

HST 203: ONLINE U.S.History Sp19 (Escobar)

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Historical Amnesia

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, May 11, 2019, 11:23 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Historical Amnesia topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Historical Amnesia

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Nanking Amnesia

by [Steph McGuire](#) - Saturday, May 11, 2019, 11:31 PM

I believe that this level of detail on the Nanking Massacre was missing from our textbook because ours is a textbook of American History. While what happened in Nanking was a horrible monstrosity, it was not part of our history. It was an important event that affected the world around us. But not us directly. So, it is important to know that it happened but not all of the in depth details are needed. I believe that it was left out or diminished in Japanese textbooks because they were ashamed of what happened. It should have been shown though. This was part of their history. How else does one learn from their mistakes if they do not acknowledge them? We are not proud of slavery but we teach our history with it to our children. This way they cannot (or will not) make the same mistakes.

Enforcing War Codes would be hard to do. Who would be in charge? How would they achieve this position? How would we police the world? I do not believe that anyone would get the world to agree on something like this. I think the only way it would work would be by depending heavily on citizens filling out tip forms. You can find an example of this on the ICE website (<http://www.ice.gov/webforms/hsi-tip-forms>). They allow you to fill out a form if you know of someone or a group that is committing human rights violations. These groups work tirelessly to find the people that do these awful things. But it would be impossible to find everyone.

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Re: Nanking Amnesia

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 12:14 PM

Although it's true that the Nanking Massacre is not necessarily a part of American history, neither is what Nazi Germany did to Jewish people in their concentration camps and yet it's talked about in much more detail than the Rape of Nanking.

Japan was an American enemy, that the American people obviously wanted victory over, "All across the nation people spontaneously flooded into the streets to celebrate the end of the Second World War." (Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 868) I don't believe that people would celebrate two atomic bombs being dropped on another country and killing 28% of their population unless they were truly their enemy. Knowing more of the backstory on what the Japanese people of that time did to the people of Eastern China, is something that I believe will help to make this foggy chapter of history gain a new light.

Your opinion on the Japanese omitting the massacre from their history books, I do agree with. I especially loved your comment, "We are not proud of slavery but we teach our history with it to our children." It is so important for future generations to learn from the mistakes of those who came before them, and acknowledging that the atrocities they committed actually happened is the first step. This ties back to my argument about why there should have been more information on the Rape of Nanking in our textbook. I believe that we, as a people, are not only capable of learning from our own ancestors, but also those of others. Just as we learn about the holocaust that took place in Germany, I believe that we should also be learning about the forgotten holocaust, that is the Rape of Nanking.

I would love to hear more about your opinion on "codes of war". Are you suggesting that the way to enforce them is to rely on citizens to report to their government what is happening? If it's the government that's breaking the codes of war in the first place, would this really be effective? Or are you suggesting that they are to report to a higher power? Possibly there could be an organization similar to the UN that tries to ensure that all the the nations involved comply to the codes that have been set in place.

As you said, enforcing codes of war is very difficult because there are so many questions that come up when trying to do so. I feel as though this topic almost requires a whole extra forum with its own page of resources!

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Re: Nanking Amnesia

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 6:07 PM

Hi Steph!

I appreciate your comments and thoughts. I would have to disagree on your point of not going so much in depth of the Rape of Nanking. Genevieve who commented down below really took the words out of my mouth. The holocaust and Nazi Germany didn't affect us quite directly (until we invaded near the end of Europe's war), but it is still a huge part of our world history. In the United States we have holocaust museums everywhere, and us citizens go to these museums to learn more knowledge, and to respect those who were effected by the tragedy. The level of detail wasn't just missing from our US history textbook, it was missing from all textbooks around the world. Specifically Japan's. The US held Japanese internment camps all over the US, and few Americans are aware of this! Many have a huge lack of knowledge in that part of our history, and are completely unaware! Even in our own history books we lack important parts of our history because we are also ashamed. I think that our textbooks need to be more in depth about this horrible event. The US is a world power, and although I believe the US shouldn't always be in other countries business, there are times the US absolutely needs to. We helped Europe, and it is a shame we couldn't do more to help China. There was the missionary who saved over one hundred Chinese, and he also helped bring attention to the massacre. It is important to always share in great detail about these horrific events so the country and other countries around the world can be aware. So that they know, but also so they don't make the same mistakes. It is important to educate our current and upcoming generations.

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Re: Nanking Amnesia

by [Steph McGuire](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 10:05 PM

I apologize if I was not very clear. I believe that we should teach the Nanking Massacre in our textbooks. It is just as important as the Holocaust and the Japanese interment camps. It seems to me that when writing these textbooks the authors will give significance to events that we had a strong military presence in. When

watching the video and doing some quick internet searches, we were not there. That is why I brought up this point. We want to write about history that we actively participated in. In this case, we were at odds with Japan before and after. But we were not in Nanking.

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Re: Nanking Amnesia
by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 3:06 PM

I agree that the reason why the Rape of Nanking is only mentioned in one sentence of our text is because it is more of a "world history" topic than a "U.S. history" topic. The United States was apparently only involved in Nanking as the American gunboat *Panay* attempted to evacuate Americans and was sunk (Murrin Textbook, page 855). The authors do mention the massacre and the fact that it alarmed President Roosevelt, but I believe that this was more of an effort to demonstrate the brutality of the Japanese military as Roosevelt continued contemplating U.S. entry into the war. I do think that more detail about the massacre would help the reader better understand the brutality which the Japanese inflicted on their enemies, and I think that the forum videos detailing these experiences have a lot of historical value. Unfortunately, the murder of 300,000 Chinese citizens probably would not have been enough to lead America into the conflict, but it's unclear how many people knew these details in the general U.S. public. America was still dedicated to neutrality at this time, and trying very hard to stay out of the war.

The unfortunate thing is that if Japan does not have a free press, it is hard for stories like these to come to the attention of the general public. Japanese culture is also deeply rooted in honor and obviously there is no honor in raping and murdering 300,000 innocent people. I think these factors played a huge role in the reasoning for this massacre to be left out of Japanese textbooks. It has already been discussed in this forum that nations need to own up to their mistakes in order for their people to learn from them. One of the things that I really enjoy about our textbook is that the authors detail the instances when the United States has acted inappropriately and details the consequences of those actions or inactions. History has be truth above all else, otherwise it is simply propaganda.

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Re: Nanking Amnesia
by [Christina Dukes](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 11:53 PM

Breanna,

I do agree with some of your aspects and points, as well as some additional points from Steph! However, I do not fully agree that the details surrounding the events of the Rape of Nanking should be so clearly illustrated and in depth taught in our curriculum - as some of this stuff is traumatic for some to see. I agree it should be well known, but not necessarily covered in such context to where it could either traumatize someone, or act as a trigger to someone who is sensitive of the information already.

