

## War and Memory in East Asian Literature and Film

MTh 1:30-2:45 Stern 12

Film screenings will be most Monday evenings at 7pm in Weiss 235



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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Fridays from 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

### Course Description

This class primarily examines Japanese, Chinese, and some Taiwanese and Korean representations of the war fought in Asia between 1937 and 1945, with some minor forays beyond it. This conflict affected the lives of millions and irrevocably changed the landscape of foreign relations in the region. We will investigate questions of collective (and contested) memory, victimization and responsibility as well as how artists attempted to represent experiences that stretched the boundaries of imagination. Many of the issues we will discuss remain heated topics of debate in domestic and international politics today. This investigation into collective memory will involve in-depth engagement with fiction and films as well as scholarship relating to the war. By the end of the semester, students will gain experience expressing their ideas using the analytic tools that we practice in class. Students will evaluate responses to historical controversies in the realms of academia, politics, and popular culture, and consider how these debates shape the ways in which we remember and understand past conflicts.

More specifically, our goals are:

- To learn to analyze literature and film through close attention to detail;
- To put yourself in dialogue with scholars and critics to make an argument within the conventions of the discipline;
- To develop a vocabulary of film techniques that enhances an ability to analyze and interpret;
- To understand a variety of positions regarding this conflict-including those outside course readings;
- To acquire advanced knowledge of and apply advanced theoretical frameworks and research methods on film and/or literature;
- To understand some basic history of East Asia at war from 1930-1950.

### Required Texts:

**Endō Shūsaku**, *The Sea and the Poison*

**Mo Yan**, *Red Sorghum*

Karen **Gocsik**, Dave **Monahan**, and Richard **Barsam**, *Writing about Movies*

Short stories and additional readings will be available online through **Moodle or the library**. If it is not on Moodle, check the library [WSL-Waidner-Spahr Library] before contacting me.

Additionally, there will be mandatory Monday film screenings almost every week at 7 in Weiss 235 (speak with me about any regular conflicts). It will be possible to view some of the films via the streaming links on Moodle. It is best to see those streaming versions as a resource to review the films rather than to watch them for the first time.

## Teaching Philosophy and Expectations

I believe each student brings valuable ideas, knowledge, and skills to the classroom from their different backgrounds and experiences. These enrich the learning environment and I work to engage them in class discussions. **Class participation** is important, and I may call on you unprompted. Consider this an invitation not a demand, and feel free to say “pass” or “pass for now” to ask me to come back to you. There is no consequence or judgement for doing so. Class should be a place where we can share our thoughts (even if they are not fully formed) about the texts freely and have those thoughts challenged or supported through thoughtful discussion. I therefore expect that you seek to understand others and their perspectives without necessarily agreeing with or shying away from questions. We will talk more about how this will work when we establish our community agreement.

To help encourage participation and learning, I expect you to write up your thoughts in **informal writing assignments**. I will regularly require you to respond to specific prompts in your **journals** to help you think and learn the material. On some days we will prepare for class by having an **online discussion**. Leaders will post discussion-starting questions and thoughts on one of those questions the night before a reading is due. These should engage directly with the texts under discussion for the day. You are also encouraged to read and comment on at least two other posts. Discussions and informal writing assignments are an essential step in generating ideas for papers and learning the material in the course.

We will begin with practicing analysis through close reading. Your **first paper** will analyze either a short passage in a work of literature or a scene in a film. We will then switch to some of the major atrocities and controversies in the war, and explore how fiction, documentary films and feature films convey them. Your **second paper** will take one of these controversies and explore multiple viewpoints, while coming to a nuanced position of your own. For this paper you will need to find at least one outside source to add to the conversation. **The final paper** combines skills learned through the first two papers, dialogue with scholarly works and analysis of cultural texts, to provide an analysis of a work from the class in dialogue with scholars and the historical background. All papers will go through a revision and reflection process.

## Equal access to learning

Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical condition – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation needed to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to [www.dickinson.edu/ADS](http://www.dickinson.edu/ADS), email [access@dickinson.edu](mailto:access@dickinson.edu), call (717)245-1734, or go to the ADS office in Room 005 of Old West, Lower Level (aka “the OWLL”).

