

Race, Gender, and Empire in the Nuclear Age
Winter 2002
RC 374, History 396
Mon. & Wed., 10–12

Prof. Gabrielle Hecht
2666 Haven Hall
hechtg@umich.edu
Tel: 647-7937

Class Listserv address: w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu

Introduction

For most people, “the nuclear age” describes both a technological revolution and a geopolitical revolution. The events and objects that come most readily to mind include Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the giant cooling towers of nuclear power plants. The people who populate the nuclear age in the popular imagination are most often scientists, (usually pictured as white men in white coats) and power plant workers (depicted as white men in strange white suits).

This standard vision of the nuclear age leaves out thousands of men and women whose participation in the nuclear age was central to its success: Africans from all over the continent, Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, and Pacific Islanders. These men and women mined the uranium used by nuclear nations to fuel their bombs and reactors. They were displaced — or not — by test explosions of atomic weapons. Their experience was shaped not just by the scientific and technological demands of the nuclear age, but also by ideologies of race and gender, and by colonial (and post-colonial) political structures.

This course examines the hidden side of the nuclear age. In the first part of the semester, assigned readings will help students develop a framework through which to understand how dynamics of race, gender, and empire shaped, and were shaped by, the nuclear age. Students will then choose one particular case study and conduct their own research. Class meetings during this second part will largely focus on working through and presenting student research.

Assignments and Expectations

Class attendance is **MANDATORY**. You are expected to come to class having completed that day’s assignment. Active discussion is crucial to this course: you should be prepared to discuss the assigned work, as well as whatever material is presented in class that day.

The latest information on assignments will be sent to the class email list. You should check email regularly for announcements.

Reading

Most of the required reading for this course is in the coursepack available from **Excel** (above Ulrich’s Art Supplies on South University).

The following book is available from **Shaman Drum** (on State St.):

- Valerie Kulturez, *The Tainted Desert* (Routledge, 1998)

One set of goals for this course is learning how to read critically. This involves:

- learning how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- learning how to isolate, analyze, and evaluate arguments presented in secondary sources
- learning how to interpret primary sources in within a broader context

Understanding the historical meaning of any text involves asking the following questions:

1. Information. What kind of information is provided in this document? How has the author shaped the narrative, either consciously or unconsciously? What seems to be the purpose of the narrative? What

information appears more reliable, and what information appears less reliable? How does the author prove the validity of the information presented?

2. Representativeness. What larger group does the principal person or class of people presented in this narrative represent? Whose point of view is expressed here? What interests does the narrative represent? If this is a primary source, how much does the author claim to speak for others in his/her group? Does s/he contrast this group with any others, either explicitly or implicitly? If this is a secondary source, which groups are included in the narrative, and which ones are left out?

Discussion

Good class discussions depend on you. Discussions go best when you prepare for them. This involves spending time **thinking** about the material before you come to class. Always ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the most exciting or interesting points raised by the readings?
- Am I persuaded by this piece? If so, why? If not, why not, and what would make it more convincing?
- What, if anything, do I not understand in the reading? (Identifying points of confusion is a valid and important contribution to class discussion)
- What questions does this reading raise for me?

I will also be posting more specific discussion questions by email. You should post your initial response (200–250 words) to these **no later than 10 pm of the day before the reading is due**. Post these to the class listserv: w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu. You should also go back and read the responses of your classmates before class starts. If you see something provocative, feel free to continue discussion online.

NOTE: RESPONDING TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON THE EMAIL LIST IS MANDATORY, AND WILL FIGURE SIGNIFICANTLY IN YOUR FINAL EVALUATION/GRADE. THE SAME GOES FOR CONTRIBUTING TO IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND FOR PROVIDING PEER FEEDBACK ON PAPER DRAFTS AND PRESENTATIONS.

