**The Historical Memory of World War II in East Asia**

Dr. Emily Matson

Class Location: James Blair Hall 201

Class Time: MTWR, 12:20 – 2:10 PM

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 2:15-3:00 PM and by appointment



**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In April of 2014, pop star Justin Bieber unwittingly visited Japan’s Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto shrine that honors Japan’s war dead, including 14 class-A war criminals from World War II. After Bieber posted about his visit on Instagram and Twitter, Chinese and South Korean social media erupted with fury, even leading a representative of the Chinese Foreign Ministry to comment directly, “I don’t know the political stance of this Canadian singer, but China’s view on Japanese leaders visiting the Yasukuni Shrine is clear and consistent. I hope this singer can learn more about the history of Japanese militarism, and the wrongful historical and militaristic views promoted by the shrine after the visit.” In response to the outrage he had inadvertently provoked, Bieber took down the offending posts and issued a formal apology to his Chinese and Korean fans.

Lest Bieber become too much of a scapegoat, the truth is that many Westerners are unfamiliar with Yasukuni Shrine, let alone East Asia’s traumatic memories of World War II. When you hear the phrase “World War II,” what is the first thing that pops into your head? Perhaps it is Pearl Harbor, D-Day or the Nazis. Important as they are, memories focused on the Western experience of the war often do not incorporate other regional experiences, including the East Asian milieu of World War II memories. In China, the Rape of Nanking haunts the collective psyche; in Korea, commemorations of “comfort women” are ubiquitous. Japan’s historical memory, in contrast, focuses largely on the atomic bombs but often fails to recognize the atrocities committed against Chinese, Koreans, and other nationalities. Rather than be relegated to the past, memories of World War II in East Asia continue to shape national identities and interstate relationships in the present, similar to contemporary American debates about Confederate monuments.

In this course, we will examine memories of World War II in East Asia. We will start with the historical context of the events themselves, then study how they have been subsequently depicted in China, Korea, and Japan. The course objectives are as follows:

1. Question the feasibility of historical objectivity and how it relates to historical memory in order to develop analytical abilities as scholars.
2. Gain the ability to explain East Asia’s World War II and its memorialization to a variety of audiences in order to improve and expand communication abilities.
3. Develop a nuanced understanding of the varying political contexts in China, Korea, and Japan in which World War II is remembered in order learn how to draw meaningful connections between the past and present.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are required to purchase copies of the following books for this course:

1. *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism.* Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, ed. (Praeger, 2008).
2. *When My Name Was Keoko.* Linda Sue Park (HMM Books for Young Readers, 2012).
3. *An Artist of the Floating World*. Kazuo Ishiguro (Vintage International, 1989).
4. *Hiroshima*. John Hershey (Vintage, 1989).
5. *Nanjing Requiem*: *A Novel.* Ha Jin (Pantheon, 2011).

All other written course materials will be scanned and uploaded onto Blackboard. Students are required to bring reading materials to class with relevant sections noted and ready for discussion.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Map Assignment** 5% - This will be a blank map of East Asia that you will need to fill in with the names of major cities and geographical features. It is available on Blackboard and will be due as a paper copy in class on Wednesday, June 1st.

**Participation** 15% - All students are expected to attend class regularly. Students are required to come to class prepared with notes and questions on the day’s readings. Participation is mandatory and speaking in class is highly encouraged. However, active listening is also a critical part of participation, and this class is intended to be an open forum for discussion amongst students. If any student is uncomfortable with speaking during section, please see me early in the semester so that we can come up with other ways to actively contribute.

Part of your participation grade will be based on the discussions of our required readings for the semester: *Hiroshima*, *Nanjing Requiem, When My Name Was Keoko,* and *An Artist of the Floating World.* On the first day of class, I will pass around a sign-up sheet; students will sign up for a book, and will subsequently be responsible for introducing the author and book to the class, as well as preparing questions for class discussion.

