

# Hiroshima: History, Ethics and Memory

Leo Maley III and Uday Mohan

Hiroshima: History, Ethics, and Memory  
Wednesdays, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

## Course objectives

This course focuses intensively on one complex and wide-ranging topic: the decision to use atomic weapons against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the fifty years of cultural "fallout" in the United States arising from that decision. Students will critically evaluate readings representing a variety of disciplines and perspectives. We expect that students will do the assigned readings and actively participate in seminar discussions. To help sharpen these discussions, students will prepare a 1 page response to each week's readings. Students will also write two 3-4 page critical reflection papers, and one final 10-12 page essay. The critical reflection papers should identify key issues that cut across the readings, briefly discuss the reasons for major points of agreement or disagreement with the readings, and note how the readings have added to your understanding the issues. In the final essay students will respond at greater length to one theme or topic from the course.

## Course Readings

September 6: Introduction.

September 13: The decision to use the atomic bomb--what we now know (part I).  
Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth* (Knopf, 1995), pp. 813-819, xiii-xiv, 1-219.

September 20: The decision to use the atomic bomb--what we now know (part II).  
Alperovitz, *The Decision*, pp. 221-420.

September 27: Hiroshima: August 6 and after.  
John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (Vintage, 1946, 1985).

October 4: The decision to use the atomic bomb--what we were told (Stimson and Truman).  
Alperovitz, *The Decision*, pp. 421-530.

October 11: The decision to use the atomic bomb--what we were told (more Truman, Byrnes, Groves, "Managing History," "The Complicity of Silence," and Questions and Theories).

Alperovitz, *The Decision*, pp. 531-668.

October 18: Historians.

Barton J. Bernstein, "The Atomic Bomb Reconsidered," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1995): 135-152.

Robert James Maddox, "The Biggest Decision: Why We Had to Drop the Atomic Bomb," *American Heritage* (May/June 1995): 71-77.

Peter Maslowski, "Truman, the Bomb, and the Numbers Game," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* (Spring 1995): 103-107.

Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, "The Bomb Minimized Casualties," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 53-54.

J. Samuel Walker, "The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update," *Diplomatic History* (Winter 1990): 97-114.

J. Samuel Walker, "History, Collective Memory, and the Decision to Use the Bomb," *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1995): 319-328.

October 25: The Scientists.

Freeman Dyson, *Disturbing the Universe* (Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 30-31, 50-53.

James Franck, et al., "A Report to the Secretary of War," reprinted in *The Atomic Age: Scientists in National and*

*World Affairs*, Morton Grodzins and Eugene Rabinowitch, eds. (Basic Books, 1963), pp. 19-27.

Philip Nobile, "Apologia Pro Hiroshima and Nagasaki," *The Village Voice* (August 11, 1992): 37.

Louis N. Ridenour, "The Scientist Fights for Peace," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1947): 80-83.

Leo Szilard, "President Truman Did Not Understand [an interview]," *U.S. News & World Report* (August 15, 1960): 68-71.

Ronald Takaki, "What the Scientists Knew and When They Knew It," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 55-56.

Norbert Wiener, "A Scientist Rebels," *Atlantic Monthly* (January 1947): 46.

October 25: The scientists, continued.

Victor Weisskopf, *The Joy of Insight: Passions of a Physicist* (Basic Books, 1991), pp. 122-157.

November 1: Was it ethical? Different approaches.

Commission on The Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith, "Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith," (FCC, 1946).

Arthur Holly Compton, "The Moral Meaning of the Atomic Bomb," in *Christianity Takes a Stand: An Approach to the Issues of Today*, William Scarlett, ed. (Penguin, 1946), pp. 57-76.

John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (Pantheon, 1986),

pp. 54-57, 185.

"Editorial Comment: The Atom Bomb," *Catholic World* (September 1945): 449-452.

Jim Holt, "Morality, Reduced to Arithmetic," *New York Times* (August 5, 1995): 19.

Ronald Schaffer, *Wings of Judgment: American Bombing in World War II* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 177-189.

Edgar R. Smothers, "An Opinion on Hiroshima," *America* (July 5, 1947): 379-380.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Basic Books, 1977), pp. 263-268.