I believe that we are actively engaging in educating on the circumstances surrounding the Holocaust more simply because our involvement as the United States was more notable in the Holocaust than that of the Rape of Nanking. In addition, (it's sad to say), but the Holocaust was more current to now in today and so it is going to be more talked about.

In comparison, an estimated 300k people were systematically tortured, raped and murdered in the Rape of Nanking. An estimated 11 million died in the Holocaust for murder, torture, experiments, and other sadistic forms of punishment/torture. The scale of the size of those impacted by the events were notably different, and so I believe that plays a factor into why we talk so much more about the Holocaust in the U.S. than that of the Rape of Nanking.

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Re: Historical Amnesia in our textbook
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 12:25 PM

I think that not including more detail into the history of Nanking in our textbook is akin to taking the side of those Japanese still trying to pretend it didn't happen. With all of the information uncovered by activists and academics regarding the first hand accounts from Japanese soldiers, photographs, and videos taken at the time, it's hard to say that what happened in Nanking was anything but horrifying. And, even though our textbook is on the history of the American people, simplifying the events down to a single sentence seems almost insulting. The book gives plenty of information on other atrocities like the Holocaust or rebellions staged in other countries, so it makes me question the motives behind not adding Nanking to the list. Is it a lack of concrete information? Maybe years ago, but with the opening of the Chukiren Peace Museum and the records stored there (article #1 from the Historical Amnesia doc), surely there is enough to consider the events fact. As Mark Selden, an East Asia scholar from Cornell University states in article #1, "As a historian of that war, I find the testimony consistent with both the documentary record and my own interviews with Chinese villagers." So if historians agree with the records what is the hold up?

Is it because Japan still claims "amnesia" regarding the events? Possibly. But then people still claim the Holocaust didn't happen when it absolutely did so that's not really a valid argument.

I'm not saying that there should be an entire chapter dedicated to this event in our **American** history book, but essentially "dumbing down" the atrocious events in Nanking to call it a "brutal occupation" and that "perhaps 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed" (our book page 855 under 'The Mounting Crisis') is simply not okay. Those victims deserve better than that, from both our textbook and Japan as a country.

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Re: Historical Amnesia in our textbook
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 11:46 AM

I wholeheartedly agree with your argument. Although our book, and entire class, is about American history, there should still be a larger portion of the text dedicated to the Rape of Nanking, as there is for the Nazi holocaust.

"But just as Hitler was rising to power, a most overlooked atrocity was taking place in a different part of the world. It's often called the forgotten holocaust. It was the worst massacre of the modern age." (The Rape of Nanking. minute mark 0.15)

Both the Nazi holocaust and the the Rape of Nanking were atrocious and unexplainable massacres, but only one is talked about, widely acknowledged, and portrayed in movies. And although there is not as much intricate detail known about the Nanking Massacre as there is about the Nazi holocaust, there is still a great deal of information that we do know about it. (See all of the videos and articles in our resources for this forum topic.) The fact that our American history textbook includes the little information that it does is strange because even though it is more a part of Japanese history than American history, it is still a huge piece of information that helps complete the puzzle of WWII. Japan was a huge enemy to America during that time, so to only know about Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a shame. And the fact that many Japanese textbooks about their own history omit the event entirely is truly worrisome. Not only because of the wisdom that would come from the knowledge of this massacre, but also because not taking responsibility for their actions causes other countries to have less respect for them.

"Only a country that respects history, takes responsibility for history and wins over the trust of peoples in Asia and the world at large can take greater responsibilities in the international community," he said. (Historical amnesia: article #2)

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Re: Historical Amnesia in our textbook
by [Steph McGuire](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 10:55 PM

Hello Genevieve,

I believe that you hit the nail on the head when you said "...it is still a huge piece of information that helps complete the puzzle of WWII. Japan was a huge enemy to America during that time, so to only know about Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a shame". Everyone knowing the history of what happened in Nanking would help to let people understand why there was such a strong reaction to

the Japanese. Pearl Harbor and now the Rape of Nanking helps you to see the big picture of our extreme reactions. (I absolutely do not agree with dropping atomic bombs on people or having concentration camps. But can see how the Japanese would have been viewed as a horrible).

You have a great way with words.

Thank you,

Steph

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Keeping Peace

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 12:47 PM

The gravest concerns regarding “historical amnesia” in this specific WWII case is, in my opinion, not taking responsibility for their actions. If they don't they risk doing it again, as well as not earning the respect of other countries, especially China. "She told me that she still feel uncomfortable with seeing Japanese people even today." (Tamaki Matsuoka interview minute mark 0.36).

In the same way one is to apologize after hurting another, nations are to apologize, or at least acknowledge that the atrocity happened after what was done in war. And in the case of the Rape of Nanking, I believe that the reason so much detail was left out of our textbook is because many Japanese(the ones that would have the most insight on the event) try to act as though it never happened and keep it out of the textbooks. Not having information makes it very difficult to try to relay that information. Which is what brought about Tamaki Matsuoka's quest to discover what really happened, by interviewing Japanese soldiers and Chinese survivors.

I would have loved to read more about what happened at Nanking in detail, especially if the videos weren’t provided. I had no idea the level of violence that was happening in China, around the same time that Hitler had taken over Germany. I know so much about the Jewish Holocaust, and so little about the Rape of Nanking and that makes me so sad. I believe that it’s very important for people to know what happened in history, because history so often repeats itself even when we do have all of the information in our textbooks. It would be a tragedy to see this kind of thing happen again solely because of ignorance and unwillingness to own up to ones actions.

Concerning the authority on which the “codes of war” can be written, it’s easy to say that all need to, “be humane”, “not kill civilians”, and “keep ones agreements”, simple things like this. However, it’s harder to get into specifics when a nations history and culture are to be taken into account. In some cultures there are rituals and events that go on even in every day life that other cultures would find atrocious, such as the eating of dogs in some Asian cultures, or the Japanese samurai's "honorable death" ritual. Sometimes things that are normalized in come cultures, seem horrific to others

When considering how the "codes of war" could be created, I considered Woodrow Wilson’s 14 points. His proposal was made to bring peace, so they were not codes of war. However, there were many demands such as the absolute freedom of the seas, and the removal of armaments to the level of domestic safely that, possibly because of their own cultural beliefs and traditions, some countries did not feel compelled to agree to. Many of Wilson's points were compromised or not fulfilled due to disagreements from other nations. "Wilson quickly learned that his negotiating partners' support for the Fourteen Points was much weaker than he had believed. Clemenceau and Lloyd George refused to include most of Wilson's points in the peace treaty"(Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 764). This made me think, if writing codes of peace that everyone agrees on is a difficult task, I can't imagine how hard it would be to write codes of war that all nations would agree to follow. There is so much to take into consideration when trying to create "codes of war" because it's trying to create a way to have "humane war", which is an oxymoron. The task is difficult because the objective is to make something atrocious make sense.

