

**The College of William and Mary**  
**History 311-01**  
**The Nuclear World**

Fall 2008  
MWF1-1:50PM  
Blair 229

Prof. Hiroshi Kitamura, Blair 312  
Office Hours: M 11-12, W 12-1  
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**Course Overview:**

This course will explore the emergence of nuclear technology and its widespread impact on global politics, business, and culture roughly from the Second World War to the present day. We begin with the invention of the atomic bomb during World War II. Then, we will explore the diplomatic, military, social, and cultural ramifications of a dangerous nuclear arms race that pushed the world towards the brink of destruction. The course will investigate the perspectives of various groups and individuals, including scientists, policymakers, journalists, artists, activists and victims of atomic blasts. In addition to analyzing American attitudes and strategies, we will investigate how peoples overseas (Japan, France, China, USSR, among other societies) reacted to this new scientific creation. Our texts include diaries, letters, government documents, films, paintings, cartoons, and key secondary sources. This class will fulfill the History Department's Major Computing Requirement.

**Required Texts:**

Svetlana Aleksievich, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster* (New York: Picador, 1997).

William Langewiesche, *The Atomic Bazaar: The Rise of the Nuclear Poor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen: The Day After* (San Francisco: Last Gasp, 2004).

Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies*, 3rd Ed. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Eileen Welsome, *The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War* (New York: Delta, 1999).

In addition, there are extra (and shorter) readings downloadable from our Blackboard site.

**Assignments and Grading:**

**Attendance and Participation (10%):** You are expected to show up for every class meeting and share your wisdom with the rest of the class on a regular basis. There will be a number of opportunities for you to voice your questions and opinions about the readings and lectures. Before coming to each class, you should complete (and put some

thought on) the readings assigned for that day. Your participation scores would affect you the most if your final grade appears to be on a border line.

**Web Article (10%):** the project requires you to find an online article on a nuclear issue. You are required to report on that news content in no more than 1-2 pages. The content of your writing should include a summary and analysis of the covered topic. The final product should be submitted in two formats: (a) as a hard copy to the instructor (b) as an online text posted on a discussion thread on Blackboard. The article must come from a legitimate journalistic source (e.g. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Virginia Gazette*). You may draw the source from individual websites (e.g. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) or from online databases such as Lexis/Nexis Academic (<http://swem.wm.edu/resources/databases/index.cfm?filter=L>). The hard copy version must include a print out of the article. The paper and online text must be submitted simultaneously. The web article is due September 3 (Wednesday) in class and online.

There are three 5-page papers required for completion. Each paper must be type-written and double-spaced. Be sure to use reasonable fonts and margins (suggested format: 12 point, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). Cover pages are not required, but page numbers are. Please staple your papers on the top left hand corner. Late submissions will be penalized. You will lose half a letter grade each day after the due date.

**Role-Play Paper (20%):** Your first paper, due September 19 (Friday), is a role-play assignment. The setting is late July 1945 – after U.S. officials confirmed that the nation had acquired nuclear capabilities but before the atomic bombs were dropped on the two Japanese cities. Your task is to write a recommendation letter to the U.S. president, arguing whether or not the new weapons should be used against Japan. You may choose to represent one of the three personalities: (1) a scientist involved in the Manhattan Project (2) a policymaker in the State Department (3) a U.S. military authority. In your report, be sure to identify yourself and to assert your position in the first paragraph. In the paragraphs that follow, defend your position step by step, using concrete examples. Compare your perspective with those of the other two. Draw from our readings and class discussions wherever appropriate.

**Japanese Response Paper (20%):** The second paper, due October 20 (Monday), is an analysis of Japan's cultural response to the atomic bomb. You are required to utilize two key sources: *Godzilla* and *Barefoot Gen*. Your central task is analyze, compare, and evaluate the central argument(s) advanced by the two sources. What do the two texts tell us about Japanese attitudes towards the bomb? How do they differ from the “American perspective”? Do you endorse or reject their interpretations? Be sure to draw concrete examples to support your claims.

**Encyclopedia Entry (20%):** The mission for the third paper, due November 17 (Monday), is to produce an “encyclopedia entry” of a nuclear-related term of your choosing. In class, the instructor will distribute a list of possible terms (e.g. Radium, the Enola Gay, Edward Teller). Your task is to conduct additional research (4-5 books/articles are recommended), discuss what it is (who the person is), and how and

why the term relates to the nuclear world. At least one source must be drawn from an online database for academic research (such as JSTOR or Project MUSE). You would need to offer a balance of “factual” information, content analysis, and historical interpretation.

In writing your encyclopedia entry, you should go to our course Wiki site (<http://hist311.wmwikis.wikispaces.net/>). The text should be written on this site. The end result would be a co-authored “encyclopedia,” which will be also linked to a scrollable timeline and a world map. On the due date, you need to submit a hard copy as well.

**Exam (20%):** There will be one closed-book exam at the end of the semester. The final exam will take place on **Monday, December 15, 1:30-4:30PM** in class. The exam will consist of identifications and essays.

### **Movie Screenings:**

There will be three movie screenings outside class hours. You are expected to watch all three movies. If you cannot show up for these movies due to a schedule conflict, please discuss the matter with the instructor ahead of time. We will discuss the films the day after each screening in class.

