Description:
On August 6 1945 the city of Hiroshima in Japan was leveled by the first atomic bomb. On August 9, the city of Nagasaki was leveled by the second bomb. It is estimated that between 210,000 and 270,000 people were killed, some immediately, some from the radiation days or months later. These estimates do not include more long-term impacts of the radiation, such as birth defects, or various cancers. How can we, as human beings, make sense of these events? How can we cope with, and represent unthinkable trauma? What are the politics of such representation? What processes of healing are possible through remembering? Is it important to represent such traumas, and if so, why? This course will explore a selection of historical, literary, cinematic, and other venues in which this unrepresentable trauma was, and continues to be, indeed, represented. We will aim at exploring the processes of mourning, remembering, and representing collective cultural trauma. Readings will include: Hein and Selden, *Living With the Bomb*, Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” and selected short fiction, poetry and photographs. We will also view documentary footage and the narrative film *Black Rain*.

Class requirements:
Attendance and Participation: 25%
Student Presentations 25%
Writing Assignments 25%
Paper 25%

Required Books


**List of Required Readings on NYU Classes**


Other:
Documentary footage: Eric Barnouw and Akira Iwasaki, “Hiroshima – Nagasaki, August 1945”
Film: Marguerite Duras, “Hiroshima, Mon Amour” (1959)
Film: “Godzilla” Edited Version (1956)
Film: Ichikawa Kon, “Fires on the Plain” (1959)
Film: Oshima Nagisa, “Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence” (1983)
Schedule

1. January 27: Introduction
   Form 3 Groups for Presentations; 7, 7, 6 Alphabetical. Hand out and explain “card reports”

Part One: Literature

2. Feb 3: Atomic Bomb Literature - Testimonials
   **Assignment:** Each group should organize a presentation *(not more than 30 minutes)* of the material read. The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in the group must present. Group One should present on LaCapra; Group Two on Ota; Group Three on Hara. Group Two and Three must address the specific questions on the “card report.”

   **Assignment:** All groups should prepare a presentation discussing and integrating the Bhowmik with the literary texts by Hayashi and Ibuse. Students MUST communicate on NYU classes to ensure that no one repeats anyone else’s passage(s), and that the presentations are broken up among students fairly and evenly and do not repeat one another’s. Is Bhowmik’s argument useful only for Hayashi? You are encouraged to also refer back to LaCapra if you like. The presentation must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present. The groups must also address the specific questions on the card report for Hayashi and Ibuse.

4. Feb. 17 Atomic Bomb Literature – Absence versus Loss; Existentialism; Ethics of Representation
   **Assignment:** Group One should prepare a presentation discussing the critical arguments by LaCapra; Groups Two and Three should integrate the Treat discussion with the text by Oe, and must organize and communicate as above. The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.
5. Feb. 24: Photos and Aesthetics - Watch Hiroshima-Nagasaki, August 1945

Readings: Silver, “Representing Rupture: The Nagasaki Photographs of Yamahata Yōsuke” (photocopy); Hein and Selden, eds., Living With the Bomb, 37-99.

Assignment: Group One should prepare a presentation discussing Silver; Group Two and Three should split up the Hein and Selden chapters. The presentations must include reference to specific passages and/or visuals in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.

6. Mar. 3: Regarding Others

Readings: Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (Whole book).

Assignment: All groups should prepare a presentation discussing Sontag. Students MUST communicate on NYU classes to ensure that no one repeats anyone else’s passage(s), and that the presentations are broken up among students fairly and evenly and do not repeat one anothers’. The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.

7. Mar. 10: Comparing Histories

Watch: “Fires on The Plain” (end of class, 1 hr. 45)

Readings: Schwenger and Treat, “America’s Hiroshima, Hiroshima’s America,” (photocopy); Hein and Selden, eds., Living with the Bomb, 173-201 (book).

Assignments: Short Presentations of 10 minutes maximum. Group One should focus on Schwenger; Group Two on Treat; Group Three on Living with the Bomb. Groups should elect spokespeople, but all must contribute to the group fairly.

No Class Mar. 17 – Spring Break

8. Mar. 24: Victimhood and War Crimes


Assignments: Regular length (30 minute) presentations resume, but the spokespeople from the previous class need not present, although they should contribute fairly to the group. Group One: LaCapra; Group Two, Tanaka 1-43 and 79-165; Group Three, Tanaka, 197-215. The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.

Part Three: Human Nature
9. April 31: Freud’s Theses
   Assignments: Regular length (30 minute) presentations. Group One: Freud, Chapters I-III; Group Two, Chapters IV – VI; Group Three, Chapters VII-VIII (to end). The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.

10. April 7: Memory, Mourning, and Scapegoats
    Readings: Victor, “Fundamentalism, Defilement, and Death,” 219-244 (photocopy); Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia” (photocopy); Arendt, On Violence, 59-87. (photocopy)
    Assignments: Regular length (30 minute) presentations. Group One: Victor; Group Two, Freud; Group Three, Arendt. The presentations must include reference to specific passages in the assigned reading that we will all look over together in class. Every student in each group must present.

Part Four: Narrative Films

11. April 14: Godzilla
    In class: Watch “Godzilla.” (1 hr. 40)
    Readings: Noriega, “Godzilla and the Japanese Nightmare” (photocopy); Nornes, “The Body at the Center,” (photocopy).
    No Presentations – work on your paper

12. April 21: Black Rain and the Maiden as Victim
    In class: Watch “Black Rain.” (2 hours 5)
    Readings: Dorsey and Matsuoka, “Narrative Strategies of Understatement in Black Rain as a Novel and a Film,” (photocopy); Todeschini, “Death and the Maiden,” (photocopy).
    No Presentations – work on your paper

13. April 28: Between Koreans, Japanese and Men
    In class: Watch “Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence.”
    WATCH at home or at Bobst: “Hiroshima, Mon Amour”
    No Presentations – work on your paper

14. May 5: Wrapping it Up
    No New Readings.

Paper Due Sunday, May 10 by 12 midnight to:
NCornyetz@gmail.com