Even if terms were created and everyone agreed to them, if one of the nations that initially agreed, breaks one, how are the other nations to react? I believe that it’s even harder to enforce codes of war because if one country doesn’t comply, there is so much to consider. Are the others to punish them for their actions? How can they be controlled? Is controlling their actions violating even more codes of war? Enforcing codes of war is difficult because it’s mostly about keeping ones word and trusting that others will do the same. I'm not entirely sure how one would enforce "codes of war", but I imagine it would begin and end with trust, integrity, and great leadership. Three things that are very difficult to come by in this day and age.



Re: Keeping Peace
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 8:16 PM

Hi Genevieve,

I agree with your assessment that writing codes of war would be difficult, and that trying to aim for a "humane war" is simply not possible. I do think, however, that there are differences in the way wars are fought. Take for instance the video we watched a few weeks ago about machine guns being introduced and how it was the first time that instead of being up close and aiming to kill, so many bullets were fired it gave the soldiers a sense of anonymity and a way to distance themselves from the act of killing. (I wish I could remember what week or the name was but I don't have access to prior weeks!)

I think for me, trying to limit civilian casualties would be part of the code. I would hope that most of the major world powers would agree to that, given the losses they've experienced in the past. More than limiting civilian casualties though, I think that using things like the atomic bomb which not only caused, "instantaneous incineration of both human beings and manmade structures" but also caused observers to be, "shocked to contemplate the longer-lasting horror of radiation disease," (Murrin text page 868) should not be used. Thinking that something like the bomb that we dropped caused innocent people to die for years horrifies me. The same goes with the atrocities of Nanking in which people were used for bayonet practice and women were raped before they were killed.

I would like to think that the world has learned from the terrible past events like the Holocaust in which so many people died needlessly, however I am unsure on how to even enforce such a law. Like you said it's unclear how to enforce codes of war, especially when most everything surrounding war is so unpredictable and ever changing in its approach.

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When it can't remember yesterday, a country forgets what it once wanted to be.-Studs Terkel
by [Jamie Atkins](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 11:02 AM

The Japanese right-wingers who have succeeded in removing the Nanking Massacre from textbooks are forgetting the most important reason that we study history, to learn from it. Furthermore, the more significant the impact, the more we learn and remember. I can understand their reasoning about it, especially as it is being held against them hypocritically by China (Article #2). People like Tamaki Matsuoka(Rape of Nanking) and Fumiko Niki(Article #1) are incredibly brave; at their own peril, they are keeping history alive with photographs, handwritten accounts, and most importantly, the oral history of those who were there. I want to point out that this doesn't just happen in Japan or China; it happens here, our own textbooks have, and continue to whitewash history. Here's a great example of from a high school textbook: "The Atlantic Slave Trade between the 1500s and 1800s brought millions of workers from Africa to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations"(Atantic.com, link below). Our textbook for this class seems slightly dismissive sounding about The Nanking Massacre (Murrin text p.855), which is disturbing only because of what I learned from the supplemental materials. The raw truth spoken by the people that lived through particular events is the most enriching element of the study of history. While the text couldn't possibly go into a great amount of detail about singular events that happened in WWII in one chapter, I think it should have at least given us the same amount of detail as it gave about the German holocaust. The imperialism of the Japanese was not far behind that of Hitler(Murrin text pp. 864-865). It is U.S. history we are learning, but in the larger scope, the crimes against humanity committed in the name of imperialism should always be studied, in the hope that we can recognize and prevent it before we are engulfed in it. One way textbooks often mislead us is in the way it is always implied that The Allies completely defeated and stamped out all notions of The Third Reich, and all were punished accordingly. That is not the case, Operation Paperclip (Wiki) alone is proof of that. Some of the WWII criminals from Germany were brought here, by the U.S. Government, and went completely unpunished. History, as presented in textbooks, is incomplete at best, and dangerously misleading and dismissive at worst.

www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/10/the-history-class-dilemma/411601/

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The importance of not repeating history
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 2:58 PM

After reviewing the material of the Rape of Nanking, I think it's concerning that people in the world aren't aware of this horrific act. I think one of the "gravest concerns" is that people are unaware, and many people in Japan are trying to hide this from the world and their citizens. The damaging side effects of this could be history repeating itself. I must admit I had no idea this was even apart of history until taking this class. But of course I completely knew of the Holocaust and those horrific times. Bringing attention to this subject is important because many people and their families were severely hurt, and feel there still needs to be justice. In the video the narrator speaks that many of the Japanese soldiers stay anonymous in their testimonies. I think this speaks clearly that many of the soldiers are humiliated by their acts, but it is more important for them to come forward and apologize. The [Tamaki Matsuoka interview](#) is very powerful because this man speaks of awful acts he committed and is honest. He also speaks about the Japanese police and how they chose not to make any arrests. I thought that was interesting that they new crime was happening, and they still chose not to do much about it. The commander also told his men not to rape the woman, and the soldiers still decided to disobey that command. I noticed that the woman who came in at the end of the interview seemed a bit upset with the reporter asking Matsuoka so many questions about the acts he committed. She came in, and told the reporter to stop asking so many questions, and that he is old and doesn't remember anything. It seemed that the older lady was maybe embarrassed and trying to make "light" of the conversation. Meaning that she was saying he was old so the reporter shouldn't really trust what he was saying. I am of course making assumptions on that, the emotions of the lady just seemed distraught. It would make sense for her to be upset because most Japanese people do not speak of the Rape of Nanking and they are very ashamed. I also believe that "historical amnesia" for this specific event is extremely concerning because the Japanese are trying to pretend it never happened. They try and alter this event by not mentioning it in their textbooks. The Japanese for several years could not speak of the Rape of Nanking without possible punishment from the law. The event is so unspoken of that quite of few people have never even heard of it, and some who claim the event never happened. It is normal for a country to feel shame, but it's not okay for the country to completely disregard a horrific act they committed. It is disrespectful to the Chinese, and it's also important to inform future generations so this event will not happen again.

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Re: The importance of not repeating history
by [Steph McGuire](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 10:43 PM

The lady coming in at the end of the Tamaki Matsuoka interview was interesting to me. She did seem distraught. I can see it from her point of view. She does not want to speak of something that may bring shame or worse on her family (or country). The people were taught from the beginning to not acknowledge what happened. I also believe that this will not help their countries or the world. It seems to me that the younger generations not being taught will only make it possible for history to repeat itself. I, too, think that it also will not help these two countries come to peace with what happen unless Nanking gets closure for the hurt that was caused on them. I think it would be beneficial to Japan as well.

The gentleman was honest and I think that it wonderful. But I did not get a lot of emotion from him one way or another. It makes me wonder if some of that generation are not able to be sorry for the things they did. That might be one of the reasons why the country does not speak of it. Speaking of it would make it known that something happened and they would be expected to apologize and/or make it right. What if they honestly were not able to see the people of Nanking as human beings? And by default are unable to see that they did something wrong. It happened with the Nazi's and the Jewish people. Maybe this is the same kind of scenario. I am probably making big assumptions here, but it is in interesting idea. The gentleman did not show remorse. He just explained what happened.

