117-142

Film: "Hiroshima: The Legacy" (NHK, 1987) 50 mins.

Sept. 24 Tues. CITY OF CORPSES (1)

Reading: "City of Corpses" ('An Autumn So Horrible Even the Stones Cry Out' – 'The City: A Tangle of Corpses'), Ōta Yōko, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 153-224

Sept. 26 Thurs. CITY OF CORPSES (2)

Reading: "City of Corpses" ('Relief' to 'Late Autumn Koto Music'), Ōta Yōko, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 225-273

Oct. 1 Tues. TŌGE SANKICHI (1917-1953)

Reading: "Tōge Sankichi: Translator's Introduction," *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 277-300

Film: "The Race for the Bomb" (ABC, 1999) 42 mins.

Oct. 3 Thurs. POEMS OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

Reading: "Poems of the Atomic Bomb," Tōge Sankichi, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 305-369

Oct. 8 Tues. WHEN WE SAY HIROSHIMA

Reading: *When We Say Hiroshima: Selected Poems*, Kurihara Sadako, 3-57

Oct. 10 Thurs. THE BELLS OF NAGASAKI

Reading: *The Bells of Nagasaki*, Nagai Takashi, selected chapters (PDF)

Oct. 15 Tues. RAIN OF RUIN

Film: "Rain of Ruin: The Atomic Bombing of Japan" (History Channel, 1995) 70 mins.

Oct. 17 Thurs. RAIN OF RUIN II

Film: "Rain of Ruin II: The Bombing of Nagasaki" (Oregon PBS, 1995) 70 mins.

Unit II: The Aftermath

Oct. 22 Tues. FIREFLIES

Reading: "Fireflies," Ōta Yōko, *The Crazy Iris*, 85-111

Oct. 24 Thurs. THE RITE

Reading: "The Rite," Takenishi Hiroko, *The Crazy Iris*, 169-200

Oct. 29 Tues. THE EMPTY CAN

Reading: "The Empty Can," Hayashi Kyōko, *The Crazy Iris*, 127-143

Oct. 31 Thurs. THE HOUSE OF HANDS

Reading: "The House of Hands" Inoue Mitsuharu, *The Crazy Iris*, 145-168

Nov. 5 Tues. THE COLORLESS PAINTINGS

Reading: "The Colorless Paintings," Sata Ineko, *The Crazy Iris*, 113-125

Nov. 7 Thurs. THE CRAZY IRIS

Reading: "The Crazy Iris," Ibuse Masuji, *The Crazy Iris* 17-35

Nov. 12 Tues. BIRDS

Reading: "Birds," Seirai Yūichi, *Ground Zero: Nagasaki Stories* (PDF)

Nov. 14 Thurs. RHAPSODY IN AUGUST

Film: Kurosawa Akira, dir. "Rhapsody in August" (Shochiku Films, 1991) 98 mins.

Nov. 19 Tues. RHAPSODY IN AUGUST (cont.)

Film: Kurosawa Akira, dir. "Rhapsody in August" (Shochiku Films, 1991) 98 mins.

Nov. 21 Thurs. BLACK RAIN

Film: Imamura Shōhei, dir. "Black Rain" (Imamura Productions, 1989) 123 mins.

Nov. 26 Tues. (Thurs. schedule) BLACK RAIN (cont.)

Film: Imamura Shōhei, dir. "Black Rain" (Imamura Productions, 1989) 123 mins.

[Thanksgiving Recess] Nov. 28-Dec. 1

Dec. 3 Tues. BLACK RAIN

Reading: *Black Rain*, Ibuse Masuji.

Dec. 5 Thurs. WHITE LIGHT, BLACK RAIN

Film: "White Light, Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (Steven Okazaki, dir. HBO, 2007) 80 mins.

Dec. 10 Tues. BAREFOOT GEN

Film: "Barefoot Gen," Nakazawa Keiji (1983) 85 mins.

[Reading Days] Dec. 12-13

Dec. 13 Fri. FINAL PAPER DUE

Length: Minimum 1500 words; maximum 2000 words

Choose one of the four topics below:

1. Explain your understanding of the atomic bombings before you took this course, and then describe how your thinking has changed as a result of the *hibakusha* eyewitness accounts, literary texts, and films you've encountered in the course. You must discuss at least three works.
2. Which specific genre (eyewitness accounts, fiction, poetry, film) did you appreciate the most in the course? Contrast it with at least one other genre, and explain what it is about the genre you chose that made it so powerful for you. You must include at least three works in your discussion.
3. Discuss differences you observed between Hiroshima and Nagasaki writers' responses to the bombings. Describe the literary strategies used by non-*hibakusha* writers from both cities to create authentic narratives. You must discuss at least three works, and you may also include films in your discussion.
4. Were there images or scenes of suffering and death in the materials we studied that had a particular impact on you? Give examples from at least three works, and explain why those images or scenes were so powerful for you. Discuss also the *chronology* of suffering/death in your examples; i.e., was it immediate, or prolonged?