Research and Writing

The primary assignment in this course is the production of a 20–30 page original research paper. We will spend a considerable amount of class time “workshopping” through this project. You will be expected to write a cogent paper proposal, identify sources, produce an annotated bibliography, write a first draft of the paper, write a final draft of the paper that takes the comments of the instructors and your fellow students into account, comment on the research and writing of your peers, and present your research in collaboration with others. The course structure allows plenty of time to work through these stages: you will have no other tasks during the final seven weeks of the course. The organization and style of your final paper are every bit as important as its content; we will discuss these matters further in class. The successful and timely completion of **each** stage of the project will figure into your final grade or evaluation.

In addition to this major project, you will be expected to write one short paper (1000–1300 words).

Detailed guidelines for these assignments will be handed out separately.

Grading/Evaluations

Your grade or narrative evaluation will be based on the following:

- Discussion participation (in-class, electronic, and peer feedback): 40%
- Short paper: 20%
- Final project: 40% (note: all aspects of final project will be counted in its grade and evaluation, from the initial proposal & annotated bibliography, through the outline, all the way to the final version)

Evaluations of all written prose will be based on style as well as content.

The Fine Print (i.e., the unpleasant stuff)

Attendance

Again, class attendance is mandatory. This is not just a matter of discipline and courtesy; it is also crucial to the success of the course as a group effort. Discussions and learning depend on all of you being present and engaged with the material. This is a question of respect, both for the instructor and for the other members of the class.

I recognize, however, that serious problems may arise that absolutely prevent you from attending class. You may therefore have up to two excused absences. Any more will affect your final grade or evaluation. All unexcused absences will affect your final grade or evaluation. **You cannot pass this course if you have more than 6 total absences, excused or not.**

An excused absence is one that you inform me about **before** the class meeting **and** that receives my approval. To be excused, you must present a compelling reason for your inability to come to class. In the most exceptional emergencies, you may be excused for an absence that you have not informed me about ahead of time. Either way, you should be prepared to present documentation. An unexcused absence is one that you have not informed me about ahead of time, and/or for which you do not have a compelling reason.

Timeliness

Timeliness is also crucial to the success of the course. Often, written assignments will be discussed by the class as a whole on the day that they are due. All assignments must therefore be turned in on time. You must also show up to class on time. This too is a matter of respect for all.

I will take 1/3 of a grade off for every day that an assignment is late. So for example, if you turn in an A assignment two days late, you will receive a B+; a B+ assignment would be demoted to a B-, and so on. Similarly, lateness will be reflected in the final course evaluation. Excessive and/or frequent lateness may be counted as unexcused absences.

I will only grant no-penalty extensions in absolutely exceptional, documented circumstances.

Plagiarism etc.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. LS&A policy prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, including:

Plagiarism – “Submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.”

Cheating – “Using unauthorized notes, or study aids, or information from another student or student's paper on an examination; altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading; and allowing another person to use one's work and to submit the work under one's own name.”

Double Submission of Papers – “Submitting or resubmitting substantially the same paper for two or more classes in the same or different terms without the express approval of each instructor.”

Fabrication – “Presenting data in a piece of work which were not gathered in accordance with guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data and failing to include a substantially accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.”

Any piece of work containing any of these infractions will automatically receive a failing grade. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the instructor or the university may also impose additional penalties. *When in doubt, be sure to use quotation marks and cite carefully and completely all sources from which you obtain information.*

Schedule of Topics

Monday, January 6

Course Introduction

Wednesday, January 8

Race & Gender at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age

Read:

John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, pp. 77–93, 234–261.

“How to Read an Academic Text”

➔ **remember to contribute to e-mail discussion by 10 pm the previous day! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu**

Please bring course pack to class. We will look at the following article in class (do not read ahead of time):

John Dower, “The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory,” in Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).

Monday, January 13

Hiroshima

Read:

M. Susan Lindee, *Suffering Made Real*, pp. 3–55, 83–101, 117–142.

Toge Sankichi, “Night” and “When Will That Day Come?,” pp. 350–51 & 358–365 in Richard Minear, ed. *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* (Princeton, 1990).