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Re: The importance of not repeating history
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 8:59 PM

Hi Breanna,

I agree with you that one of the gravest concerns with historical amnesia is that people don't know it happened. You're right in the fact that without knowing how these events transpired in the past, it's possible a similar event could happen. I found the documentary about the Rape of Nanking very compelling the narrator said that, "This was not fighting, these were barbaric acts that cost the lives of 15 million Chinese." (2:37 into the clip from the Rape of Nanking documentary-third link) It's frightening to think about so many men, women, and children being murdered without the acknowledgement of the country responsible. I do think that the fact that Japan is trying to cover up their wrongdoings by trying to erase the history very telling of their guilt though. In the same documentary clip, the narrator said that it wasn't until the late 1980's that Murase's photos of Nanking were published (around the same time that Kurihara's drawings were also published), and during that same time period is when Nanking suddenly dropped out of Japanese schoolbooks. (5:15 into the Rape of Nanking documentary clip)

I also think that another grave concern of this historical amnesia is that along with this cover up, it has forced so many Japanese soldiers to not be able to discuss or come to terms with their role in these acts. I can only imagine the level of trauma they endured back then, and knowing just how much war has affected my husband has me worried for those soldiers as well. Don't get me wrong, I think that the actions of those soldiers who raped women before killing them is awful, but hearing a soldier in that documentary talk about how when ordered to kill an entire village, "we knew we'd be killed if we weren't capable of carrying out the order," (2:53 in to the documentary clip) really made me think of not only the Chinese villagers who didn't stand a chance, but of the soldiers afraid for their lives if they didn't kill helpless victims. Another soldier in the documentary said that "They knew that orders from above were from the Emperor and had to be followed," (2:24 into the documentary clip) proving just how difficult it would be to disobey if ordered to kill. You heard some of the soldiers talk plainly and even sometimes laugh about some of the things they did (the soldier talking about bayonetting living people), and that is clearly not what you'd expect from someone who hasn't had great experience in separating their feelings from their actions and simply following orders.

Overall, this entire event was a massacre and horrible, awful, etc, but I do think that something we can take away from this is just how important it is to get honest, truthful accounts from major events. Finding resources that are clear and concise and fall in the middle of the political spectrum I think can be very helpful in navigating things going forward.

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Re: The importance of not repeating history
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 2:32 PM

Hi Carisa,

Thank you for commenting on my post! I would like to point out I really like the points you brought up in your second paragraph. They are all very valuable. When reading about the Rape of Nanking its hard to imagine how anyone could commit these crimes. The same goes for Nazi Germany, when you read about the Holocaust; your stomach aches because of the horrors these soldiers committed. The quote, "we knew we'd be killed if we weren't capable of carrying out the order" (2:53 in to the documentary clip). This is another side we often don't see. These soldiers were owned by the government and if they refused to comply with orders they would be killed. It is hard to say what any of us would do in these situations. Some of the soldiers also talked about how difficult it was for first year soldiers to kill children. One of the older men said the younger or first year soldiers would often close their eyes while shooting women, and children because it was too difficult for them to see. But like many of the soldiers said they had to listen to their commands. If they didn't they would be killed or considered weak. Being truthful and not ignoring the past is important. It will help the country move on quicker and be aware of their mistakes; so they hopefully won't make them again.

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Accountability is the answer

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 5:32 PM

I think that most people like to believe that “rules of war” such as the Geneva Convention simply apply to every nation involved in a war. The truth, as we have seen, is quite different. Unfortunately, there will always be some warriors who are going to use the occasion of war to commit atrocities which most people consider abhorrent. As we saw in the “Rape of Nanking” video, there are soldiers who break all the rules (11:46 minute mark) simply because they are left unsupervised. There is also the factor of “mob mentality” which has been widely studied, in which participants perform acts which they would otherwise not have simply because “everyone else was doing it.” This becomes a very hard thing to control in a situation like war where you have so many different units and cliques who are devoted to one another sometimes more than they are devoted to the rules. When we factor in racism-an essential element in almost any war- coupled with the genuine hatred for an enemy which has “wronged” you, we get a recipe for disaster. The only way which I believe this situation can be defused is by drawing a hard line- whether it be at an international level (as we still see today with Nazis being taken to trial), or simply at a national level with a zero-tolerance policy for such acts-these things have to be dealt with as they happen, when possible, and they have to be dealt with severely. The gentleman in the “Rape of Nanking” video stated that the military police knew what was going on in his sector and simply decided to stay away because they would have to arrest everyone (12:25 minute mark). I believe that arresting everyone would have been the only logical solution to the problem. When people see that others are being held accountable for their actions, most are less inclined to behave in the same ways. The military which I served in relied heavily on group punishments. If one person broke the rules, everyone was punished. The mentality behind this approach was that those who were punished unjustly would be sure to prevent others from misbehaving in the future for fear of being punished again for something they did not do. I’m not saying this was the correct approach, but it seemed effective. It also instilled a sense of ownership in each of us that if we decided to break the rules, we knew we were not simply going to answer for ourselves, but everyone else would also answer for us. Without some level of accountability, evil will continue to go unchecked. I think these are the biggest lessons we can take from Nanking and other incidents like it.

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Re: Accountability is the answer

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 3:36 PM

I love that you drew from your own experience in answering the “codes of war” question. I struggled a lot in trying to decide how codes of war could be written, let alone enforced. Deciding on who makes the rules, how they’re enforced and what to do when they’re broken are very difficult questions to answer because there is so much to be taken into account when dealing with different nations and everything that they bring to the table. You said that in your experience, if one person broke the rules, everyone was punished. I can definitely see this being an effective tactic, because knowing that others suffer on your account is somehow more motivating than if it’s just yourself. It forces everyone to have a higher level of accountability.

In order to figure out how this would work in codes of war, we would have to think about how could this be taken to the next level. This is an effective tool for people under one commander, so how can it be a tool for nations under the same law? In order for an accountability tactic like this to work on a global scale, all of the nations involved would have to be punished for one countries rule breaking. The big question would be, what is the punishment? I personally am having a hard time picturing how this could work on a global scale, so I’d love your input on what you think the collective punishment would be!

In order to try and understand how punishing a nation for their war crimes would work, I’m going to lay out a scenario. Let’s say that one of the codes of war is: nations are not allowed to bomb cities that contain innocent civilians. Now, America and North Korea both have bombs, and have been upholding this law just fine for a while. But then one day, North Korea decides to bomb an American city, killing thousands of innocent Americans in the process. How is North Korea to be punished?

In the past, when countries have broken peace agreements or alliances there was retaliation. And while this kind of behavior might be justified, it only helps to escalate the war. So if retaliation is to be taken out of the picture, the “punishment” must be something else. Every time I think about this kind of scenario and try to answer it I just come up empty. This is just one of those intricate and complicated problems that I never seem to have a solution to.