If you’ve already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please follow the guidance at [www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan](http://www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan) for disclosing the accommodations for which you are eligible and scheduling a meeting with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your accommodations and finalize your Access Plan. If you will be using any test-taking accommodations in this class, be sure to enter all test dates into your Access Plan in advance of our meeting. ADS will be happy to provide any assistance you may need.

## What is required of you

### Fulfilling your grade contract

“Contract grading” is an equitable grading practice that has arisen from a critique of the counterproductive effects of conventional grading. I use it for several reasons:

- to reduce the burden of grade anxiety;
- to give all of you the potential to earn an A (as opposed to advantaging those who already have solid writing skills);
- to separate feedback (which is central to learning) from letter grades (which aren’t);
- to give you the agency to decide how much work you can do in this class;
- to reward your time and energy because the practice/feedback/revision cycle is the secret to success that may come sooner for some and later for others;
- to help you feel free to pursue the interesting questions that arise, take risks, and deepen the quality of your thinking.

Your contracted grade will reflect the amount of **satisfactory** work you choose to complete. You will choose a grade to contract for based on the following guidelines and write a short paragraph about why you chose that grade and your own goals for the course. You will have a chance to revise the contract at the midterm when you do a self-check. At the end of the semester, you will submit a self-assessment that includes reflection on whether you fulfilled the grade contract.

	Absences	Missing/late informal writing	Essays	Drafts	Peer Reviews	Revision memos
<b>A</b>	3	2	3 <sup>⊗</sup>	3	3	3
<b>B</b>	3	4	3	2 <sup>♦</sup>	3	2 <sup>♦</sup>
<b>C</b>	4	6	2 <sup>*</sup>	2	2	2
<b>D</b>	6	8	2 <sup>*</sup>	1	2	1

⊗For the A contract, one *satisfactory* essay must be revised after receiving my comments on it. This must be completed before the next paper is due.

♦For the B contract, you may get have one unsatisfactory draft and memo (e.g. late or lacking, *but not missing*) without detriment to your contract.

\*For the C and D contracts, all three essays must be submitted. One may be unsatisfactory.

Note: Not meeting the D contract will result in an F.

**Feedback:** For each assignment, I will state the criteria for satisfactory work beforehand and then provide feedback explaining how you succeeded and how you can improve.

**Unsatisfactory Work:** If your work is unsatisfactory, you have two choices:

- 1) You can meet with me and discuss revision so that you stay on target to complete your contract. Revisions must be completed before the next paper is due.
- 2) You can revise your contract and aim for a different (lower) grade.

You must have satisfactory participation and complete **all** parts of the contract to receive the grade. If you choose a contract and do not complete the tasks in *each* column, your grade will reflect the lowest level completed. For example, if you contract for a B, but complete some tasks at the C level, you will receive a C. That said, if you only fall short in one category, then your grade will drop to a minus. For example, if you contract for a B but have five late/missing/unsatisfactory informal writing assignments, then your final grade will be a B-. Alternatively, if you are at one level, but show notable strengths in more than one category, I reserve the right to add a + to your grade of B or below.

Contract grading relies upon good faith and a desire to learn. I believe you are willing to put effort into this course to learn, and I am also willing to help you reach the writing skill level to which you aspire.

### **Class Participation:**

Thoughtful class participation is crucial for your learning and for the class to function properly. You should prepare for class by thinking about what you can contribute as well as reviewing the text/film notes to be ready to discuss. If you can, I recommend that you watch each unfamiliar film twice, once to understand the narrative and the second focusing on key moments and film techniques.

I will take notes on participation and attendance for feedback purposes, but you will assess your own participation a few times over the course of the semester. You should consider yourself fully participating if you attend class having carefully watched the film and taken notes, read any assigned texts, contribute *without prompting*, listen attentively to the discussion, and show interest in and respect for other's views (e.g. by not looking at screens during discussions).

Tips for making thoughtful and respectful comments in a class discussion:

- Give examples and evidence for your point.
- Try to connect with other's ideas, using your classmates' names.
- Make explicit the ways your comment moves the discussion further.

### **In order to satisfy any contract, all students are expected to:**

- Come to most classes prepared by having read the material for that day and/or watched the films.
- Show respect for classmates' ideas by giving them your attention and putting away all electronic devices (unless used for a class activity).

### **For "A" and "B" contracts, I expect you will:**

- Often contribute to the class discussion without prompting.
- Show efforts to improve participation.