➔ **remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.**

Film: “Survivors”

Wednesday, January 15

In the US, On the Periphery of the Nuclear Age

Read:

Valerie Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West* (Routledge, 1998), pp. 3–37, 81–120.

Simon J. Ortiz, *Woven Stone* (Univ. of Arizona Press, 1992), pp. 295–303, 330–331, 353–363.

➔ **Please bring course pack to class: we will need to refer to the Ortiz poems in our discussion**
➔ **remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.**

Wednesday, January 22

Uranium in Australia

Read:

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, *Aborigines and Uranium: Consolidated Report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the Social Impact of Uranium Mining on the Aborigines of the Northern Territory* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984): pp. 1–19.

Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, Second Report (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977): pp. 1–10, 33–47, 225–233.

→ remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.

Film: "Yorky Billy"

Monday, January 27

Uranium in Australia: Discussion & Archives

Meet outside the entrance of the reserve room in the UGLI at the beginning of class. We will hold class in a reserved room there. We'll spend the first part of class discussing the readings, and the second part introducing the archives.

Read:

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, *Aborigines and Uranium: Consolidated Report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the Social Impact of Uranium Mining on the Aborigines of the Northern Territory* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984): pp. 133-191, 218-237, 261-306.

→ remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.

Wednesday, January 29

Australian Archival Sources: Discussion

Read/research: See handout for more specific guidelines.

Bring copies of your Australian primary sources to class, along with your notes on their contents. We will discuss these in conjunction in preparation for your paper due Monday Feb. 10th.

Monday, February 3

Global Nuclear Proliferation: South Asia

Itty Abraham, "Science and Secrecy in Making of Postcolonial State," *Economic and Political Weekly* (August 16-23, 1997): 2136-2146

Itty Abraham, "Science and Power in the Postcolonial State," *Alternatives* 21 (1996): 321-339.

From Smitu Kothari and Zia Mian, eds., *Out of the Nuclear Shadow* (London: Zed Books 2001):

Arundhati Roy, "The End of Imagination," 51-70

Zia Mian, "Pakistan's Fateful Nuclear Option," 101-116

Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Bombs, Missiles, and Pakistani Science," 263-268

→ remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.

Film: "The Haves and the Have-Notes"

Wednesday, February 5

TOPIC IDEAS DUE

Think and write:

It's time for some preliminary thinking about your final paper topic. **Due in class:** 3 topic ideas, and a written paragraph on each one (minimum 150 words per topic). See the **list of theme clusters** for inspiration - or come up with a theme cluster of your own!

Monday, February 10

PAPER DUE. Library Tour on finding primary sources

Meet at entrance to Graduate Library at the beginning of class.

Due -- short paper on primary sources about uranium in Australia. See handout for guidelines.

Wed., February 12 Gendered Perspectives on Global Nuclear Proliferation

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12, 4 (1987): 687–718.

Lawrence S. Wittner "Gender Roles and Nuclear Disarmament Activism, 1954–1965," *Gender & History* 12, no. 1 (2000): 197 – 223.

→ remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.

Film: "The Atom and Eve"

→ NOTE: You should also be working on your final project proposals...

Monday, February 17 Global Nuclear Proliferation: South Africa

Read:

J. D. L. Moore, *South Africa and Nuclear Proliferation*. pp. 10–37, chs. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Film: "South Africa: the nuclear file"

→ remember to contribute to E-MAIL DISCUSSION BY 10 PM THE PREVIOUS DAY! SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO w3-rcssci-374-001@umich.edu.

→ NOTE: You should also be working on your final project proposals...

Wednesday, February 19 PROPOSALS DUE

Project proposals due. Proposals should consist of a 750 word description of the project and a preliminary annotated bibliography. Plan to present your proposals in class, and to listen carefully to the presentations of others.

