The Atomic Bomb & the Atomic Age

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Office: 2302 HSS, East Wing / Hours: Tues+Thurs 12-1, 3:45-4:15, 6:30-7:30
Tuesdays-Thursdays 5-6:20 PM, Center Hall 002
Grading: Practice Midterm (5%) + Midterm (35%) + Final (60%)
No requirements or prior knowledge expected to take the class

Classwebsite: http://webctweb.ucsd.edu

Readings – at the Bookstore

Readings – Selected Pages as PDFs (on class website):
Michael Uhl and Tod Ensign, GI Guinea Pigs (1980).

Lectures, Readings, Exams
March
31 NUCLEAR WEAPONS, NUCLEAR FEAR: Introduction
    download “Atomic Links” as a rar file in the Atomic Database on the Class Website.
April
02 RADIOACTIVE: Radiation, the Nucleus, Nuclear Energy

    The Atom Bomb & Strategic Bombing, 1939-1945
07 FISSION: Uranium and Transuranic Elements (1939-1941)
    Read: Kunetka, City, pp. 2-40. Watch (IAPA): A Is for Atom.
09 NEUTRONS: Plutonium, Reactors and Bombs (1941-42)
    Read: Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 1-62.
14 MED: General Groves and the Manhattan Project (1942-1943)
    Read: Kunetka, City, pp. 41-89; Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 63-79.
16 OPIE: Oppenheimer and Los Alamos (1943) + Practice Midterm in Class
    Read: Kunetka, City, pp. 90-106; Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 81-121.
21 THE GADGET: Thin Man, Fat Man, Little Boy (1944-1945)
23 LEMAY: Strategic Bombing in Europe & Asia (1936-1945)
    Read: Sherry, Rise, 256-300.
28 TRINITY: Firebombing, Politics, Testing & Using the Bomb (January-August 1945)
    Read: Kunetka, City, pp. 158-89; Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 122-37.
30 DISCUSSION OF THE ATOM BOMB + IN-CLASS MIDTERM
    Read: Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 138-56.
May

The Hydrogen Bomb & Radioactive America, 1945-1954
05 CROSSROADS: A-Bombs and Bikinis, (1946-1948)
    Read: Uhl & Ensign, GI, pp. 30-53.
07 TELLER: The Nuclear Navy, SAC, the RAND Corporation, and the Super Bomb (1948 to 1950)
    Read: Kaplan, Wizards, pp. 51-84; Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 159-93; Einstein, On Politics.
12 FUSION: Spies and the American Thermonuclear Device (1950-1952)
    Read: Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 194-251; Moss, Men, pp. 64-94.
    Read: Uhl & Ensign, GI, pp. 54-88. Watch: A Is for Atom.

Armageddon, or “How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb,” 1954-1962
21 FALLOUT: Atomic Soldiers, and Physical and Biological Effects of Nuclear Explosions
    Read: Moss, Men, pp. 94-114.
26 CD: Nuclear Policy, Nuclear Fear, Nuclear Culture in the 1950s.
    Read: Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 295-328.
28. MISSILES: ICBMs and Megatons (1951-1961)
    Read: York, Race, pp. 27-48, 75-124; Kaplan, Wizards, pp. 174-84; Moss, Men, pp. 115-32.
June
02 CUBA: SIOP-62 & the Cuban Missile Crisis (1961-1962)
    Read: Kaplan, Wizards, pp. 185-257
04 DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NUCLEAR FEAR
    Read: Herken, Brotherhood, pp. 329-34.

11 Final: Take-Home Essay Due in Class at 7 PM + In-Class Final

Video Sources

IAPA (Internet Archive Prelinger Archives) [www.archive.org/details/prelinger]:
1940, Taking the 'X' Out of X-Rays  1951, Survival Under Atomic Attack
1945, Trinity Blast  1952, What You Should Know About BW
1945, Trinity Blast (close)  1954, A Is for Atom
1946-55, Atom bomb (Joe Bonica’s)  1954, House in the Middle
1946, Operation Crossroads I: Able  1955, About Fallout
1946, Operation Crossroads II: Baker  1955, Operation Cue
1946, Tale of Two Cities (Hiroshima and Nagasaki)  1956, On Guard! The Story of SAGE
1950, Medical Aspects of Nuclear Radiation  1957, The Relaxed Wife
1951, Duck and Cover  1957, In the Suburbs
1951, Atomic Alert  1963, About Fallout

Suggested Books for Future Reference:
Gar Alperovitz, The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb (1995)
Thomas Coffey, Iron Eagle: The Turbulent Life of General Curtis LeMay (1986)
Stuart Weart, Nuclear Fear: A History of Images (1988)