Note: One person each day will be designated as scribe for that day. The scribe will not be expected to participate as actively in the discussion but will record notes for the rest of the class.

### **Attendance/mental health**

I design courses in a way that makes the learning active and collaborative, and so you get the most out of class if you attend, engage, and participate. That said, I do recognize the importance of staying home if you are sick or need a mental health day. If you are having any difficulty attending, let me know. I will support your success and direct you toward college resources as needed. If you

start accumulating absences outside your contracted amount and you do not notify me or respond to my emails, I will become concerned about you, and I will alert the [CARE Team](#). It is possible to make up absences *in extenuating circumstances* if you meet with me shortly after returning to class to determine a plan.

## Informal writing

### *Journals*

Your journal is a central location for informal writing shared only with me and should record your thinking in response to the films and texts following prompts in the syllabus. Informal writing is very important because it is your opportunity to detail the learning that is happening for you. I am looking for ideas and intellectual engagement, such as puzzling over complexities or something that seems like it doesn't fit. Each journal entry should be **more than 300 words** and completed before class.

### *Online Discussions*

Online discussions are designed to help you share your thoughts publicly before class and to help us jumpstart discussions in class. Leaders should post three analytical questions that derive from your curiosity and write **300 words** thoughtfully exploring at least one of those questions. Analytical questions are questions that could be explored in a paper.

**Good questions:** How might character X relate to the theme of Y? How does sound convey the theme of Y in scene Z?

**Not so good:** Why didn't character X do Y? What did you think of the music?

These should be posted by **midnight before class**.

Other students should read and respond to two posts written by the leaders. Take the ideas in the original posting further or oppose them *with evidence*. I do not want to see simple agreement. Responses should be posted before class.

## Formal Writing

There are three essays in the class that demonstrate your writing and critical thinking skills. Each must show evidence of thoughtful revision and reach certain benchmarks to be considered satisfactory. To improve as writers, you need to develop a functional writing process. For each paper, you will draft, give and receive feedback, revise, and edit (not necessarily in that order). Each contract includes satisfactory participation in peer review and a revision memo that details your plans for revising.

## Meeting deadlines

Deadlines are important in the world and often necessary to get work done. Informal writing helps your learning and prepares you for class and the papers *if done on time*. That said, sometimes you need an extension. There is a 12-hour automatic grace period for drafts, peer reviews, and essay submissions. Three-day extensions are possible on essay submissions only (not drafts), *but you must ask*. Papers turned in past the extension period will automatically be marked unsatisfactory and will require revision to reach satisfactory. You may turn in TWO informal writing assignments up to one week late without penalty.

## Academic Integrity

The very nature of higher education requires that students adhere to accepted standards of academic integrity. As it states on the Academic Misconduct webpage, "Plagiarism may take a number of forms but to plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas, or work of another." If you are confused about the complicated rules regarding documenting

research, please ask me. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by the College's principles of academic integrity. Please see the library website and the Dickinson Community Standards for more information. If I have any suspicion that there might be academic dishonesty, I am obligated to forward my suspicions to the conduct office.

Using ChatGPT or other generative AI applications is prohibited for this class. The goal of the class is to teach you to develop a writing process and your own critical thinking. You are welcome to use a grammar checker.

## **Where you can go for help**

### **Me**

One of the benefits of a liberal arts college like Dickinson is the access to professors. Students will often come talk with professors in their offices about many different things: questions from class discussions, writing topics, questions about drafts, ideas about majors and careers, etc. I look forward to chatting with students to talk about the course, the assignments, and more. You can also come to me if you have any issues or concerns. If I personally cannot solve them, I will likely be able to find someone on campus who can help you.

I am available to meet during the student hours noted at the top of this syllabus, and there is a link to sign up for an appointment on the Moodle page. That said, students frequently ask to meet with me at other times, and I have been able to accommodate them. Please do not hesitate to email and ask for an appointment at a different time.

### **The Eberly Writing Center**

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback to develop their ideas and grow as writers. Dickinson's trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out my preferred documentation style (Chicago), understand and respond to feedback, edit your writing—among other things. You can schedule an appointment via the link on Moodle.