I guess my question is, how do you see this kind of accountability rule working worldwide. I would love to hear more about your opinion on the issue as you seem to have great experience!

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) 2[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Accountability is the answer**by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 5:25 PM

Hello Genevieve, Thank you for your reply, you have given me a lot to think about. First of all I want to clarify something that I feel I did not do an adequate job explaining in my first post. When I mentioned groups punishment or mass punishment, I did not intend to suggest that if one person in a military unit committed a rape, the entire unit should be tried for rape. When I was in the Marine Corps, there was a longstanding practice which I assume is still in use today. If one Marine in a particular unit went out and got a DUI, the command would decide that until further notice there was no alcohol allowed in the barracks (living quarters), and anyone caught with alcohol in their room would be dealt with through the legal system which the military has set up. Now in certain areas like Okinawa, Japan, this has been a recurring issue. There has been a lot of tension between the United States Marine Corps and the civilian population on Okinawa because of civilian deaths as a result of Marines drinking and driving. This has led to many protests by the Japanese people calling for the Marines to leave the island. When such events occur, the standard procedure (in addition to trying the Marine responsible in military court) is to "lock down" the base. No Marines (excluding those who live off-base) are allowed to leave the base. In this way, everyone is paying for the poor decision which one Marine made, yet the Marine in question is still facing the legal consequences of their actions. As far as your question regarding punishing an entire nation for the inappropriate actions of their military, I believe we have already seen examples of that in our text. Germany was severely punished by the rest of the world following the First World War which led to the rise of the extreme views of Adolph Hitler which captivated that country for a time. Our text explains that "Meanwhile, ultranationalist states in Europe also sought to alleviate domestic ills through military aggression. Adolph Hitler's National Socialist (Nazi) Party came to power in Germany in 1933 and instituted a fascist regime, a one-party dictatorial state. Hitler denounced the Versailles peace settlement of 1919, blamed Germany's problems on a Jewish conspiracy, claimed genetic superiority for the "Aryan race" of German-speaking peoples, and promised a new Germanic empire, the Third Reich," (Murrin Textbook, page 854). Hitler is an extreme example of what can happen when you force an entire group of people to pay for someone else's mistakes. I believe that this is part of the reason why the United States agreed to a plan to rearm West Germany five years after the Second World War (Murrin Textbook, page 896). The United States was eager to fight the spread of communism to be sure, but I think they also recognized that "dropping the hammer" on the whole of Germany after the first war was a contributing factor to the second war. In this way, punishing an entire country has proven a poor strategy. However, as I mentioned in my first post, the continued efforts by Germany to track down and punish all of those involved in the Holocaust is a strategy which I firmly believe in. Group punishment is effective in the moment as it applies to military units. If one or more soldiers is found guilty of rape or driving under the influence or whatever the case may be, it is effective in the short-term to punish the whole unit or the entire base (in the case of Okinawa). In the long term, more drastic measures may need to be applied, such as an extensive investigation into all those involved and punishing everyone, regardless of how long it has been since the crime occurred (in the case of the Nazis). I do however believe that Germany's willingness to pursue and prosecute the individuals involved in the Holocaust after all these years is a gesture of good faith showing that they take that period of their history seriously and are taking steps to rectify it in whatever ways they can. It gets trickier in the case of North Korea where we have so many allegations of human rights violations, yet the economic sanctions which have been put in place seem ineffective due to their communist allies providing them with the supplies they need. In this way, Macarthur was right. The United States should have pursued communism and defeated it where it stood in order to provide freedom for people throughout the world. What we are dealing with now is a long-term fix to a problem that potentially could have been solved in the short term (at great cost, no doubt). I know this is a very long reply, and I thank you if you have stuck with me this long. When it comes to enforcing codes of war on entire nations, I think we have seen that it just doesn't work, at least not in the "drop the hammer" sense. I think that governments and militaries need to be held accountable for their actions, but I don't think that punishing an entire nation for the decisions made by those entities is a wise decision, as it can lead to extremism and further poor decision making. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to such a problem. Each conflict needs to be assessed as it happens, and decisions must be made. If the United Nations is to be the end-all governing body for the world, then they need to set a standard punishment for such transgressions as bombing innocent people and stand by it. Rules are only effective when they are enforced 100% of the time. This is the only way in which we avoid a third world war and ensure that human rights are respected around the globe.

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Re: Accountability is the answer
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 12:11 PM

Thank you so much for your reply, it was very insightful. Your clarification on how the group punishment works helped me to see what you meant by applying it worldwide. I initially thought that your idea was to punish an entire nation for the military's action. It's clear though that this is something that wouldn't necessarily make sense. Instead, the military is to take responsibility for their actions and to be punished for it. The Rape of Nanking is an excellent example of when this strategy should have been used.

The Japanese soldier that Tamaki Matsuoka interviewed said himself, "They knew we were behaving terribly. If they had wanted to enforce the rules, they would have had to arrest everyone." (The Rape of Nanking. minute mark 12:28) This is where enforcing rules or codes of war becomes tricky. A military not wanting to arrest the entirety of their armed forces, and letting them get away with breaking the rules. I'm sure that at the beginning of the Japanese's take over of Nanking, not all of the soldiers were going out and raping the women. However, after a few got away with it, more joined in, and they got away with it, I can see how quickly the situation would escalate. If the military police had put a stop to the soldiers actions earlier on, and arrested the first few men for breaking the rules, I'm sure that the tragedy of Nanking would be far less gruesome than it became.

You mentioned the mob mentality in your first post, and I believe that sums up how the Rape of Nanking escalated so quickly. I remember when I first started driving, and I saw a speed limit sign that said 50mph. I remember thinking that the sign meant 50mph was the literal "speed limit", and that going any higher was against the law. My mother quickly told me otherwise. She said, "50 isn't the limit, it's the minimum, everyone goes higher than it suggests." Essentially what I got from that statement was, if everyone breaks the rules, they can't catch us all. And that is, what I believed, what occurred at Nanking.

Letting people go unchecked leads to rule breaking. And I know that this is a pessimistic point of view, but it's something I believe to be true; if no one is held accountable for their actions, and everyone gets away with everything, the world would descend into chaos overnight. As you said, "Rules are only effective when they are enforced 100% of the time." Even though what happened at Nanking is horrific, the fact that hardly anyone knows about it, and the Japanese still don't want to take credit for it is even worse. Nations need to be held accountable for what they've done, because trying to sweep something like this under the rug, could lead the world into another global war.

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Intentional Historical Amnesia
by [Christina Dukes](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 10:21 PM

To be quite honest, I had never heard of "The Rape of Nanking" or any memorable moments in history of disputes between the Chinese and the Japanese - until this chapter. I read the articles and watched the videos, and I was extremely confused on how or why I had never heard anything relating to the matter of their disputes during WWII. I feel like this is partially due to the fact that there is a sort of censorship to the general public, and many times the government tries to reinvent itself and move away from the horrors that they either caused, or were a part of. Take for example Germany and Nazism in WWII. My best friend is from Germany and she showed me many textbooks in which she learned about WWII and what the sort of materials were included detailing the major points of WWII. The explanation of WWII as well as the chronology of events throughout the war were completely different.

