

# Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Beyond

Norma Field

Japan #27305

East Asia #27605

Human Rights 25400

T/Th 1:30-2:50 Judd 111

Teaching Assistant: Justin Jesty

Week One: Early representations and reactions

Tuesday, March 30

Introduction

Meeting with Jay Satterfield, Special Collections, Regenstein Library

Thursday, April 1

John Hersey, Hiroshima

31 August 1946 New Yorker selections (Chalk)

Mary McCarthy, "The 'Hiroshima' New Yorker," Norman Cousins, "The Literacy of Survival" (1946; Bird and Lifschultz, 303-306) e\*

Lane Fenrich, "Mass Death in Miniature: How Americans Became Victims of the Bomb" (Hein and Selden, 122-133)

Week Two: Early representations, reactions, and historical assessments

Tuesday, April 6

Mahatma Gandhi, "The Atom Bomb & Ahimsa" (1946), Albert Camus, "Between Hell and Reason" (1945), Dwight Macdonald, "The Decline to Barbarism" (1945), and Reinhold Niebuhr, "Our Relations to Japan" (1945); (Bird and Lifschultz, 258-68; 275-77) e\*

Simone de Beauvoir, The Mandarins (1956; 239-41)

Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb" (1947; Bird and Lifschultz, 197-210) e\*

William Lanouette, "Three Attempts to Stop the Bomb" (1992; Bird and Lifschultz, 99-118) e\*

George Roeder, "Making Things Visible: Learning from the Censors" (199[?], Hein and Selden, 73-99)

Paul Boyer, "Victory for What?-The Voice of the Minority" (1984; Bird and Lifschultz, 239-52) e\*

Thursday, April 8

Citizens' Memoirs, Pictures by Atomic Bomb Survivors, Children's Voices (Kyoko & Mark Selden, 173-242)

Photographs (1945 [one 1973] Kyoko & Mark Selden, 114-24); Chalk photographs from

Nagasaki (Joe O'Donnell, *Toranku no naka no nihon* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1995)  
Domon Ken, "The Boy Who Was a Fetus: The Death of Kajiyama Kenji" (1958; Kyoko & Mark Selden, 157-69)

Week Three: Beyond the nation state: The diversity of the target

Tuesday, April 13

\*\*Talk by Steve Leeper (Transnet; US representative, World Conference of Mayors for Peace)

Carole Gallagher, *American Ground Zero* (1993; selections) Chalk  
Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power, U.S. House of Representatives,  
*American Nuclear Guinea Pigs: Three Decades of Radiation Experiments on US Citizens*  
(1986; 1-7) e\*

CHALK documents on ABCC (Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) and DU (depleted uranium)

Thursday, April 15

Sodei Rinjirô, "Were We the Enemy? American Hibakusha" (199[?]; Hein and Selden, 232-59)

Toyonaga Keisaburô, "Colonialism and Atom Bombs: About Survivors of Hiroshima Living in Korea" (1995; Fujitani, White, Yoneyama, 378-94) e\*

Lee Gi-sang, "The Unknown Victims" (1979; *Hibakusha: Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, 120-35) e\*

Week Four: Atomic bomb literature (1)

Tuesday, April 20

John Treat, "Atrocity into Words," "Genre and Post-Hiroshima Representation," "The Three Debates" (1995, *Writing Ground Zero*, 24-120)

Thursday, April 22

Hara Tamiki, "Summer Flower" (1947; Oe, *The Crazy Iris*, 37-54) e\*

Agawa Hiroyuki, "August 6" (1946; Kyoko & Mark Selden, 3-23)

\*\*Sharing (Interview/dialogue)

Week Five: Atomic bomb literature (2)

Tuesday, April 27

John Treat, "Hara Tamiki and the Documentary Fallacy," "Poetry Against Itself" (125-97); "Nagasaki and the Human Future" (301-49)

Thursday, April 29

Ota Yoko, "Residues of Squalor" (1947; Kyoko & Mark Selden, 55-85)

