

University of Wisconsin  
Department of History

1982-83: Semester 2

HISTORY 573: THE WAR IN EAST ASIA, 1931-1945

John W. Dower  
5114 Humanities (263-1972)

History 573 is an advanced undergraduate seminar that places emphasis on student initiatives in research and class discussion. All participants will read general materials dealing with the course of events from the Manchurian Incident of 1931 to Pearl Harbor, and the conduct of World War Two in Asia and the Pacific. Each student will also address a specific issue or development in depth, and present this as both a class report and final paper.

Suggested individual topics are itemized separately in this syllabus. Ideally, roughly half of the class will focus on the road to Pearl Harbor (including Japanese aggression in China from 1931), and half on developments after December 1941. Certain topics naturally may bridge the Pearl Harbor date. Papers may address specific developments (such as Japan's decision to "move south," the Hull-Nomura talks of 1941, or the decision to drop the atomic bombs); they may examine broad issues (such as the racial or economic aspects of the East Asia war, or media handling of the war); or they may focus on interpretive controversies (such as "Japan's case" or the "back door to war" thesis critical of President Roosevelt). These individual projects should be analytical and, to the extent possible, based on primary materials (documents; contemporary media coverage; autobiographies or other first-person accounts; official publications; the original rather than summarized versions of controversial arguments; etc.). Many basic materials emanating from Japan are available in English; this is true to a lesser degree for Chinese materials as well. Detailed bibliographies of both primary and secondary materials will be made available to the class.

Class reports must not exceed one-half hour, with an additional half hour left for discussion. There will be two reports each seminar, on closely related topics. The two individuals giving reports are jointly responsible for that day's seminar. Thus, they will also conduct the discussions, and should get together beforehand to coordinate their presentations. These reports will be discussed with the instructor before they are presented.

The final paper is due May , and should be 20-25 typed, double-spaced pages. It must include a bibliography and proper annotations (notes can be given all in one place at the end of the text), and comply with basic scholarly as well as editorial standards. The paper should summarize the problem addressed as accurately and succinctly as possible, and convey the student's critical evaluation of the issues involved.

The final grade will be based on the paper (2/3) plus class presentation and contribution to class discussions (1/3).

General Readings. There are three paperback books available in the bookstore:

- \*\* Saburo Ienaga. THE PACIFIC WAR: WORLD WAR II AND THE JAPANESE, 1931-1945. 1978: Pantheon (original Japanese edition, 1968).
- \*\* Robert J. C. Butow. TOJO AND THE COMING OF THE WAR. 1961: Stanford.
- \*\* Pacific War Research Society. THE DAY MAN LOST: HIROSHIMA, 6 AUGUST 1945. 197 : Kodansha International.

In addition, the following materials are available on reserve in two places-- (1) the State Historical Society library, and (2) the History Department Library in 4257 Humanities:

- \* United States Strategic Bombing Survey. SUMMARY REPORT (PACIFIC WAR). 1946. 32 pp.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_. JAPAN'S STRUGGLE TO END THE WAR. 1946. pp. 1-22.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_. THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC BOMBS ON HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI. 1946. pp. 1-23.
- \* Waldo Heinrichs, "1931-1937," in Ernest R. May & James C. Thomson, Jr., ed. AMERICAN-EAST ASIAN RELATIONS: A SURVEY. 1972: Harvard.
- \* Louis Morton, "1937-1941," in Ernest R. May & James C. Thomson, Jr., ed. AMERICAN-EAST ASIAN RELATIONS: A SURVEY. 1972: Harvard.
- \* William L. Neumann, "How American Policy Toward Japan Contributed to War in the Pacific," in Harry Elmer Barnes, ed. PERPETUAL WAR FOR PERPETUAL PEACE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT AND ITS AFTERMATH. 1953: Caxton.
- \* Noam Chomsky, "The Revolutionary Pacifism of A. J. Muste: On the Backgrounds of the Pacific War," in Noam Chomsky, AMERICAN POWER AND THE NEW MANDARINS. 19 : Vintage.
- \* Kazuko Tsurumi, "Socialization for Death: Moral Education at School and in the Army," in Kazuko Tsurumi, SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN JAPAN BEFORE AND AFTER DEFEAT IN WORLD WAR II. 1970: Princeton.

SUGGESTED INDIVIDUAL TOPICS

The "Far Eastern Crisis" Prior to 1941

- \* The rationale of Japanese expansion (strategic planning as seen in Crowley, Ike, official U.S. studies, translated Japanese monographs, etc.)
- \* The rhetoric of Japanese expansion (White Peril, Monroe Doctrine for Asia, New Order, Pan-Asianism, Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, etc.)
- \* Leftist analyses of the crisis of the 1930s (Amerasia, Far Eastern Survey, Trotsky, Stalin, Comintern, etc.)
- \* IPR (Institute of Pacific Relations) conference reports and publications on "Problems of the Far East" prior to 1941
- \* The scholarly debate over Japanese "fascism" (Maruyama, Halliday, Tanin and Yohan, Hobsbawm, Duus and Okamoto, Fletcher, Berger, etc.)
- \* The debate over the role of the emperor (Harada-Saionji diary, Kido diary, Bergamini, Titus, Sheldon, etc.)
- \* "Japan's case" vs. "China's case" in the 1930s (many propaganda materials are available on both sides)
- \* The Manchurian Incident (1931) and the League of Nations (see C. Thorne's study as a starter, and for bibliography)
- \* The puppet state of Manchukuo (voluminous Japanese Government publications in English)
- \* The Japanese imperium as seen through the eyes of the South Manchurian Railway (many publications in English)
- \* The underside of Japanese imperialism (opium, prostitution, etc.--through League of Nations materials, IMTFE documents, journalistic accounts, etc.)
- \* Western evaluations of Japan's aims, capabilities, and "personality structure" prior to Pearl Harbor
- \* Japan and the Japanese in Anglo-American military evaluations prior to (and after) 1941
- \* Imperialist interests in China (or in Asia as a whole) on the eve of Pearl Harbor (economic and military, involving especially Japan, the U.S., Britain, France, and the Netherlands)
- \* Southeast Asia in American, British, and Japanese planning, 1936-1941