To me, the German textbooks were sort of censoring the information as well as the reiteration of materials to the students throughout the years, just to sort of start fresh from start and ignore the past. I mean, I do not think they want to blatantly describe themselves as these demon figures who committed such horrendous crimes - the same as the Japanese have done in their representation of themselves during WWII towards the Chinese people. "Some other Japanese museums discuss the Nanjing massacre and other war crimes, but typically in a way that minimizes or whitewashes the brutalities committed." (McNeil, War Museum Resists Japan's Historical Amnesia).

I think throughout time with the presence of historical amnesia and misrepresentation of information to the public, sometimes this could possibly lead to the changing of the details of history entirely. I mean, what if over time, we forget the details surrounding the holocaust, solely based on the censorship from Germany initially, and then other countries following in their footsteps. Many people do not like hearing about the nasty details of the past and everything that surrounds very specific crimes, and so because of this the minimization of the events could potentially lead to the altering of history remembrance entirely.

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Re: Intentional Historical Amnesia

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 12:48 PM

Just like you, I had never heard of the Rape of Nanking before this class. It's troubling to me that something like this isn't widely known! In one of the videos we watched, The Rape of Nanking Overview, the man at the beginning even says, "Just as Hitler was rising to power, a most overlooked atrocity was taking place in a different part of the world. It's often called, the forgotten holocaust, it was the worst massacre of the modern age"(minute mark 0:15) It's so barely acknowledged that it's even called "forgotten", and even when I searched "forgotten holocaust" online, many websites about Nazi Germany still came up. The Rape of Nanking is buried so deep in history that it's hard to find information on it, even though it only happened under 100 years ago.

I decided to look up the Rape of Nanking to try and see if there was any more information on it that our resources didn't include and I found this on the Wikipedia page on the subject. "The massacre occurred over a period of six weeks starting on December 13, 1937..." This shocked me; the event that happened at Nanking occurred within the span of only six weeks. I wanted to run some of the numbers to compare, and the Japanese killed 200,000 Chinese civilians within six weeks, while the Nazi's killed 5,896,577 in four years. I did the math, and it turns out that the Japanese soldiers killed more people per week(33,333) than the Nazis did(28,213). The Japanese killed about the entire population of Keizer, Oregon every week, for six weeks. The fact that this information is simply watered down, not acknowledged, and forgotten is frightening. Historical amnesia is taking place about the event right now, as it is slowly fading from memory. "Stop asking him questions. He doesn't remember anything." (The Rape of Nanking. minute mark 12:51)

I loved your comment "I do not think they(Germany) want to blatantly describe themselves as these demon figures who committed such horrendous crimes - the same as the Japanese have done in their representation of themselves during WWII towards the Chinese people." I think that it describes the reason for Japan omitting this atrocity from their textbooks. No one wants to be remembered for the bad things that they've done. And for a country like Japan that so rich in history as well as being one of the leading nations for modern technology, having something like this on their backs could dampen their reputation. But trying to rip this page out of their history, and pretending that it didn't happen, could cause more bad than good for their country in the future.

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Historical Amnesia and Who is Responsible

by [Kara Miner](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 5:04 PM

It is no surprise to me that a country like Japan, with such deeply rooted nationalistic values, would try to skim over something as horrific as the Nanking Raping. After all, it is hard to play the victim with such an ugly "scar" on your record. I believe the biggest issue with "historical amnesia" is that we time and time fail to take into account the perspective of all sides. While the Nanking Raping my be an embarrassing "incident" in the eyes of the Japanese, to China it was a crime against humanity and the people of their nation. No matter who is writing the textbooks it is important to honor those whose lives were lost so that it doesn't insult their loved ones and their country. I think that people should write textbooks solely for its intended purpose not for a political agenda. Politics should be left out of the process, so that way the truth can be remembered and so that people can learn from the mistakes others have made in the past.

The idea of who gets to write codes on war is really interesting to me. The events in this chapter left me divided on who gets to write codes of war. After reading about the deaths at Hiroshima and seeing the aftermath I had a hard time really believing that the United States should be responsible for deciding what is right during wartime (Life, Liberty and Equality pg. 867). But after reading and watching videos about the Nanking Raping (Historical Amnesia document), and reading about Germany's crimes against humanity during the Holocaust I couldn't trust either to make these types of decisions. Perhaps the people who have suffered greatly from these tragedies should be responsible for deciding what types of weaponry and behavior is acceptable during wartime. If Japan was involved in the Hague Conventions and in the Geneva Conventions perhaps the use of atomic bombs would be banned. If the individuals who survived the Nanking Raping were involved they would have chosen to outlaw rape and the killing of civilians. If Jews were involved they would likely choose to outlaw internment, the list goes on. I recognize that this is likely impractical however, the sheer number of atrocities committed during this time period makes me view almost all countries involved as aggressors; and it makes me uneasy thinking that the same people giving the orders that resulted in mass destruction get to choose what is and is not okay in war.

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Re: Historical Amnesia and Who is Responsible

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 4:44 PM

Addressing the section of your post on the Rape of Nanking, I believe you're correct in saying, "It is no surprise to me that a country like Japan, with such deeply rooted nationalistic values, would try to skim over something as horrific as the Nanking Raping. After all, it is hard to play the victim with such an ugly "scar" on your record... While the Nanking Raping my be an embarrassing "incident" in the eyes of the Japanese, to China it was a crime against humanity and the people of their nation." The Japanese are known for their reserve and gentleness as well as their isolationist tendencies from the past. The Rape of Nanking is such a different story than what I know of Japan and I can see why they want to keep it quiet- that does not mean I condone it. Like you said, historical textbooks should write the truth, politics and peoples opinions should be left out.

Moving on, I loved your opinion on who should be writing the codes of war. When I considered the question concerning codes of war, I merely thought about what they may be, or how to enforce them rather than who would be responsible for creating them. Breaking it down, I think that your conclusion that the people who have suffered the most from others during war should be the ones making the rules. I can definitely see countries such as China and Israel that have suffered greatly from the actions of others having a lot to say about the matter. Laws against bombings of inhabited cities, raping innocent citizens, and internment camps would be brought up immediately, and many more fair laws would follow.

I believe it's the same for any given situation in the world today. Recently there have been some bans on abortions across the U.S. And after doing a little research on it, I noticed that those responsible for the bans were mainly men. I don't believe that this is a fair way to make laws because abortions do not affect men in the way that they effect women. If a ban on abortion had been passed by a voting of women then I believe it would be a fair law. But to not take into account the people that are actually effected by the law before passing it is a horrible way to run a country. The innocents(those who are robbed, raped, abused etc.) should be making the laws that prevent it because they know first hand the effects that those behaviors have. So I agree with your statement that those who are responsible for mass destruction in war should not be making the rules.

