War Memory in Postwar Japan (HIST. 352)  
W: 2:30-4:20 in Peters Hall 305

Course Description:

Pierre Nora once wrote that “[h]istory is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it.” In fact, history and memory are not so opposed as Nora’s description may suggest. This course takes as its focus war memory in its various forms: individual, public, and official. The year 1945 marked the end of a long-term imperial project to which the majority of Japanese were fully committed. Almost overnight, it seemed, Japan went from an empire bent on regional hegemony to a democratic, pacifist country united behind economic development. In reality, however, personal and public memories of Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) continued to play an important role in Japanese society, politics, culture, and international relations. Pick up any newspaper today and you will likely find an article on a Japanese politician’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine, debates over revising the so-called “peace constitution,” or requests for apologies and reparations by victims of Japan’s war. These conflicts plague Japanese international relations, but they are also the focus of contentious domestic debates over Japan’s recent past. In this course we will explore the formation of Japanese war memory, paying special attention to the ways in which individuals and communities mobilized particular representations of the past in order to achieve their contemporary goals. This course shall raise the students’ awareness of the importance of issues of historical memory in recent decades and problems emerging from “memory wars” in modern societies. Working from a combination of text-based and visual primary and secondary sources, we will navigate topics such as nationalism, the Cold War, the atomic bombs, censorship, and, of course, war memory. The bulk of your grade rests on a semester long project that requires you to draft a 15-page paper. By the end of this course, students will not only have a firm grasp of postwar Japanese history, but they will also be able to discuss the construction of popular memory, the production of historical memory, and the figuration of “war” in contemporary Japanese society.

Evaluation:

1. (30%) Research paper (15 pages), due May 14, by 9:00pm  
   a. B-E are related to the final paper, but are graded separately.  
   b. (5%) Research proposal (1-2 pages), due 2/24.  
   c. (5%) Annotated bibliography, due 3/16 — five source minimum. Each entry should have one paragraph summarizing the text and another paragraph stating its usefulness to your project. Purdue offers a helpful explanation of annotated bibliographies with several samples. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/  
   d. (10%) Five pages of a draft, due 4/6. This does not have to be the first five pages, but it must consist of consecutive pages.  
   e. (10%) Presentation of Findings, 4/27 & 5/4. This will consist of a 20 minute presentation of your research findings.
2. (25%) Attendance and Participation
   a. Your attendance and participation are crucial for the success of this course. If you miss two or more class meetings, you are required to meet with me to discuss your standing in the course.

3. (15%) Response Papers
   a. On designated weeks, you are required to write a 500 word (max) response papers on assigned materials. These papers should not summarize the readings. Rather, they locate common themes between readings, discuss contrasting positions, AND raise questions for our in-class discussion. These papers are an ideal chance to critically engage the readings before discussion. You do not have to cover every issue in the readings, but you must illustrate a thoughtful exploration of themes/methodologies/theoretical frameworks/etc. Post your response papers to Blackboard no later than Tuesday at 8pm. Response papers will be graded on the following scale: 5=A, 4=A-, 3=B+, 2=C+, 1=C-. 

Course Policies:

Late Submission: History is primarily a written discipline and this course requires regular short assignments in addition to a substantial research paper. Be strategic in how you plan your time. If you find yourself falling behind, set an appointment to speak with me. The final research must be submitted by the deadline and late response papers will not be accepted. Other assignments will incur a 1/3-grade penalty per 24 hours.

Absences: Attendance is mandatory. This course requires your active participation. If you miss two class meetings you are required to visit me during office hours. More than two unexcused absences will result in 1/3 grade penalty (per absence) for your overall course grade.

Tardiness: Please try to be on time to all class meetings. If you must be late, please enter the class in the least disruptive manner possible. If you need to leave class early, please let me know in advance and do not cartwheel out the door.

Laptop/Computers: I recommend that all students able to do so take notes by hand on paper. This method is proven to be most effective in helping students understand and retain information. That being said, computers and tablets are allowed in class for the purposes of taking notes or accessing readings. Please do not surf the net during class.