**Response Papers** 15%

In order to encourage deeper reflection on the readings and in-class lectures and discussions, there will be one weekly informal response paper assigned. *These papers are due by midnight every Wednesday night (except for the first week of class) and will deal with the previous week’s materials, including readings, lectures, and in-class discussions.* They should be written in paragraph form and should deal with at least one theme, question, or passage discussed in the previous two weeks, of the student’s choice. Each response paper will be 1 page, submitted electronically on Blackboard. The papers should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins.

**Paper #1** 20%

The papers should each be about 1200 words in length, and will be based on a combination of assigned readings and outside research. **Papers are due in class on the assigned date. Students will be deducted 1/3 of a grade each day the paper is late, and papers not handed in within 2 weeks of the due date will not be accepted.** Two forms of the paper should be submitted: 1) a hard copy in class, on the due date; 2) an electronic copy on Blackboard, also to be submitted on the due date. I will be providing further instructions on the two papers, as well as a grading rubric, on Blackboard.

**Presentation** 20%

The presentation should be five minutes in length and based on your topic for your paper. It should also include a PPT presentation of 3-5 slides and include one slide with discussion questions for the class based on your topic.

**Final Exam** 25%

The final exam will take place on the last day of class, and it will be completed through Blackboard. It will be open-notes, and you will have the duration of class to complete it. I will provide a study guide for the exam a week in advance.



**CLASSROOM POLICIES**

*Electronic devices:* Cellphones and other hand-held electronic devices must be turned off during class. Laptops are allowed for taking class-related notes and accessing assigned readings online. However, there is to be no web surfing during class. If the instructor catches a student web surfing during class, that student will be marked as absent for the day. The instructor also reserves the right to revoke laptop use at any time for all students (except those who require laptops for notetaking and can provide documentation from the Coordinator of Disability Services stating this).

*Plagiarism*: Plagiarism is a serious honor violation for which there are severe penalties. In short, in your papers you must provide notes giving credit for all ideas of other authors that you use. In addition, when you use direct quotation from a source, you must both include a note citing your source and enclose the quoted matter in quotation marks (unless you are dealing with a long quotation, in which case the quote is put in blocked form, indented from the left margin, without quotation marks). Most of the time you should avoid quotation, instead paraphrasing the source you are using—and, of course, giving credit to your source in a note. It is not enough to substitute a few words or change them around in order to make a paraphrase; a paraphrase must be in your own words—and sentence structure. A true paraphrase does not require quotation marks, but it does require a note. Please feel free to ask me if you have questions about any of this.

**COVID-19**

COVID is far from over, unfortunately. Out of an abundance of caution, anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID – even if they don’t have a positive test – should not come to class.

Please note that testing positive for COVID or any other temporary illness is not considered a disability as defined by ADA guidelines and is not under the purview of W&M’s Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Thus, any questions should be addressed via email to the instructor.

If you cannot come to class due to a temporary illness, please email me before class so that I can arrange a make-up assignment for you. Students who do not email me before class in the case of an absence will, with the exception of extenuating circumstances, accrue an unexcused absence. If the instructor is absent due to a temporary illness, we will conduct class over Zoom in the instructor’s personal Zoom room. A reminder and the Zoom link will be emailed to you the evening before class.

**SUPPORT**

*Dean of Students Office:* If you have a personal crisis of any kind during the semester, the Dean of Students Office can provide support. They will also notify your professors while maintaining privacy. The office is located in Campus Center 109. You can also reach staff via telephone at (757)221-2510 or by email at deanofstudents@wm.edu.

*Student Accessibility Services:* The College of William and Mary is committed to providing learning experiences that are accessible for all students and will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities.  If you have a learning difference or a disability – mental health, medical, or physical impairment – please contact the Student Accessibility Services staff at (757)221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please visit [www.wm.edu/sas](http://www.wm.edu/sas).

*Counseling Center:* For mental health concerns (including stress, anxiety, and depression), the Counseling Center (WMCC) can provide consultations and connect you with support to resources both on and off campus. The center is located in Blow Hall 240, and can be reached at (757)221-3620.