**Working with the writing center for every major assignment will help you turn in higher quality work no matter your skill level.**

### **SOAR: Academic Success Support and More**

SOAR stands for Strategies, Organization, & Achievement Resources, and there you'll find apps, tips, planners, and other resources related to organization, study skills, note-taking, and more. Visit [www.dickinson.edu/SOAR](http://www.dickinson.edu/SOAR) or go to Old West's Lower Level (aka "the OWLL"). You'll find strategies for managing your time and well-being, as well as a schedule of academic success workshops offered throughout the semester. If you'd like to attend a workshop or request one-on-one assistance with developing a strategy for a manageable and successful semester, email [SOAR@dickinson.edu](mailto:SOAR@dickinson.edu).

**Warning:** This is a class about the horrors of war and the ways people remember them. Almost every text we read or watch deals with violence and, often, sexual violence. I will try to warn you when there are scenes of sexual violence but be advised that such scenes may appear unannounced.

**Final note:** The policies, procedures, assessments, and/or schedule in this course are subject to change, by mutual agreement, in the event of extenuating circumstances and/or to ensure better student learning.

## Course schedule

**Note:** Readings and screenings must be completed before the class in which they are discussed.

### Week 1 ..... September 2-6

Monday: Introduction to the course

Thursday:

Read: Hirabayashi Taiko, "Blind Chinese Soldiers" and *Writing about Movies* Ch. 1 (about 20 pages total)

Online forum: Post one question about the class that wasn't answered in the syllabus AND something you found in the syllabus that you think is important.

### Week 2 ..... September 9-13

Monday:

Read: Eileen Chang, "Lust, Caution" (33) & *Writing about Movies* (WAM) Ch. 2 (15)

Journal: Pick a passage from either "Lust, Caution" or "Blind Chinese Soldiers" and do a close reading using "The Method" from *Writing Analytically* (see Moodle).

Monday screening: ***Assassination*** (Dir. Choi Dong-hoon, 2015)

Thursday: Intro to film analysis

Read: WAM Ch. 3 (20p) & Mike Chopra-Gant "History Written with Lightning" (18p)

Journal: Pick one scene from the film and one cinematic technique (camera, mise-en-scène, editing, acting, sound). Describe the use of the technique and suggest what it means.

**Complete the film techniques quiz by class**

### Week 3 ..... September 16-20

Monday:

Read: Barbara Mistztal, "Theorizing Remembering," in *Theories of Social Remembering* [Online through WSL] (25 p) AND Endō Shūsaku, *The Sea and the Poison* (Part I: prologue and chapters 1&2, 41p).

Journal: Summarize each of the theories of remembering from Mistztal with one sentence but summarize one with a paragraph based on this list on Moodle.

Monday Screening: ***Human Condition I*** (Dir. Kobayashi Masaki, 1959) (also Kanopy)

Thursday:

Read: Endō, *The Sea and the Poison* (finish Part I & Part II chapter 1, 50p) and WAM Ch. 5 (20p).

**Draft of paper 1 due Friday at 11:59 pm**

**Week 4..... September 23-27**

Monday:

Read: Endō, *The Sea and the Poison* (finish the book, 64p) and WAM Ch. 7 (10p)

Journal: Confucius question and revision plan

Due: Peer reviews

Monday screening: *The Sea and the Poison* (Dir. Kumai Kei, 1986)

Thursday:

Discuss: *The Sea and the Poison* and adaptation

Read: WAM Ch. 8 (20p)

**Paper 1 final draft due Friday at 11:59 pm**

**Week 5..... September 30-October 4**

Monday:

**USE AS A CATCH - UP DAY**

Read: Nanyan Guo, "Discovering Traces of Humanity" (16p)

~~Iris Chang, "Introduction," in *The Rape of Nanking* [Online through WSL-Waidner-Spahr Library] (14p) and Daqing Yang, "The Malleable and the Contested: The Nanjing Massacre in Postwar China and Japan." (37p-Moodle)~~

~~Journal: What would Yang say to Chang about a passage she wrote in her "Introduction" or vice versa? Look especially for a "similarity within difference" or vice versa.~~

Monday screening: *City of Life and Death* (Dir. Lu Chuan, 2009) also on Kanopy

Thursday:

Read: Dai Jinhua "I Want to Be Human: A Story of China and the Human" (22p)

Online discussion 1: *City of Life and Death* with at least one question referencing Dai.