Hayashi Kyoko, "Two Grave Markers" (1975; Kyoko & Mark Selden, 24-54)

Week Six: Newer representations and connections

Tuesday, May 4

Dr. Shuntaro Hida, "The Day Hiroshima Disappeared" (1982; Bird and Lifschultz, 415-32) e\*

Keiji Nakazawa, Barefoot Gen (1972-73)

Thursday, May 6

Yuki Tanaka, "Nuclear Power Plant Gypsies in High-Tech Society" (1985; Joe Moore, The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance Since 1945, 251-71) e\*

Chikahiro Hiroiwa, "Seeking a New Life" (No More Chernobyls, Suzuko and Fusako, Antiwar and Antinuclear Movements; 1998, Hiroshima Witness for Peace: Testimony of A-Bomb Survivor Suzuko Numata, 226-53) e\*

Arundhati Roy, "Preface" and "The End of Imagination" (1999; The Cost of Living, 93-126)

Week Seven: Commemoration struggles (1)

Tuesday, May 11

John Dower, "Unconditional Surrender at the Smithsonian" (1995; Bird and Lifschultz, 338-42) e\*

Barton Bernstein, "A Postwar Myth: 500,00 U.S. Lives Saved" (1986; Bird and Lifschultz, 130-34) e\*

Paul Fussell, "Thank God for the Atomic Bomb" (1988; Bird and Lifschultz, 211-22) e

Goldstein, Dillon, and Wenger, "Introduction" (1995; Rain of Ruin: A Photographic History of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, xi-xiii) e\*

Thursday, May 13

In-class film: Hiroshima: Why the bomb was dropped (1995)

Week Eight: Commemoration Struggles (2)

Tuesday, May 18

Monica Braw, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Voluntary Silence" (199[?], Hein and Selden, 155-72)

Ellen Hammond, "Commemoration Controversies: The War, the Peace, and Democracy in Japan" (199[?], Hein and Selden, 100-21)

Lisa Yoneyama, "[199[?], Memory Matters: Hiroshima's Korean Atom Bomb Memorial and the Politics of Identity" (Hein and Selden, 202-231) e\*

Thursday, May 20

\*\*Sharing (archival research)

Week Nine: The Burden of Proof and History's Ethical Challenges

Tuesday, May 25

Akira Tashiro, Discounted Casualties: The Human Cost of Depleted Uranium

Thursday, May 27

John Rawls, "Fifty Years after Hiroshima" (1995; Bird and Lifschultz, 474-79) e

Gar Alperovitz, "Afterword: Questions, Issues, and Major Theories Concerning the Use of the Atomic Bomb" (1995; *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 643-68) e  
Leo Szilard and Colleagues, "The July 17th Petition of the Manhattan Scientists" (1945)  
and William Lanouette, "A Note on the July 17th Petition" (*Bird and Lifschultz*, 552-60)  
e  
Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals" (1987) TBA  
Hugh Gusterson, "Remembering Hiroshima at a Nuclear Weapons Laboratory" (1995;  
*Hein and Selden*, 260-76)

Week Ten: Where Are We Now?

Tuesday, June 1

\*\*Sharing (interview/dialogue)

\*=ereserve

\*\*\*additional films TBA

### **Some of the Why of This Course**

The Enola Gay is on display at the Smithsonian in restored splendor. In the meanwhile, in Japan, a committee including some who have never involved themselves in the nuclear issue has been named to study approaches to the fast-approaching sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The decades since the bombings have seen nuclear power plant accidents, nuclear waste storage crises, and most recently, the proliferation of depleted uranium (DU) in combat and training sites. The familiar image of the mushroom cloud can no longer capture the multifarious dimensions of nuclear threat.