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Rape of Nanking

by [Taylor Hunter-Rogers](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 6:50 PM

What do you consider are the gravest concerns regarding "historical amnesia" in this specific WWII case?

I think that the gravest concerns are regarding the "historical amnesia" is that people tried to almost completely sensor out what truly happened during this awful time. They didn't want to bring all the truth to light.

While war is "bad" and results in the deaths of both soldiers and civilians, HOW war is carried out differs from country to country, influenced no doubt, by a nation's history and culture. On what authority can "codes of war" be written?

More importantly, how should they be enforced?

Codes of war should be enforced just as they are written, always. When they are written, they are expected to be enforced among all military branches and followed as soon as they are given as orders.

And finally, why do you think this level of detail on Nanking was missing from your textbook? Should it have been? Why or why not?

I think that this level of detail on Nanking was missing because it isn't something that the Japanese are proud of, that's also why they were not allowed to photograph and document these events either. It is not a shining moment for history and it definitely could bring up some bad PTSD that they don't want their families to know for the survivors of the time. I believe that yes, it should have been talked about more. Not is such detail but they shouldn't have sugar coated it at all either.

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Re: Rape of Nanking

by [Christina Dukes](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 1:06 PM

Taylor,

I believe that your first response to the question regarding "the gravest concerns of historical amnesia" is simply answered in the sense of censoring illicit details from the public. I do agree however that both our government, as well as governments from around the world do sort of put a sensor on the amount of information that the public has access to, and the information that is constantly being mentioned in history textbooks, etc. Each country delegates what they believe is necessary to release to the public, and its no doubt that each country sort of censors out any bad influence that they were the cause of or are to blame. Its extremely sad yes, but I believe that the government to which an individual falls under, is what influences the information or more so the "level of information" that its citizens are able to know. Take for example an article I found here: <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/countries-censor-the-internet/58366/> . In this article I found a lot of really simplified versions of examples of different countries and their censorship from the government.

In addition, I think that in certain circumstances where there was an act of war that was so far against the rights of humans, such as the Rape of Nanking, every country around the world censors the information from this time. By that, I mean it is available to us yes, but it is not a detail of history that is religiously taught. The Rape of Nanking was particularly horrible, in the sense that it broke basic human rights codes and violated people in a way that no one should ever endure. War is "bad", and the events that ensue on each side are of course tragic, but there are basic "rules" that are in agreement by many nations, that say violating certain "rules of war" are not acceptable. The source : <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/what-are-rules-of-war-Geneva-Conventions> illustrates the international humanitarian law, and the reasoning behind their organization. Basically, it is a cohort of nations that have bound themselves together in the efforts to make sure all acts of war are carried out with the least amount of suffering, and then to maintain humanity of course. This is what I believe the "Codes of War" is based around - how war is inevitable but the amount of suffrage and pain an individual or a nation endures should be minimal. I believe that the banding together of many nations around the world is what determines is acceptable in war fare strategies, and since it is a shared and favored view, they should maintain their right to "make the rules of war".

I also found this intriguing article on the origins of the IHL (international humanitarian law) or "The Rules of War" that establishes a history baseline as to why the law was created. <https://blogs.icrc.org/ilot/2017/08/07/origins-international-humanitarian-law/> I think it was a great read, and kind of gave a few different details of the rules of war than our textbook did!

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Historical Accountability

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 11:37 AM

I think that while it would be nice if every country in the world would agree on set codes of war with guaranteed consequences for violations, this simply is not practical. There will always be those who want to push the envelope and dare others to stop them. Hitler’s rearmament of Germany in the 1930s is an excellent example of this. This was a country which was under very heavy restrictions because of the first world war, yet in desperation they turned to a man who decided to break the “rules” in order to elevate his country to another level in the hierarchy of nations. Imagine if the Allies had all agreed to codes of war that prohibited the use of machine guns, only to come up against Hitler’s very well-armed forces. In war, there are always going to be individuals who choose to do the wrong things. Sometimes groups of individuals or even entire countries decide to do the wrong thing. The only real answer I can come up with for this phenomenon is the aggressive pursuit of those guilty of war crimes. The United States has learned a lot of lessons regarding war crimes the hard way when faced with the facts of its own military, and to this day there are people in this country facing trial for war crimes. If the nation responsible for these crimes is not taking ownership and pursuing the guilty parties, then it is up to other nations to ensure justice is done, just as we saw with the Nuremberg Trials. “The Allies would, in 1945 and 1946, bring 24 German high officials to trial at Nuremberg for ‘crimes against humanity,’” (Murrin Textbook, page 861). These trials in no way captured the entire scope of those involved in the crimes, but it was an important first step. Even today, Germany continues pursuing the “last Nazis” and bringing them to trial. I think this is a prime example of a nation which is trying to do the right thing after so many years of doing the wrong thing. It’s an important example for nations like Japan to emulate when it comes to demonstrating what is and is not acceptable in war.

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Dangers of Forgetting

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 5:31 AM

The gravest concern for me is human’s natural tendency to forget what is not right in front of them. As the saying goes, out of sight out of mind. By downplaying and excluding the harsh realities of history we make it easy for people to forget. This can be dangerous to people because it prevents the lessons of human destruction. Lessons that shape our own personal survival instincts. As humans we are born and continually develop a personal and social sense of survival. This helps us to judge the world around us for safety and precaution. To create long- and short-term goals in relation to our continued existence on this planet. When we get a skewed view of history, we automatically learn skewed lessons.

Japan has long been captivated by world power. While at one point in time they might have tried to use their military might to gain this power. Such as their decision to bomb Pearl Harbor. But now with the threat of nuclear war they will attempt diplomacy instead. But it is hard to get other countries, many who were former enemies to trust and work with your country when it has a history of such violence in war. So, by erasing the history from their own books they hope to erase it from the minds of their current and future generations as well as the worlds.

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Codes of War? How Does this Work?

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 6:01 AM

The term codes of war seem very contradictory in itself to me. War means and symbolizes many different things to many different people. But when I think of war I think about the loss of human life. I am not the only one to think this. Even our own textbook cannot mention a war or a battle without talking about the numbers of wounded and killed. In our legal system there is almost no crime as harshly punished as murder. But during times of war it is fully condoned. Not only condoned but encouraged. So, I find it hard to think that in a situation where murder is condoned that there would be “laws” on how you treat prisoners of war. Especially considering that if those prisoners were not captured and were with their side fighting then it’s perfectly acceptable to shoot him in the head. But if you have captured him then he is deserving of rights.