*Writing Centers:* The A&S Writing Resource Centers are available to work with students on their writing and communication assignments. These include the Writing Resources Center (WRC) and the History Writing Resources Center (HWRC). You can find more information on each center on their individual websites: [www.wm.edu/as/wrc](http://www.wm.edu/as/wrc) and [www.wm.edu/as/history/undergraduateprogram/hwrc](http://www.wm.edu/as/history/undergraduateprogram/hwrc).

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The topics and readings listed on this syllabus are tentative, and the instructor may modify readings and topics at any time. Students should pay attention for any such changes. Students should come to class having read the materials listed for that date.

**Tuesday, May 31: Session 1 – Introduction**

**Wednesday, June 1: Session 2 – East Asia before WWII**

**Thursday, June 2: Session 3 – Japan’s WWII**

* John Hersey, *Hiroshima* Ch. 1-4

**Monday, June 6: Session 4 – Japan’s Postwar History**

* John Hersey, *Hiroshima* Ch. 5
* **Class discussion: *Hiroshima***

**Tuesday, June 7: Session 5 – China’s WWII**

* Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally,* Introduction
* Ha Jin, *Nanjing Requiem,* pg. 3-144 (Ch. 1-23)

**Wednesday, June 8: Session 6 – China’s Postwar History**

* Ha Jin, *Nanjing Requiem,* pg. 147-300 (Ch. 24-52)
* **Class discussion: *Nanjing Requiem***
* **Response Paper #1 DUE**

**Thursday, June 9: Session 7 – Korea’s WWII**

**Class Online**

* Linda Sue Park, *When My Name Was Keoko*, pg. 1-99 (Ch. 1-17)

**Monday, June 13: Session 8 – Korea’s Postwar History**

**Class Online**

* Linda Sue Park, *When My Name Was Keoko*, pg. 99-192 (Ch. 18-32)
* **Class discussion: *When My Name Was Keoko***

**Tuesday, June 14: Session 9 – Japan’s “History Problem”**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapter 1
* Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World,* pg. 7-96

**Wednesday, June 15: Session 10 – An Overview of the Historical Issues**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapters 2 and 3
* Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World*, pg. 99-206
* **Class discussion: *An Artist of the Floating World***
* **Response Paper #2 DUE**

**Thursday, June 16: Session 11 – History Textbook Controversies**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapters 4 and 5
* John K Nelson, “Tempest in a Textbook: A Report on the New Middle-School History Textbook in Japan”

**Monday, June 20: Session 12 – The Nanjing Massacre**

* Qian Fengqi and Liu Guo Qiang, “Remembrance of the Nanjing Massacre in the Globalised Era: The Memory of Victimisation, Emotions and the Rise of China”
* **Paper #1 DUE**

**Tuesday, June 21: Session 13 – Unit 731**

* Rachel Pawlowicz and Walter E. Grunden, “Teaching Atrocities: The Holocaust and Unit 731 in the Secondary School Curriculum”

**Wednesday, June 22: Session 14 – The Yasukuni Shrine**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapter 6
* **Response Paper #3 DUE**

**Thursday, June 23: Session 15 – “Comfort Women”**

**Class Online**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapter 7

**Monday, June 27: Session 16 – East Asian Nationalism and WWII**

* Guilio Pugliese, “The China Challenge, Abe Shinzo’s Realism, and the Limits of Japanese Nationalism”
* He Yinan, “History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict”

**Tuesday, June 28: Session 17 – The US, Russia, and WWII’s Legacy in East Asia**

* Hasegawa and Togo, Chapters 11 and 12

**Wednesday, June 29: Session 18 – Politics and Memory in East Asia Today**

* David Schumacher, “Asia’s ‘Boom’ of Difficult Memories: Remembering World War Two Across East and Southeast Asia”
* **Response Paper #4 DUE**
* **Final Presentations DUE**

**Thursday, June 30: Session 19 – Final Exam (online)**