In this course, we will consider the history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through literature, film, photo essays, and nonfiction writing. While being mindful of the different effects of these genres of representation (e.g., how do photos, drawings by adults, drawings by children, poems, fiction, or documentary records differ in their desire and capacity to convey horror?) we will grapple with the shifting understanding of the bomb both within and without Japan during the Cold War and beyond. The Smithsonian controversy of 1995 constitutes a major threshold in the U.S. There, the exhibit organizers tried but failed to introduce artifacts and images portraying the bombing experience on the ground. This conflict and its outcome suggested the extent to which Americans had failed to sustain debate on the bombings in the postwar decades. If anything, levels of understanding seem to have declined. US veterans' claims that making room for the view from the ground in a national museum dishonored the sacrifice of US soldiers interestingly mirrored the view of Japanese veterans and their rightist sponsors who found the demand for acknowledgment and apology for Japanese war crimes offensive to the spirits of their martyred comrades. The latter phenomenon is also a reflection of how Japanese examination of atomic history has, with the growing demand for the acknowledgment of Japanese colonial history, moved beyond a singular focus on the United States to painful recognition of the liberatory status accorded the bombs in the former Asian empire.

Even though, and because our focus is on Japan, we will be considering the growing diversity of the population to whom the term "hibakusha" has been extended—the victims of radiation exposure, from nuclear bombing and other sources. Japanese have often been criticized for a "victim consciousness" because of the bombings, but Japanese peace and antinuclear activists have also acted on their knowledge of that history to concern themselves with the victims of Chernobyl, the impact of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, of Indian and Pakistani testing, of uranium mining on Native American populations in the southwest, and now, most of all, the proliferation of depleted uranium (DU) in the sites of armed conflict as well as testing, especially since the Persian Gulf War.

The toxicity (metallogical but especially radiological) of DU is a hotly contested issue. Long-term scientific investigation is obviously necessary, but many contend that the dramatic health problems exhibited by US and NATO veterans as well as civilian populations in Iraq or the former Yugoslavia warrant banning the use of DU now. The US government at present denies the harmful health effects of DU. As we bring our study of the nuclear age to this moment, we will necessarily be confronting ethical questions. We will surely need to reexamine what has been the common last word in America, of the millions of lives saved by the Bomb.

### **Course projects**

(a) How we process this varied and conflictual material constitutes the substance of the course. To this end, each of you will choose an interlocutor outside the course with whom you will conduct a combined interview/dialogue. Your interlocutor may be a family member or a friend or a willing acquaintance. The first criterion of selection must be willingness to engage with you through the quarter. The governing assumption here is that an interviewer can also be changed by the interviewee; in that sense, this is a combination of interview and dialogue. As you read, watch, and listen, you will be thinking of how to draw on your own experience of learning and horror, sorrow, or confusion in formulating the questions you pose your interlocutors (without expecting them to read our syllabus!). Ideally, at the end, you will have an account of a journey undertaken by both of you.

Of course, you will want to be thinking about what kind of interlocutor you want. Someone considerably older, with combat experience in WWII? Or a woman on the "home front"? Someone with childhood memories of the Bomb and its aftermath? Someone with strong convictions with which you agree? disagree? Your own contemporary with a similar or contrasting background? Think about how you would handle intense disagreement, or the expression of views you might even find offensive. Of course, we will all need to explore ways to discuss controversial topics in this course. Keep in mind that your interview/dialogue isn't a one-shot encounter. You may want, for whatever reason, to keep your interlocutor anonymous and assign a nickname. (We will discuss this more in class.) Also bear in mind that we are not here to judge your interlocutors' knowledge and claims.

Your interviews can be by email, telephone, or in person. Give the question of format some thought in choosing your interlocutor. Email leaves a written record, and some people are freer in writing than in speech. On the other hand, you don't get the

information that voice can offer-hesitation, excitement, agitation. You must hold a minimum of three distinct sessions, spaced through the quarter as much as possible. You do not need verbatim transcripts, but you must keep a record of the questions you formulate in advance. You will undoubtedly NOT be using all of these questions, and you will assuredly be posing some unanticipated questions, depending on where conversation takes you. Each week, by midnight Monday and midnight Wednesday, you will post to Chalk two or three questions derived from readings and discussion. You may also post questions reflecting second thoughts about a previous topic. This gives us not only a starting point for class discussion but a pool of questions for you to consider using. Write up the conversation as soon as possible (even if you're using email, write up a quick analysis) after it takes place. You will be giving interim reports to the class, sharing successes, failures, and impasses.

