

Dr. Michael Mays
Professor of English and Director, Hanford History Project
Washington State University Tri-Cities
Japan Studies Institute
Project Description

This project has two components:

I. The first is the implementation of a campus-specific, team-taught, senior capstone course that can be customized for majors from any discipline.

The theme for the class, “Global Hanford,” refers both specifically to the Hanford Nuclear Site and more generally to the Mid-Columbia region that is home to the Tri-Cities (Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco WA).

The class will focus primarily on the period beginning with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and extending to the present day. A brief “pre-history” of Hanford—i.e., its history before the government’s evictions of local residents in 1943—will introduce the course. Core disciplines will include History, Literature, Political Science, Biology. Supplemental Lectures, which will vary from semester to semester based on availability of resident faculty and guest lecturers, may include Earth Sciences, Natural Resource Sciences, Nuclear Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Health Physics, and Native American Studies.

As described below, two of the course’s five thematic blocks will focus on U. S./Japanese relations in a comparative framework. The unifying theme for both blocks (and to a great degree for the entire course) is the concept of “soteigai” or “beyond imagination” (Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 347).

“Global Hanford” Course Blocks:

1. Introduction: Hanford Before “Hanford” (1 week)
2. The Manhattan Project: The Race for the Bomb (3 weeks)
3. **“Soteigai” I: The U.S. and Japan** (4 weeks)
Topics:
Japanese-American Internment
The War in the Pacific and the Decision to Use Atomic Weapons
Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Hibakusha
Occupation
The Security Treaty
4. The Cold War Divide: 1950-1980s
5. **“Soteigai” II. Nuclear Legacies in the U. S. and Japan**
Topics:
Nuclear Testing in the Pacific
Atomic Bomb Literature in Japan

American “Downwinders”
The Global Anti-Nuclear Movement
Hanford Cleanup
3.11 and Fukushima

II. The second component of this project is to utilize the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, and the Department of Energy’s Hanford Collection (which the Hanford History Project manages) in applying for a National Endowment for the Humanities “Landmarks of American History and Culture” grant. These grants are designed to expand K-12 teachers’ knowledge of and approaches to teaching about diverse histories, cultures, traditions, languages, and perspectives in the United States. The same basic curriculum used for the Senior Seminar/Capstone course will be used for this workshop, though with approaches relevant to K-12 education.