SUGGESTED INDIVIDUAL TOPICS

The Road to Pearl Harbor

- \* The official U.S. version (as seen in Foreign Relations of the United States; the Pearl Harbor hearings in Congress; accounts by Hull, Grew, Stimson, Byrnes, Truman; etc. )
- \* The Hull-Nomura talks of 1941 as seen from both sides (FRUS, Hull, Ike's translation of minutes of top-level Japanese meetings; Harada-Saionji diary; Kido diary; etc.)
- \* Japanese strategic planning for Pearl Harbor (Ike, various writings by Crowley, official U.S. studies, biography of Yamamoto, Prange, etc.)
- \* The debate over why the U.S. was caught by surprise at Pearl Harbor (Wohlstetter, Prange, Toland, Congressional hearings, etc.)
- \* The "back door to war" argument among conservative revisionists (Beard, Barnes, Tansil, Newmann--and their critics, such as Langer and Gleason, Schlesinger, Dallek, etc.)
- \* The Magic intercepts of Japan's secret diplomatic messages--and their significance to U.S. intelligence activities and war planning
- \* The U.S. media and events leading to Pearl Harbor (analysis of such journalistic vehicles as The New York Times, Time, Life, Newsweek, a local paper, etc.)
- \* The impending crisis as portrayed in the Japanese media available in English (Contemporary Japan, Trans-Pacific, The Nippon Times, etc.)
- \* The impending crisis as depicted in cartoons, movies, popular books and novels, etc.
- \* Anti-Oriental racism in the United States and British Commonwealth, and its relation to the Far Eastern crisis
- \* Asians in Western popular culture (Fu Man Chu, Charlie Chan, Mr. Moto, writings of Pearl Buck
- \* The debate over U.S. support of Japanese aggression against China, 1937-1941 (focusing on U.S. export of strategic materials to Japan)
- \* The U.S. policy of economic strangulation of Japan--and its influence on Japanese war planning
- \* British policies toward Japan prior to Pearl Harbor

SUGGESTED INDIVIDUAL TOPICS

World War Two in Asia

- \* A comparative study of battlefield behavior, atrocities, etc.
- \* Comparative study of propaganda messages and techniques
- \* "Imperialism" and "Anti-Imperialism" in wartime rhetoric, with particular focus on the U.S. and Japan
- \* The "war at home": effects of the war on Japan's civilian population (Havens, Ienaga, Shilloni, USSBS on Morale, reports from immediate postwar period, etc.)
- \* The war as portrayed in the Anglo-American mass media (books, articles, photographs, etc.--or possibly case studies of one or a few specific newspapers or magazines)
- \* War movies (or cartoons, art, songs, etc.)
- \* The wartime "national character" studies by Anglo-American social scientists
- \* War literature (fiction or semi-fiction, including early postwar writings by Americans (such as Norman Mailer) and Japanese (such as Fires on the Plain, Harp of Burma, Terraced Hell, Homecoming, etc.))
- \* Retrospective accounts by Japanese military participants (above-mentioned novels, plus works like Zero, Kamikaze, Suicide Submarine, Kogun; plus writings of K. Tsurumi, Ivan Morris, Ienaga, etc.)
- \* Anglo-American cooperation and conflict in the East Asia War (take Thorne's Allies of a Kind as point of departure)
- \* Japanese war and occupation policies in China
- \* Japanese occupation policies in Southeast Asia (in general, or as case study of a particular country such as Indochina, Indonesia, the Philippines, etc.)
- \* The evolution and practice of strategic bombing and terror bombing by the Allies
- \* The effects of strategic bombing--and of maritime economic strangulation--against Japan
- \* The decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan (use Sherwin, Bernstein ed. as points of departure)
- \* Soviet entry into the war in Asia (including the Yalta debate)
- \* Japanese accounts of the atomic-bomb experience
- \* Japan's decision to surrender (start with standard accounts by Butow, USSBS, Pacific War Research Society, Zacharias--and address the question of whether an earlier surrender may have been possible)

SUGGESTED INDIVIDUAL TOPICS

World War Two in Asia (cont.)

- \* War crimes trials in Asia (IMTFE in Tokyo; the Yamashita trial; other war crimes trials in Japan and Asia; the Soviet trial of Japanese engaged in biological warfare)
- \* "Victors' Justice": the debate over Japanese war guilt (Minear; IMTFE Judgment; dissent of Justice Pal; etc.)
- \* U.S. wartime planning for postwar Asia
- \* "Anti-colonial" and "pro-colonialist" thinking in wartime U.S. policy toward postwar Asia