For the end of the quarter, you will be writing up a 2500-4000 word account of your interview/dialogue. Again, this is as much a chance to take stock of your own learning process as to understand your interlocutor's stance, the knowledge and experiences informing it. How do the questions you deemed important in early April look by the end of May? Did your style of engagement change? Your interlocutor's? Do you think your interlocutor's views changed? As you can see, through this interview/dialogue, you are also producing an informal, mini oral history of the present, of ways of thinking about nuclear history. Let's hope that your differences and the diversity of your interlocutors will stretch all our minds.

(b) Finally, as if all the readings, web links, and films weren't enough, I propose that we take advantage of our peculiar good fortune, namely, that we are at an institution intimately tied to the history we are studying. As the inscription to Henry Moore's sculpture Nuclear Energy puts it, "On December 2, 1942, man achieved here the first self-sustaining chain reaction and thereby initiated the controlled release of nuclear energy." Special Collections in Regenstein is a treasure trove of documents relating to the "atomic scientists" who lived and worked here. We will get an introduction to parts of the collection on the first day of class. You will work in pairs to produce a short report on a particular aspect of the nuclear era as it developed here at the University of Chicago, such as how Henry Moore's sculpture came to reside next to Regenstein Library, or what President Robert Maynard Hutchins thought of the Manhattan Project, before, during, and after, or how the Doomsday Clock got started and what effect it's had. This material, too, can be part of your conversation with your interviewee.

## **Readings**

Titles for purchase at Seminar Co-op:

Hersey, John. Hiroshima. Vintage Books, 1989.

Nakazawa, Keiji. Barefoot Gen, Vol. 2 Last Gasp Eco-funnies, Inc. (backordered; new 2004 edition)

Hein, Laura and Mark Selden, eds. *Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age*.

Roy, Arundhati. *The Cost of Living*. Modern Library. 1999.

Selden, Kyoko and Mark Selden, eds. *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. M.E. Sharpe, 1991.

Treat, John. *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*. U. of Chicago Press, 1996.

\*(optional) Ibuse, Masuji. *Black Rain*. Kodansha America. 1988.

Title for purchase from instructor:

Akira Tashiro. *Discounted Casualties: The Human Cost of Depleted Uranium*. Chugoku Shimbun, 2001. (\$12 + \$2 shipping)

Titles with excerpts on reserve

Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1995)

Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz, eds. *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy* (Stony Creek, Ct.: Pamphleteer's Press, 1998)

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs: Journal of women in Culture and Society*, 1987, Vol. 12, No. 4

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Mandarins* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1956)

T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds. *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*. (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2001)

Donald M. Goldstein, Katherine V. Dillon, and J. Michael Wenger, *Rain of Ruin: A Photographic History of Hiroshima & Nagasaki* (Dulles, Va.: Prange Enterprises, Inc., 1995)

*Hibakusha: Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 1986)  
Chikahiro Hiroiwa. *Hiroshima Witness for Peace: Testimony of A-bomb Survivor Suzuko Numata* (Tokyo: Soeisha, 1998)

Joe Moore, ed. *The Other Japan: Conflict, Compromise, and Resistance since 1945* (N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997)

Oe Kenzaburo, ed. *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1985)

Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power, U.S. House of Representatives, *American Nuclear Guinea Pigs: Three Decades of Radiation Experiments on US Citizens* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986)

Titles with excerpts on Chalk (for now)

Carol Gallagher. *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War* (N.Y.: Random House, 1993)

Joe O'Donnell. *Toranku no naka no Nihon: Bei jûgun kameraman no hikôshiki kiroku* (Japan 1945, Images from the Trunk). (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1995)8888