

01:565:215 "A-Bomb Literature and Film in Japan"
Rutgers University, Fall 2021

Syllabus

Instructor

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Office Hours: Wed. 2:30-3:30 and by appointment
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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 Mon. online 5:00-6:20 and Wed. in person 5:00-6:20 in Campbell Hall (A-2)

Grading

Discussion posts: 50% (2 pts x 25)
Discussion leader: 15% (5 pts x 3)
Final paper: 35%
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/>

Class Schedule

Unit I: The Atomic Bombings

Sept. 1 Wed. In person INTRODUCTION TO HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

No readings

Sept. 8 (Wed.) Mon. schedule—Online HIBAKUSHA (1)

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

Sept 13 Mon. Online HUMAN ASHES

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

Discussion leaders: Group 1

Sept. 15 Wed. In person 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. 20 Mon. Online SUMMER FLOWERS (1)

Reading: *Summer Flowers* ("Summer Flowers" & "From the Ruins") by Hara Tamiki, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 45-78

Discussion leaders: Group 2

Sept. 22 Wed. In person SUMMER FLOWERS (2)

Reading: *Summer Flowers* ("Prelude to Annihilation") by Hara Tamiki, *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, 79-113

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

Sept. 27 Mon. Online 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

Discussion leaders: Group 3

Sept. 29 Wed. In person CITY OF CORPSES (2)

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

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

Oct. 4 Mon. Online ŌTA YŌKO (1906-1963)

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

Discussion leaders: Group 4

Oct. 6 Wed. In person 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. 11 Mon. Online POEMS OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

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

Discussion leaders: Group 1

Oct. 13 Wed. In person WHEN WE SAY HIROSHIMA

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

Film: "After the Cloud Lifted" (Santorium Productions, 1996) 45 mins.

Oct. 18 Mon. Online THE BELLS OF NAGASAKI

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

Discussion leaders: Group 2

Oct. 20 Wed. In person HIBAKUSHA (2)

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

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

Unit II: The Aftermath

Oct. 25 Mon. Online FIREFLIES

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

Discussion leaders: Group 3

Oct. 27 Wed. In person RESIDUES OF SQUALOR/BAREFOOT GEN

Reading: "Residues of Squalor" Ōta Yōko, *Japanese Women Writers* (PDF)

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

Nov. 1 Mon. Online THE RITE

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

Discussion leaders: Group 4

Nov. 3 Wed. In person THE EMPTY CAN

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

Film: "The Children of Nagasaki" (2005) 30 mins.

Nov. 8 Mon. Online THE HOUSE OF HANDS

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

Discussion leaders: Group 1

Nov. 10 Wed. In person IN THE POT/RHAPSODY IN AUGUST

Reading: "In the Pot" Murata Kiyoko, *Japanese Women Writers* (PDF)

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

Nov. 15 Mon. Online COLORLESS PAINTINGS

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

Discussion leaders: Group 2

Nov. 17 Wed. In person CRAZY IRIS

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

Nov. 22 Mon. Online BLACK RAIN (NOVEL)

Reading: *Black Rain*, Ibuse Masuji.

Discussion leaders: Group 3

[THANKSGIVING BREAK] Nov. 24-28

Nov. 29 (Mon.) Wed. schedule—In person BLACK RAIN (FILM)

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

Dec. 1 Wed. In person GROUND ZERO (1)

Reading: "Nails," "Stone," "Insects," Seirai Yūichi, *Ground Zero: Nagasaki Stories* 1-77 (PDF)

Dec. 6 Mon. Online GROUND ZERO (2)

Reading: "Honey," "Shells," "Birds," Seirai Yūichi, *Ground Zero: Nagasaki Stories* 79-182 (PDF)

Discussion leaders: Group 4

Dec. 8 Wed. In person WHITE LIGHT, BLACK RAIN

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

Dec. 13 Mon. Online CONCLUSION TO THE COURSE

Discussion: Final paper topics

[READING DAYS] Dec. 14-15

Dec. 17 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. Describe the literary strategies used by non-*hibakusha* writers 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?