Office Hours and Communication: I will be available in my office, Rice 305, on Mondays and Fridays from 11:00-12:00pm and on Fridays from 2:00-3:30pm. To book a time, please put your name on the sign up sheet on my office door. You are also free to stop by office hours without an appointment, but those with prearranged meeting times have priority. If you are unavailable during my office hours, please speak with me and we can find a time that fits both our schedules. The best way to reach me is through my Oberlin email account listed at the top of page one. Do not expect an immediate response if you write me after 8:00pm or before 8:00am. Also keep in mind that emails between students and faculty are professional exchanges and, as such, should be crafted with a modicum of care in regards to language and etiquette.

Students with Disabilities: Oberlin College is committed to providing a supportive and challenging environment for all students. Oberlin works to provide all students with disabilities a learning environment that affords them equal access and reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Please let me know if you are eligible for and require accommodations in accordance with college policies, which can be found here at: http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/

Academic Integrity: All students should be familiar and are required to adhere to Oberlin College’s “Honor Code.” The college requires that students sign an “Honor Code” for all assignments. The pledge states, "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." From “The Honor Code”:

Oberlin College students are on their honor to uphold a high degree of academic integrity. All work that students submit is expected to be of their own creation and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. When students write and sign the Honor Pledge, they are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information, nor assisted others in these actions.
More information can be found at:
http://www.oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode/

Required Books:

Most assigned readings can be found online on the Oberlin library website or Blackboard. If you have trouble accessing readings, please contact me as soon as possible.

Weekly Schedule:

**Week One (2/3): Introduction to the Course**

**PART I: Theorizing and Collecting Memory**

**Week Two (2/10): History, Memory, and War: Theoretical Approaches**

Assignment:
Reading Responses.

Readings:
*Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* (Yale, 2006), 1-76.
*Phillip Seaton, from *Japan’s Contested War Memories: The ‘Memory Rifts’ in Historical Consciousness of World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 9-18.

**Week Three (2/17): Contemporary Takes on Japanese (War) Memory**

Assignment:
Reading Responses.

Readings:
*Phillip Seaton, “The Long Postwar” from *Japan’s Contested War Memories: The ‘Memory Rifts’ in Historical Consciousness of World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 18-56.

(Recommended: get a start on next week’s readings)

**Week Four (2/24): Telling War Experiences in Oral Histories**

Assignment:
Research proposal (1-2 pages).
Reading Responses.

Readings:

PART II: The Culture of War Memory

Week Five (3/2): War Films in Postwar Japan

Assignments:
Reading/Film Response.

Screening (2/29):
The *Burmese Harp*, directed by Ichikawa Kon, 1957. *The Burmese Harp* was the highest grossing movie of 1957 and 1985, when Ichikawa remade it in color. We will watch the original 1957 version.

Readings:

Week Six (3/9): Manga Memories

Assignments:
Reading Response.

Readings:

Week Seven (3/16): Okinawan War Memory in Fiction

Assignment:
Annotated bibliography.

Readings:

**Spring Recess (3/19-3/27)**
Week Nine (3/30): NO CLASS MEETING

Readings:

PART III: Sites of Controversy

Week Ten (4/6): Teaching Historical Memory

Assignments:
Five pages of a draft.

Readings:
*Kathleen Masalski, “Examining the Japanese History Textbook Controversies” from *Japan Digest* (November 2001), 2pgs.

Week Eleven (4/13): Remembering Nanjing

Assignments:
Reading Response.

Readings:

Week Eleven (4/20): Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Enola Gay

Assignments:
Reading Response.

Readings:
*(MOFA has digitized interviews with several surviving hibakusha (atomic bomb victims) and you can watch them online at the website above. Watch at least three of the videos, which run about 20 minutes each.
Week Twelve (4/27): Research Presentations (1)

Week Thirteen (5/4): Research Presentations (2)

**Final Paper due 5/14 by 4:00pm**