**Week 6.....October 7-11**

Monday:

Read: Mark Ramseyer "Contracting For Sex In The Pacific War" (8p), and the response from concerned scholars (read the intro and first section on evidence, skim the rest). Please also review the Kōno Statement (short).

Journal: What issues did you notice with the Ramseyer article before reading the response? How did the response influence your understanding of the Ramseyer article?

Monday screening: *Shusenjo* (Dir. Miki Dezaki, 2019)

Thursday: Scholars and filmmakers on the comfort women question.



Read: Hyunah Yang, "Finding the 'Map of Memory': Testimony of the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery Survivors" (29p, find it via JumpStart) and Kazuhiko Tōgō, "Comfort Women: Deep Polarization in Japan on Facts and on Morality" (20p, Moodle)

Journal: What would Yang say to Tōgō about a passage he wrote or vice versa? Look especially for a "similarity within difference" or vice versa.

## **Week 7 ..... October 14-18**

Monday:

Read: Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces* "Introduction" (40p, JumpStart) and Samuel Walker, "History, Collective Memory, and the Decision to Use the Bomb" (10p)

Journal: Summarize Yoneyama and Walker's arguments.

Monday screening: *The Effects of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (US Strategic Bombing Survey, 1946)

Thursday:

Read: Abè Mark Nornes, "After Apocalypse" (36p)

Online discussion 2: *Effects of the Atomic Bomb*

## **Week 8 ..... October 22-25**

**No class on Monday (Fall Pause)**

Thursday: Atomic bombs

Read: Hara Tamiki, "Summer Flowers" (68p)

**Draft of paper 2 due Friday at 11:59 pm**

## **Week 9 ..... October 28 – November 1**

Monday:

Read: Mo Yan, *Red Sorghum* (Chapters 1 and 2, 165p)

Journal: Confucius question and revision plan

Due: Peer reviews

Monday screening: TBA

Thursday:

Read: *Red Sorghum* (Chapter 3, 66p) & WAM Ch 4 (pp. 55-77)

**Paper 2 final draft due Friday at 11:59 pm**

## **Week 10 ..... November 4-8**

Monday:

Read: Conclude *Red Sorghum* (Chapters 4 and 5, 120p)

Online discussion 3: *Red Sorghum*

Monday screening: *Devils on the Doorstep* (Dir. Jiang Wen, 2000)

Thursday:

Reading: TBA

Online discussion 4: *Devils on the Doorstep*

**Week 11 ..... November 11-15**

Monday:

Read: one of the following stories:

Ōe Kenzaburō, "Prize Stock" or Kojima Nobuo, "The Rifle"

Journal: Write down a few potential questions to explore for the final paper and your thoughts about them.

Monday screening: *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* (Dir. Wei-Te-sheng, 2011)

Thursday:

Read: Michael Berry, "Musha 1930" in *A History of Pain* (53p, find it on Jumpstart)

Journal: How does the film make historical arguments? What would Berry say about it?

**Week 12 ..... November 18-22**

Monday:

Read: Yubas Naogih "Out of the Bush" (14p) and WAM Ch. 4 (pp. 77-100)

**Proposal for final paper due**

Monday screening: *Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (Dir. Hara Kazuo, 1987)

Thursday:

Read: Bill Nichols "Documentary Ethics" (JumpStart)

Online discussion 5

**Week 13 ..... November 25-29**

Monday:

Read: Sun Li, "Lotus Creek" and "Honour" or Yu Hua, "Death of a Landlord" AND Bill Nichols, "Documentary Modes of Representation" (JumpStart)

Online discussion 6

Thursday: **Thanksgiving break**

**Week 14 ..... December 2-6**

Monday:

Read: Michael Renov, "The Poetics of Documentary"

Journal: What kind of theoretical approach can you take for your paper? Find a related essay and include bibliographic information and a short summary. How do you think that essay will help you think differently about your question?

Monday screening: TBA

Thursday:

Read: TBA

**Due: Final paper draft**

**Week 15 ..... December 9-13**

Monday:

Read: TBA

Journal: Confucius question and revision plan

Due: Peer review

Screening: TBA

Thursday: Conclusions

Journal: After completing the survey on Moodle, write down some concluding reflections on the class. What surprising thing have you learned? What skills do you think you have gained? Be sure to reflect on your contract and provide evidence that you have met the requirements.

**Final paper due Thursday, December 19 at 5pm**