

Cultural Legacies of the Atomic Bomb

Steve Cohen and Hosea Hirata

Cultural Legacies of the Atomic-Bomb

Tufts University, Spring 2004

CIS 150 / JPN 91 / CIV 91

Time: M 1:30 –4:30

Steve Cohen

Hosea Hirata

Writing Fellows: Jamila Moore, Tom Chen, Laura Horwitz

Required Texts:

1. Bird, Kai, and Lifschultz, Lawrence, *Hiroshima's Shadow*
2. Dower, John, *War Without Mercy*
3. Hersey, John, *Hiroshima*
4. Duras, Marguerite, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*
5. Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking*
6. Ibuse, Masuji, *Black Rain*
7. Frayn, Michael, *Copenhagen*
8. Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima*

A packet of xeroxed readings is available from Gnomon Copy, 348 Boston Ave. in Medford. Gnomon

OVERVIEW

Recalling the testing of the first atomic bomb in Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Director of the Los Alamos laboratory that produced the bomb, remarked:

We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita... 'I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that, one way or another.

The atomic bomb changed the world forever. Through an exploration of literature, photographs, film, history, the popular press, and documentaries, this interdisciplinary course will consider the lasting political, social, cultural, scientific, and ethical legacies of that event on our everyday lives.

The course will begin with an investigation of the situation in 1945. The decision to use the atomic bomb will receive a great deal of attention and will be the subject of a great many readings and discussions. The legacies, of course, follow from that decision and need to be studied with a deep understanding of that event.

SCHEDULE

9/9 (M) Introduction

Video: Hiroshima Nagasaki August 1945 (17 min)

9/11 (W) Video: A Personal Matter: Gordon Hirabayashi vs. the US (30 min) (VC 2988)

9/16 (M) Was Racism Involved?

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Dower , War Without Mercy
- 2) Chapters 1-4: Hiroshima by Takaki

Guest Lecturer: Dean Charles Inouye

First paper assignment distributed

9/18 (W) Video:

- 1) Last Bomb by the War Department (36 min) (1947) (VC 1345)
- 2) The Bomb (52 min) (1982) 9/23 (M) Science and Atomic Bomb

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Finish Takaki
- 2) Rhodes's article "Moonshine" in the packet
Chapter 1 of The Making of the Atomic Bomb
- 3) Introduction to Hiroshima's Shadow

Guest Lecturer: Professor Gary Goldstein

9/25 (W) Video: Hiroshima: Why the Bomb was dropped with Peter Jennings (67 min)

9/30 (M) Why were the bombs dropped? It was necessary.

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Iris Chang, The Rape of Nanking
- 2) Articles by Sayle, Blackett, and Lanouette from Hiroshima's Shadow

Guest lecturer: Professor Gary Leupp

10/2 (W) Video: Barefoot Gen (83 min) (1983) (DV 159)

10/7 (M) The Early Controversy

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Section II of Hiroshima's Shadow

10/9 (W) Video: After the Cloud Lifted: Hiroshima's stories of recovery (VC3898)

10/15 (T) Why were the bombs dropped?

Reading Assignments:

1) Hiroshima by John Hersey

2) "Hiroshima Maidens" (packet)

Chapter 1 of The Hiroshima Maidens by Ronald Barker

3) An article by Yagoda (packet)

from About Town by Ben Yagoda, p. 183-193.

4) Start reading Black Rain

Special Guest Speaker: Mayor of Hiroshima, Tad Akiba

10/16 (W) Video: The Day after Trinity (88 min) (1980)

10/21 (M) Literature of the Atomic Bomb

Reading Assignments:

1) Keep reading Black Rain

2) Tamaki Hara "Summer Flower" (in Hiroshima's Shadow pp. 443-452)

video: The Last Epidemic (19 min) (10/23 (W) Video: Black Rain

10/28 (M) Literature of the Atomic Bomb

Reading Assignments:

1) Finish Black Rain

2) Lifton "Creative Response: A-bomb literature" (packet)

from Death In Life by Robert Jay Lifton, p. 397-468.

10/30 (W) Video: Hiroshima Mon Amour (VC515)

11/4 (M) Survivor's Guilt: Hiroshima as Seduction

Reading Assignments:

1) Screen play: Hiroshima Mon Amour

2) MacLear "Limits of Vision" (packet)

from Beclouded Visions by Kyo Maclear, p. 141-157.

3) The Araki Yasusada controversy: Selections from Doubled Flowering

11/6 (W) Video: Dr. Strange Love

11/13 (W) Video: On the Beach

11/18 (M) Our Friend the Atom

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Arnold: "Blast from the Past"
From the Boston Globe magazine.
- 2) Mason: "Fall Out"
from The New Yorker, January 10, 2000
- 2) Life Magazine: "Fallout Shelter"
From Life, September 15, 1961

11/20 (W) Video: The Atomic Café

11/25 (M) Fall Out Fever

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Article by Weinberg (packet)
From The New York Review of Books, July 18, 2000
- 2) "Check Please" (packet)
from The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Sept./Oct. 1998.
The Second Paper Due
Guest Artist: Karen Aqua (film maker)

12/2 (M) Enola Gay Controversy

Reading Assignments: Bird, Hiroshima's Shadow: Section IV: "Censoring History at the Smithsonian"

Guest Lecturer: Professor Martin Sherwin

12/4 (W) Video: Akira (LD96)

12/9 (M) Now What?

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Article by Frayn (packet)
From The New York Review of Books, March 28, 2002
- 2) Article by Doctorow (packet)
From The Nation,
- 3) Article by Rinjiro Sodai (packet)
From Journal of American History, Vol. 82, No. 3.
- 4) Copenhagen, a play by Frayn