

Department of History  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
College of Letters and Science

## **Japan and World War Two in Asia History 456**

Fall 2011  
MWF 9:55-10:45  
6102 Social Science

Professor Louise Young  
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### **Course description**

World War Two was many wars. Fought on multiple fronts, the war involved a complex tangle of war aims and competing ideologies. The advent of “total war” blurred the line between the home front and the battlefield and necessitated the mobilization of domestic societies in unprecedented ways. The war introduced new weapons of mass destruction that targeted both civilians and soldiers. This course looks at these issues from the vantage point of Japanese history, focusing on what Japanese call the “Asia-Pacific War.” Beginning with the post World War One settlement, we track the gathering crisis of the twenties and thirties through the outbreak of a multi-front war against China, against the USSR, against the US, and against the European empires in Southeast Asia. We also examine end of “hot” war and the beginnings of “cold” war in Asia.

### **Readings**

Reading assignments are drawn from a combination of primary and secondary sources. I have assigned a textbook by Andrew Gordon that gives an overview of modern Japanese history and should serve as a reference, particularly for those of you without previous exposure to Japanese history. We read monographic studies of the war by John Dower (racial ideologies in the conflict between America and Japan) and Chalmers Johnson (an intellectual and social history of one of Japan’s foremost “China hands”) as well as an excellent compilation of oral interviews by Haruko and Theodore Cook, supplemented with several shorter readings. Together, these should provide students with a window on the war from a variety of perspectives. The readings, like the course itself, are meant to convey the multidimensional nature of the war.

The following required readings have been ordered for purchase at the University Book Store:

Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, Japan at War: An Oral History (New

- Press, 1992)
- John W. Dower, War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War (Pantheon, 1986)
- Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan from Tokugawa Times to the Present (Oxford, 2003)
- Chalmers Johnson, An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring (Stanford University Press, 1992)

All other readings are available on the class website at Learn@ UW.

- Norma Field, In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End (Vintage, 1993), pp 4-104.
- "Hiroshima in History and Memory: A Symposium," essays by Bix, Bernstein, and Dower, Diplomatic History 19, 2 (Spring 1995), pp 197-295.
- Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945 (Princeton, 1984), pp 3-43, 61-79, 128-172.
- James J. Orr, The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp 1-70.
- William Tsutsui, Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of the Monsters (Palgrave, 2004), pp 13-42.
- Daqing Yang, "The Malleable and the Contested: The Nanjing Massacre in Postwar China and Japan," in Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s), eds., T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Duke, 2001), pp 50-86.

## **Requirements**

- Short essay #1 (25%) Five page essay due in class October 10. Pick three interviews from *Japan at War* and compare the experience of the war from these different perspectives. What do the accounts focus on? Why? How do these accounts highlight values and shortcomings of oral history?
- Short essay #2 (25%) Five page essay due in class December 12. Compare the three films: *Godzilla*, *Grave of the Fireflies*, and *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima* to explore the issue of war memory in Japan. What do the films tell you about war memory? How have memories changed over time?
- In-class midterm examination (20%) Scheduled for October 28, the exam will cover material through the first seven weeks of the course. The format of the exam will be a combination of short answer/identification questions and a choice of longer essay questions.
- Final examination (30%) The final is comprehensive and covers all material covered in class lectures, readings, and films. Like the midterm, the format of the exam will be a combination of short answer/identifications and essay questions.

## **Essay Instructions**

- Five pages of double-spaced text in 12-point font.
- Hard copies must be handed to instructor in person. Late papers will not be accepted except in case of a documented emergency.
- Good writing takes effort. Take care to craft an essay that is well reasoned and builds effectively from opening to close. Make an outline, write a first draft, and then revise it. Edit the paper for word choice, grammar, and spelling.
- Avail yourself of Writing Center assistance. The Writing Center offers various forms of help including one-on-one tutoring, on line handouts, and workshops.
- Make use of the talent in the classroom. Find a partner or partners to exchange drafts for peer review.

## **Class schedule**

September 2 introduction

### Week 1

*Read:* Andrew Gordon, A History of Modern Japan, pp 61-139.

September 5 Labor Day/ NO CLASS

September 7 the Meiji state and the “emperor system”

September 9 politics under the constitution

### Week 2

*Read:* Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie, The Japanese Colonial Empire, pp 1-43, 61-79, 128-172.

September 12 the emergence of imperial Japan

September 14 empire, war, and the Japanese economy

September 16 NO CLASS

### Week 3

*Read:* Andrew Gordon, A History of Modern Japan, pp 140-203.

September 19 World War One and the East Asian regional system

September 21 the peace conference and its aftermath

September 23 “*Taishō demokurashii*”

### Week 4

*Read:* Daqing Yang, “The malleable and the contested,” pp 50-86; Haruko and Theodore Cook, Japan at War, pp 3-68.

September 26 the economic muddle of the 1920s

September 28 public memory and memory politics

September 30 film screening: *Nanjing: Memory and Oblivion*

Week 5

Read: Haruko and Theodore Cook, Japan at War, 169-258

October 3 Manchurian Incident

October 5 war fever!

October 7 film screening: *The Roots of Anime*

Week 6

Read: Chalmers Johnson, An Instance of Treason, pp 1-59, 84-139.

October 10 militarism and the rise of the right

Paper #1 due in class

October 12 intellectuals and fascism

October 14 the “woman question” and the war

Week 7

Read: John Dower, War Without Mercy, pp 1-73.

October 17 film screening: *Know Your Enemy: Japan*

October 19 “fascism from below”

October 21 the China Incident

Week 8

Read: John Dower, War Without Mercy, pp 203-290.

October 24 film screening: *Wings of Defeat*, start

October 26 film screening: *Wings of Defeat*, end

October 28 Midterm examination

Week 9

Read: Andrew Gordon, A History of Modern Japan

October 31 total war in China

November 2 fascism from above and the national defense state

November 4 the road to Pearl Harbor

Week 10

Read: Chalmers Johnson, An Instance of Treason, pp 140-215.

November 7 the Greater East Asian War

November 9 the “great zoo massacre”

November 11 NO CLASS

Week 11

Read: “Hiroshima in History and Memory,” Diplomatic History 19.2, pp 197-295

November 14 film screening: *Grave of the Fireflies*, start

November 16 film screening: *Grave of the Fireflies*, finish

November 18 air power and the atomic bomb

Week 12

Read: Norma Field, In the Realm of a Dying Emperor, pp 5-104.  
November 21 defeat and delayed surrender  
November 23 the Tokyo Trials: war crimes/ war responsibility  
November 25 Thanksgiving Break/ NO CLASS

Week 13

Read: William Tsutsui, Godzilla on My Mind, pp 13-42; James Orr, The Victim as Hero, pp 1-70.

November 28 film screening: *Godzilla* (Japanese version, 1954), start  
November 30 film screening: *Godzilla*, finish  
December 2 A-bomb literature

Week 14

Read: Andrew Gordon, A Modern History of Japan, p 226-244; John Dower, War Without Mercy, 293-317.

December 5 film screening: *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima*  
December 7 occupation and reform  
December 9 Japan in the cold war order

Week 15

December 12 Americanization/ embracing defeat  
Essay #2 due in class  
December 14 the Asia-Pacific War in retrospect/ Examination review

FINAL EXAM

December 21 2:45 pm