Use the comments you got in class on Feb. 19th to begin working on your research!

Monday, March 3 Research & Writing Workshop

Due: list of research problems you face with your project (1 page – must be typed! Bring enough copies for everyone in the class).

Workshop on writing (composition & argumentation) and research (finding sources, troubleshooting research problems).

Sign up for meetings on 3/5

Wednesday, March 5 Individual meetings about project proposals

→ Bring a one-page outline of the progress you have made on your research since Feb. 19th.

Monday, March 10

Secondary source analysis due. Select 2–3 secondary sources from your bibliography. Write a 750–1000 word description and interpretation of this material. Be prepared to present your analysis in class, and plan to listen carefully to other presentations.

Peer comments due (by email, no later than 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 12th): comment on the presentations you heard during this session. Your comments should consist of at least 100 words of thoughtful response. Email these to the presenter, **with a “cc” to hechtg@umich.edu and pshapins@umich.edu**

IMPORTANT: in the subject line of each comment sent, put “comments on {presenter’s name}’s presentation.” This will help us sort out the barrage of emails!

Wednesday, March 12

1. Writing workshop. We’ll spend the first part of class working through writing questions. The selection of topics will be based on issues that arise in your papers.
2. Sharing sources. Bring 3 secondary sources to share with the other people in your theme-group. At least one of these should be different from the ones you wrote about in your secondary source paper. Be sure to choose sources that you think will actually help one or more of your theme-mates.

Monday, March 17

Primary source analysis due. Select 2–3 primary sources from your bibliography. Write a 750–1000 word description and interpretation of this material. Be prepared to present your analysis in class, and plan to listen carefully to other presentations.

Peer comments due (by email, no later than 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 19th): comment on the presentations you heard during this session. Your comments should consist of at least 100 words of thoughtful response. Email these to the presenter, **with a “cc” to hechtg@umich.edu and pshapins@umich.edu**.

IMPORTANT: in the subject line of each comment sent, put “comments on {presenter’s name}’s presentation.”

Wednesday, March 19

1. Writing workshop. We’ll spend the first part of class working through writing questions. Again, the selection of topics will be based on issues that arise in your papers.
2. Sharing sources. Bring 3 primary sources to share with the other people in your theme-group. At least one of these should be different from the ones you wrote about in your primary source paper. Again, be sure to choose sources that you think will actually help one or more of your theme-mates.

Monday, March 24

First draft of your paper due. This should be a minimum of 3000 words of text, plus footnotes, plus a complete annotated bibliography. On a separate sheet of paper, list at least 3 problems you currently face in your research.

Bring enough copies of paper + bibliography for everyone in your theme group, plus 2 instructor copies. You will spend class discussing research problems, reading, and marking up the drafts written by people in your group.

Sign up for meetings on 3/31.

Wednesday, March 26 – Peer comments on drafts due.

DUE BY EMAIL: Comments on the drafts of your theme-group. You should write a minimum of 250 words of comments on each draft. Email these to the author, **with a “cc” to hechtg@umich.edu and**

pshapins@umich.edu. Again, in the subject line of each comment sent, put “comments on {presenter’s name}’s paper.”

IMPORTANT: You should keep working on your research over the weekend, even if you haven’t gotten instructor comments back yet!

Monday, March 31

Individual meetings to discuss drafts

You should have continued to work on your project over the weekend, and tried to resolve at least one of the problems you listed. We’ll discuss your drafts and these problems in the meetings.

Wednesday, April 2

Presentation preparation with your theme–group. Bring at least 3 visual materials that you might want to use in your presentation. Prepare a 1 page description of these materials (with full bibliographic information) to hand in.

Monday, April 7

Project presentations.

Wednesday, April 9

Project presentations.

Monday, April 14

Project presentations.

Wednesday, April 16 — LAST DAY OF CLASS

Final paper due