Description:

Seventy years ago, the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima… three days later, Nagasaki…. In this course, we relive a pivotal point in the Twentieth Century and human history. Through film and literature, balanced between the Japanese and American perspectives, we consider the phenomenological implications before, during, and after the United States dropped the Atom Bomb on Hiroshima then Nagasaki. We travel to such sites at Kamakura, the spiritual heart of Japan, where the legend of the kamikaze began. We travel by bullet train from Tokyo first to Kyoto to explore the ancestral Imperial city of Japan for over one thousand years. Then to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where we walk through their respective Peace Parks, visit the museums, and reflect on the greatest horror modern warfare has yet to produce and why we must fight for peace.

Other course highlights include: a welcome and farewell dinner, a Tokyo-based culture program with on-site visits to museums, shrines, the Imperial Palace, the old Edo-era town of Asakusa, Ueno Park, and more.

Course Requirements:

I. Extensive Journal: As we “tour” both literary/filmic and physical landscapes, I will offer a variety of prompts to initiate your journal responses. The journal is your tool, the key to your “education” through this cultural and academic experience. You first and foremost must employ the 5 W’s and 5 Senses, recording fully your impressions. For each work considered in the course, you will dissect that work on the page as well as allow for elicit meanderings sparked by that work. Apply this rubric to your journal as a minimum for each entry: 1) Automatic/freewritten response—whatever comes out. Don’t censor. For specific texts, offer a first impression/gist. 2) Observations (5W’s/Senses and 1H). For specific text (synopsis, 5W’s and 1H, symbols/themes). 3) Historical context; contemporary relevance, personal and in society-at-large. 4) Intended audience and impact on that audience, now and then. 25% of your grade.

II. Two Writing Assignments: one critical essay (3-5 pages) in which you offer a close reading of one of the primary texts (includes film) of the course. One personal/expository essay (3-5 pages) relating to your firsthand observations and experience in-country as relates to the purview of the course. 30% of your grade.

III. Group Project: “The Committee to Rebuild”—The atomic bomb was dropped on your city and now you must rebuild. You will determine who goes on this committee,
full agenda of the committee, priorities, physical plan to rebuild, execution, etc. **30% of your grade.**

**IV. Final Exam Essay:** of substantial and of sufficient length to address your experience through the primary texts, being on-site in Tokyo, Kamakura, Kyoto, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, your observations/self-critique of your committee to rebuild, and your final commentary/reflection. **15% of your grade.**

Required Texts/Materials:

An unlined journal
We will maintain an ongoing dialogue with these works throughout the class. Read before the trip. Record thoughts in your journal. Lay the foundation.

*Denotes book we will focus on excerpt/story from, not entire work. Read the full text on your own

**Books:**
Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*
Ibuse, Masuji. *Black Rain*
*Jones, James. The Thin Red Line*
*Morgan-Witts, Max, and Gordon Thomas. Enola Gay: Mission to Hiroshima*
*Nakazawa, Keiji. *Barefoot Gen*
*Yamanouchi, Midori and Joseph L. Quinn, (eds.), (trans.), Listen to the Voices from the Sea (Kike Wadatsumi no Koe).*

**Films:**
*From Here to Eternity/The Thin Red Line*
*The Burmese Harp*
*Gojiro* (1954, uncensored version)
*Black Rain* (Japanese version)
*Truman* (highly suggested)
*Madame Butterfly* (1995 version)
*White Light/Black Rain* (Documentary footage of actual atomic blasts)
*Akira*