November 8: The media.

"A Jap Burns," *Life* (August 13, 1945): 34.

Wilfred Burchett, *Shadows of Hiroshima* (Verso, 1983), pp. 15-24.

Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Smithsonian, 1992): 59-66.

Vincent Leo, "The Mushroom Cloud Photograph: From Fact to Symbol," *Afterimage* (Summer 1985): 6-12.

Robert Karl Manoff, "Covering the Bomb: Press and State in the Shadow of Nuclear War," in *War, Peace and the News Media*, David M. Rubin and Ann Marie Cunningham, eds. (Center for War, Peace, and the News Media, 1983, 1987), pp. 197-207.

Uday Mohan and Sanho Tree, "Hiroshima, the American Media, and the Construction of Conventional Wisdom," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* (Summer 1995): 141-160.

Newsweek: selections from 1985 and 1995.

"Picture of the Week," *Life* (May 22, 1944): 34-35.

U.S. News & World Report: selections from 1995.

November 15: The Smithsonian and the Enola Gay.

Peter Blute, "Revisionist History Has Few Defenders," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 51-52.

Tony Capaccio and Uday Mohan, "Missing the Target," *American Journalism Review* (July/August 1995): 18-26.

John Dower, "Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Politics of Memory," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 48-51.

Hugh Gusterson, "Tales of the City," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 56-57.

I. Michael Heyman, opening statement for Enola Gay exhibit, June 27, 1995.

Historians' Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima, letter to I. Michael Heyman, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, July 31, 1995.

I.B. Holly, Jr. "Second-Guessing History," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 52-53.

Edward T. Linenthal, "Can Museums Achieve a Balance Between Memory and History?," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 10, 1995): B1-2.

Mike Wallace, "The Battle of the Enola Gay," *Radical Historians Newsletter* (May 1995): 1-12, 22-32.

Selected editorials and columns from various newspapers: August-September 1994.

November 22: Was it legal?

Richard A. Falk, "The Claimants of Hiroshima," *Nation* (February 15, 1965): 157-161.

Jordan J. Paust, "The Nuclear Decision in World War II--Truman's Ending and Avoidance of War," *International Lawyer* (Vol. 8, No. 1): 160-190.

November 29: Memories and "Voices."

Paul Boyer, "The Bomb and the 'Good War'," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 4, 1995): A36.

Ellsworth T. Carrington, "August 6, 1945: Reflections of a Hiroshima Pilot," *Progressive* (August 1980): 34-35.

Paul Fussell, "Hiroshima: A Soldier's View," *New Republic* (August 22/29, 1981): 26-30.

Zoe Tracy Hardy, "What Did You Do in the War, Grandma?" Ms. (August 1985): 75-78.

Rachelle Linner, *City of Silence: Listening to Hiroshima* (Orbis, 1995), pp. 36-54, 79-99. (Also read chapt. 3 or chapt. 5)

Kurihara Sadako, selected poems reprinted in *International Quarterly* (1995): 252-261.

John Smitherman, in Studs Terkel, "The Good War": An Oral History of World War II (Pantheon, 1984), pp. 545-554.

November 29: Memories and "Voices," continued.

Selected letters to the editor: August 1994-January 1995.

December 6: Hiroshima's legacy.

Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell, "The Age of Numbing," *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 58-59.

Linner, *City of Silence*, pp. 119-126.

Richard H. Minear, "Atomic Holocaust, Nazi Holocaust: Some Reflections," *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1995): 347-365.

Felix Morley, "The Return to Nothingness," *Human Events* (August 29, 1945): 144-147.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (NCCB, 1983), p. 124 (paragraphs 301-302).

William Styron, "The Enduring Metaphors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima," *Newsweek* (January 11, 1993): 28-29.

Essays by Jonathan Dean and Randall Forsberg, Carole Gallagher, Carl Kaysen, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, Paul Rogat Loeb, Bernard Lown, Alex Roland, Joseph Rotblat, Bryan C. Taylor, and Theodore B. Taylor in *Technology Review* (August/September 1995): 60-79.

December 13. No class. "Exam study day."

December 20. Final essay due.