

## HIS 350: Modern Japan, Fall 2024

Jonathan Skaff

### Paper Assignment 3: Wartime Memories

**Due:** Monday, December 2

- Hard copy due in class with the grading sheet on the reverse attached
- Electronic Copy submitted to the to the D2L Assignment Folder.

**Length:** 4 to 7 pages, double-spaced in 12-point font

**Background:** The anime film, *Grave of the Fireflies*, is based on Nosaka Akiyuki's partly autobiographical novel published in 1967, deriving from Nosaka's traumatic experiences as a fourteen-year old boy. He and his younger sister were left orphaned and homeless after the U.S. firebombing of the industrial city of Kobe (near Osaka) in 1945. The anime version of the story premiered in 1988. The director, Takahata Isao, based the beautiful animation on his visual memories of the war, including the firebombing of his hometown of Ise when he was nine years old. The anime, in particular, has come to play an important role in Japanese remembrances of World War II because it is televised annually on August 15, the anniversary of Japan's surrender, and is shown in schools to teach children about the war. Consequently, a generation of Japanese children has watched *Grave of the Fireflies* repeatedly to be entertained, educated, and saddened. As many of these children grow to be adults, the film's depiction of life during wartime have become regarded as representing the history of Japan at the end of World War II.

**Topic:** Write a critique of the historical value of *Grave of the Fireflies* as a depiction of the end of World War II from the firebombing of Kobe on March 16, 1945 to the death of Seita on September 21, 1945 after Japan's surrender. The critique should evaluate the film's *historical accuracy* depicting civilian life in Japan in the final months of World War II and *historical interpretation* of the underlying causes of the suffering of the Japanese people. Regarding the interpretation, consider who is to blame for the plight of the children. The film's aesthetic or entertainment value should not be a focus. Your main sources for evaluating the film should be Yamashita's *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, Gordon's *A Modern History of Japan*, and class lectures. Additional research in library sources is allowed, but not necessary. **NO INTERNET SITES ARE ALLOWED UNLESS LEHMAN LIBRARY PROVIDES DATABASE LINKS.**

The paper should include citations and a bibliography that includes the film and any books or class lectures referenced. History majors should use Chicago A (Turabian notes-bibliography) or Chicago B (Turabian author-date) format. Students who are not history majors have the option of using MLA. **Quotations** or **ideas** that you take from your sources should be acknowledged with properly formatted citations and bibliography. Failure to acknowledge the source of a quote or an idea is **plagiarism**. To check for plagiarism or Artificial Intelligence, *all papers must be submitted to the D2L Assignment Folder*. **Flagrant cases of plagiarism or AI usage will result in a grade of "F" for the class.**

**Evaluation:** 80% of the grade will be based on content. Grades of A will be awarded to papers with persuasive argumentation defending a thesis evaluating the *historical accuracy* and *interpretation* of the film. The other 20% will be based upon grammar and word usage (4%), spelling, capitalization and punctuation (4%), organization (4%), readability (4%), and bibliography and citations (4%).

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**Grading sheet (attach to paper)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Content (80%)**

Critique of historical accuracy of life in Japan:     \_\_\_Excellent \_\_\_Good \_\_\_Fair \_\_\_Poor \_\_\_Failing

Critique of historical interpretation of suffering:     \_\_\_Excellent \_\_\_Good \_\_\_Fair \_\_\_Poor \_\_\_Failing

A=72-80, B=64-71, C=56-63, D=48-55, F=47 or lower     \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Writing mechanics (20%)**

A=4, B=3.5, C=3, D=2.5, F=2 or lower

Grammar and word usage (4%)     \_\_\_\_\_

Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (4%)     \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (4%)     \_\_\_\_\_

Readability (4%)     \_\_\_\_\_

Citations and bibliography (4%)     \_\_\_\_\_

**Total**     \_\_\_\_\_

**Correction Symbols Used in Grading Paper**

- agr     wrong agreement (noun-verb or noun-noun)
- awk     awkward sentence
- cit     citation needed
- frag     sentence fragment (usually a sentence that lacks a verb)
- org     organization problems
- redun    redundant (using different words to say the same thing more than once)
- rep     repetitious use of the same word
- run-on   run-on sentence
- sp     wrong spelling
- trans    poor transition (between sentences or paragraphs)
- tn     wrong verb tense
- unc     unclear phrase, sentence, or paragraph
- wf     wrong grammatical form of word
- ww     wrong word usage
- ¶     new paragraph needed