Films and Screening Schedules (all on Thursdays at 7PM in 201 Blair):

October 16	<i>Godzilla</i> (Japan, 1954)
November 6	<i>The China Syndrome</i> (USA, 1979)
November 20	<i>Blast from the Past</i> (USA, 1999)

### **Grading Scale**

Each assignment will be graded numerically (usually with a letter grade for that assignment inscribed on the side). What ultimately matters is the sum of your earned points. It will be converted to a final letter grade. The grading scale is listed below:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

### **Other Important Things:**

It is highly recommended that you keep up with the reading and start working on your papers early. If you need assistance in paper-writing, feel free to discuss your questions and concerns with me. I also suggest that you contact the History Writing Resources Center (Blair 347, <http://www.wm.edu/hwrc/index.html>), which can give you some useful help. If you would like to meet with the consultants of HWRC, be sure to contact them by phone (221-3756) or e-mail ([write1@wm.edu](mailto:write1@wm.edu)) in advance.

Your contributions during regular class hours, in exams, and on paper are subject to the Honor Code of the College of William and Mary. Plagiarism, cheating, and intellectual theft of any kind are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. I will not allow extensions for your papers unless you have a serious emergency. If this is the case, you *must* talk to me *and* receive permission for an extension (either in print or by e-mail) before the paper is due. If you do not undergo this procedure, your paper will be penalized in ways that are described above, even if you do have a serious emergency. Failure to complete any of the exams or written assignments will result in an F for this course.

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1

Wednesday, August 27	Introduction
Friday, August 29	Origins of the Nuclear World H.G. Wells, <i>The World Set Free</i> . Read Chapter 4, "The New Phase."

#### Week 2

Monday, September 1	Crisis of World War II Begin Sherwin.
Wednesday, September 3	The Manhattan Project I Sherwin, 3-63. <b>Web Article Due in Class (and Online)!</b>
Friday, September 5	The Manhattan Project II Sherwin, 67-89.

#### Week 3

Monday, September 8	Roosevelt and the Bomb Sherwin, 90-140.
Wednesday, September 10	Scientists, Medicine, and the Nuclear Dilemma Welsome, 1-11, 75-124.
Friday, September 12	Truman and the Bomb Sherwin, 143-192.

Week 4

Monday, September 15	The Downfall of Japan Sherwin, 193-220.
Wednesday, September 17	Destruction on Ground Zero Sherwin, 221-238; Hachiya, "Hiroshima Diary."
Friday, September 19	Debating the Decision <b>Role-Play Paper Due in Class!</b>

Week 5

Monday, September 22	The Early Cold War Welsome, 165-218.
Wednesday, September 24	Stalin and the Bomb Welsome, 219-248.
Friday, September 26	Atomic Dreams and Utopias Boyer, <i>By the Bomb's Early Light</i> , excerpts.

Week 6

Monday, September 29	The Hydrogen Bomb
Wednesday, October 1	Testing in the West Welsome, 249-312.
Friday, October 3	'Civil Defense Begins at Home' Rose, 1-77.

Week 7

Monday, October 6	'Atoms for Peace'
Wednesday, October 8	Going Underground I Rose, 78-149.
Friday, October 10	Going Underground II May, "Explosive Issues"; Rose, 150-185.

Week 8

Monday, October 13	Fall Break
Wednesday, October 15	Japan Responds to the Atom Nakazawa, <i>Barefoot Gen</i> , first half.
Thursday, October 16	<i>Godzilla</i> screening (7PM, 201 Blair)
Friday, October 17	<i>Manga</i> and the Bomb Nakazawa, <i>Barefoot Gen</i> , second half.

Week 9

Monday, October 20	Atomic Culture in Japan <b>Japanese Reaction Paper due in Class!</b>
Wednesday, October 22	The New (Nuclear) Frontier Rose, 186-213.
Friday, October 24	Crisis in Cuba Paterson, "Spinning Out of Control."

Week 10

Monday, October 27	Dangerous Diplomacy Suri, "Political Constraints and Personal Charisma"; Suri, "The Nukes of October."
Wednesday, October 29	Resisting the Atom Wittner, <i>One World or None</i> , excerpts.
Friday, October 31	Regulating the Atom I Welsome, 383-416.

Week 11

Monday, November 3	Regulating the Atom II Boyer, "Bible-Prophesy Popularizers."
Wednesday, November 5	Nuclear Power Controversies I Walker, "The Nuclear Power Debate."
Thursday, November 6	<i>China Syndrome</i> screening (7PM, 201 Blair)

Friday, November 7

Nuclear Power Controversies II  
Walker, "The Long Term Effects."

Week 12

Monday, November 10

The New Cold War  
Powaski, *Return to Armageddon*, excerpts.

Wednesday, November 12

Disaster at Chernobyl I  
Alexievich, first half.

Friday, November 14

Disaster at Chernobyl II  
Alexievich, second half.

Week 13

Monday, November 17

The End of the Cold War  
**Encyclopedia Entry Due in Class!**  
**(in both online and hard copy formats)**

Wednesday, November 19

The Nuclear World in the 1990s  
Boyer and Idsvoog, "Nuclear Menace in Mass Culture."

Thursday, November 20

*Blast from the Past* screening (7PM, 201 Blair)

Friday, November 21

Memory, Anger, and Nostalgia  
Hogan, "The Enola Gay Controversy."

Week 14

Monday, November 24

Nuclear Terrorism  
Langewiesche, 3-69.

Wednesday, November 26

Thanksgiving

Friday, November 28

Thanksgiving

Week 15

Monday, December 1

Nuclear Terrorism II  
Langewiesche, 70-126.

Wednesday, December 3

Nuclear Terrorism III  
McCormack, "Nuclear Chicken."

Friday, December 5

The Atomic Age: Costs and Legacies  
Langewiesche, 127-179.