While I find even the concept of codes of war boggling. I find the concept of who should have the authority to make them even more troubling. There are approximately 200 countries in this world. Who is to say which of them should have the authority to make codes that they expect the rest of the world to follow? Who is supposed to enforce these codes? While we expect that an organization such as the U.N. could do this, we must see the downside. What if another world war broke out? What if countries had back door deals to support each other instead of others? Such as the agreement that Roosevelt made with Churchill to focus on Germany first then Japan. While the idea of making a set of codes to control certain aspects of war is a humane idea. I think the thing we need to remember is war is not humane.

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Re: Codes of War? How Does this Work?

by [Kara Miner](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 12:42 PM

I certainly agree with your idea's regarding who would enforce laws of war and how impractical the idea is. With war comes death, a reality I know too well. Even a war as short as the Spanish American war resulted in death. While less than 500 american troops died in combat, 5,000 died from tropical diseases (Life, Liberty and Equality pg.724). We view this a small and successful war with very few lives lost, but this is because we only consider the deaths of those who died fighting in combat as related to the war. However, if there was no war soldiers wouldn't have been in the position to contract diseases and those 5,000 who lost their lives wouldn't have died seemingly without purpose. No matter how small a war is, it never fails to accompany death even before atomic bombs and machine guns were created.

So in a modern society, with machinery and technology that can result in mass destruction, how can we avoid inhumane deaths? I think the answer is not deciding what is humane during wartime but instead, deciding what justifies a war. I think that President Wilson had this idea when coming up with his 14 points so having a framework of negotiation to avoid war isn't a new idea. But lets say a council built from representatives from each country and a framework was created that all countries could agree on. A list of steps that countries will use to hopefully negotiate peace, all of which needs to be attempted before countries go to war. I believe having an outline of protocols in the event of tension, that all parties agree with would help diffuse any tension between countries and possibly save countless lives avoiding war all together.

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Re: Codes of War? How Does this Work?

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 6:12 PM

While I love the idea of having a worldwide organization in place to help squash wars before they happen, this is once again an idea that would only work for those countries who decided to follow the rules. It would also present a similar issue which Congress disagreed with over the League of Nations, in which the U.S. Congress would lose its power to determine when America should enter a war. America gave up some of this power when deciding to join NATO. Our text states that “Republican senator Robert Taft called NATO a provocation to the Soviet Union, an ‘entangling alliance’ in violation of settled foreign policy principals, and a threat to Congress’s constitutional power to declare war. Still, the NATO concept prevailed,” (Murrin Textbook, page 891). The other area where I see problems is when there is an aggressor group that does not belong to a country, such as Al Qaida. Who would decide which countries were approved to invade in pursuit of a group which does not belong to any one country?

Even today, we have the President of the United States taking to Twitter to promise the “official end of Iran” if they want to fight. Not only is it outside the power of the presidency to declare war, but the fact that it is being unofficially declared on social media represents a changing age. These are the instances where I believe that such a world governing body would be helpful, but only if the United States and every other country were willing to obey the decisions made by that body.

I think the type of decisions which have already been made by the leading powers of the world are more on course with the decisions that such a body should be making. Which weapons are so heinous that they need to be barred from conflict? The terms of humane treatment of prisoners of war. These are the types of decisions that a body of this type should be making, as well as listing appropriate consequences for those who disobey the guidelines.

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My Gravest Concern

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 7:54 PM

When I think about the gravest concern that I have regarding the Japanese War Museum and China’s concern for Japanese textbooks, I worry about a period of history with so much educational value that is trying to be erased by the Japanese people. I firmly believe that the main reasons for studying history are to determine: What happened? Why did it happen? And what can we learn from this? If one is not seeking answers to those questions, then they are simply memorizing dates and places in order to pass a class. This becomes very difficult when there is an organized national effort to rewrite history in one’s favor. It reminds me of North Korea and the efforts which have been made to keep the citizens in the dark and lead them to believe that their dictator is the most righteous and powerful man in the world. Only through information and education can people learn the truth. Sometimes the truth is not pretty, and it paints a picture of one’s country which they do not prefer to see. These are the most important lessons of all. American students learn about slavery, segregation, the My Lai massacre, and so many other events not simply to point out where Americans got it wrong, but also the atmospheres and ideas which led up to these events taking place. This is how we learn to create a better tomorrow in this country, by acknowledging the things that didn’t work yesterday and how we put ourselves into a situation where we thought those things were okay.

Just as Germany needs to admit its mistakes during the Holocaust, Japan needs to admit that something as terrible as the Rape of Nanking happened and that they were responsible. When these historical events are studied in-depth and accepted, healing will begin, and the Japanese people will find a way forward which does not include committing similar atrocities. These are the types of incidents which can lead to better foreign policy decisions, tighter regulation on the military, and general awareness of the causes of such a toxic environment which led so many young men to go astray. In the modern world, if an American President knew that such human rights violations were taking place-as Roosevelt did (Murrin Textbook, page 855)-American troops would be responding within a matter of hours. I guess this demonstrates the turn which America has taken since the outbreak of the Second World War from isolationist to “world police.”

There is no situation which warrants and rape and murder of 300,000 innocent civilians in six weeks. People like to claim that awful things happen in war and that is just the way it goes, but there is a difference between waging war on an enemy and ravishing an entire region for your own personal pleasure. This is where the codes of war discussion comes into play. It is nearly impossible to write codes of war which every nation in the world would agree to and adhere to. There does however need to be a list of human rights violations that simply will not be tolerated by the majority of the nations on earth. When those violations occur, the consequences need to be swift and severe. This is the only way to keep evil in check. I believe that America has adopted a policy of pursuing evil wherever it rears its head, and I think that if more nations followed this policy, the world would be a safer place.

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Detail Missing



by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 11:08 PM

The level of detail missing from our textbooks or world history in general is incredibly heartbreaking. I believe and the videos I have watched have shown me that Japan is very ashamed of their past. They are so ashamed they will do whatever they can to make sure it stays quiet. The people were not aloud to speak of the Rape of Nanking or they risked punishment. So little people spoke of the Rape of Nanking that people began to believe it never happened. There is barely any live footage or photos; and the few they had a Christian missionary had to smuggle it in and out. I believe because the knowledge of what really happened, they couldn't put a ton of information in US or other countries textbooks. Many people that were victims of the Rape of Nanking were killed. The soldiers often said, "It would be all right if we only raped them—I shouldn't say all right. But we always stabbed and killed them. Because dead bodies don't talk." This made testimonies and other information hard to find. The Japanese soldiers were very smart, and knew how they could get away with crimes. Including commanders not holding their soldiers accountable. Commanders would join and they would start comfort stations (sexual slavery). There was no one to help these people at the time. These are all very shameful acts I don't blame Japan for wanting to hide it. But that is not a good thing to do because their own citizens began to believe it never happened. They were in denial. There probably was just not enough detail to really show the horrors of the massacre; but either way it should still have been in textbooks. To honor the Chinese and educate our world.

"Nanking." *Women's Media Center*, www.womensmediacenter.com/women-under-siege/conflicts/nanking.

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