

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

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Historical Amnesia
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, May 10, 2019, 11:24 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Historical Amnesia topic.

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Re: Historical Amnesia
by [DAVID Welshman](#) - Sunday, May 12, 2019, 10:11 AM

Historical amnesia happens.

History has a way of sweeping under the rug, events it is embarrassed by. The Japanese soldiers and leader whom ordered ad or allows these terrible acts to be committed would have been shun by their country men, so they tried to wipe it out of history. They wanted to forget the history because its Ville. Their children are not taught about this time, Burt of the good things because its a black mark on the government past. The Japanese looked at it as if it was not spoken about that it did not happen. It is evident in the video clip where some Japanese soldiers were being interviewed an the woman comes and tells the interviewer to not ask the questions of the man because he doesn't not remember anything. However he was answering questions as if he did remember.

This is just one example of how history shows acts that are so horrific that others want to remove the facts from the world so no one believes the truth. This talks of war time, in which human rights were violated. War is not evil, however there are people whom do evil things. Some try to say the ones who committed the crimes were brain washed others say it never happened, that the things spoken are lies. As history has shown it will repeat itself if the lessons are not learned.

Reason for code of conduct.

One thing that always happens is there are strong people whom are willing to fight to show that these things did happen, like Tsuyoshi Ebat, stated in the article {article by Davd Mcneil} Countries open museums to show the facts of what happens during the dark times of war. Books are written describing the events that have taken place during these times. We cannot let distorted histories be hidden in order for the world to heal and to not let this things happen we need to educate all generations of these things.

It was the world power whom had come together to help set rules for what is an is not acceptable during war time, which if broken then the nations can react together in punishing the counter braking the rules. The U. N. Security council is a group that does enforce that these rules are not broking in war, or for genocide. We need to make sure we teach students about these things that happened, so they can understand the world as a whole. The future leaders of the world need to understand the mistakes made and why they were made.

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Horrors of Amnesia

by [Ryan Monett](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 1:43 PM

It's interesting how quickly we try to hide from realities that are grim and not of what we like to associate with our collective nation, history and sense of pride in one's beliefs and culture.

The Japanese infliction upon the Chinese, specifically at Nanking, involving rape, decapitation, murder and other forms of brutality have been purposefully erased from the Japanese culture as it affects pride in country. However, in order to resolve issues and errors of the past, one must look at the reality, be humble enough to admit when mistakes have been made, and correct behaviors. If it is hidden from the culture and youth (class textbooks), then it could be repeated by the next generations to come. Let's face it: war is horrific, in all shapes and forms. We know from historical evidence of such truths. Some horrors of war are simply too injurious to ever be repeated, and therefore must be faced. It is pride that allows a culture to ignore these truths. Nothing grows in the dark: we are likely to repeat mistakes in history if we keep it hidden from the light of truth.

"An estimated 20,000 – 80,000 Chinese women were raped. The Japanese raped Nanking women from all classes: farm wives, students, teachers, white-collar and blue-collar workers, wives of YMCA employees, university professors, even Buddhist nuns, some of whom were gang-raped to death. Japanese soldiers searched for them constantly as they looted homes and dragged men off for execution. They conducted door-to-door searches, demanding money and young girls."

"They gang-raped women from the ages of twelve to eighty and then killed them when they could no longer satisfy sexual requirements. . .I beheaded people, starved them to death, burned them, and buried them alive, over two hundred in all. It is terrible that I could turn into an animal and do these things. There are really no words to explain what I was doing. I was truly a devil. . .Many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breast, and nail them alive to walls."

This was obviously not one or two soldiers, this was systemic and pervasive, and never to be forgotten so not to be repeated.

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Sources Cited

Website: <https://theformofmoney-mammon.blogspot.com/2012/06/japanese-rape-nanking-wwii.html>

Web videos,
articles: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QZtM6XULizO9T9boiTNeuEoDE3dFEbrci1hbZ8C8uyM>

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Japanese "Historical Amnesia" May Be Rubbing Off...

by [Matthew Berry](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 4:01 PM

I found this Forum subject pretty interesting, and I am for the first time in a long-time kind of shocked! Not because of the images, videos or the first-hand accounts of the cruelty, and treatment of soldiers and civilians alike. Not even because of the barbarianism of the Japanese in the "Rape of Nanking", and other areas dominated by the Japanese Empire before and after the start of WWII. But for the simple fact that as someone who thoroughly enjoys learning about history, and being a military man myself I pride myself on learning all about what went on in different times of war and the fact that I had NEVER even heard about the "Rape of Nanking" until reading chapter 26-27 and

reviewing this material is pretty crazy. They have obviously done a pretty good job of creating a kind of “Historical Amnesia”; and I can see why, the Japanese have tried to hide this from their historical records because it is just as atrocious as the behavior that German Nazis did during their reign before and after the start of WWII.

I am well aware of how brutal the Japanese were, just look into the history of the battles that played out in the Pacific Island Theatre during WWII (island hopping or leapfrogging) but I had no idea about what they did to the Chinese civilians when they attacked China in the latter half of the 30’s. I don’t know if it was me not doing my due diligence to study or look into it further in all these years, or if it is because of the skewed vision we have of Japan post WWII. Just look how history has been taught to us in the public-school system, it seems to down play the horrendous acts of Japan and puts most of the atrocities that played out during WWII on Germany. Is this because somehow, we feel guilty about our destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the use of nuclear bombs? Or, is it because we have allied ourselves with Japan that it would be best for the US to create its own form of “Historical Amnesia” of the prior acts of Japan in order to maintain peace? Either way I find it interesting that you just don’t hear that much about Japans expansion (East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere) compared to Germany’s expansion (perfect example see Textbook pg. 855, less than one paragraph that talks about Japan’s Invasion on China). It's pretty hard to refute the actual evidence...



Even to this day you can see how touchy of an issue that this is. The New York Times wrote an article titled, **Chinese City Severs Ties After Japanese Mayor Denies Massacre** (Martin Fackler, FEB. 22, 2012). Just the fact that the Mayor of Nagoya, Japan; Takashi Kawamura refused to acknowledge the Nanking massacre happened and has the view that the Chinese government is playing up the massacre for its own propaganda purposes is pretty ridiculous. I always find it interesting with so much proof as to the historical accuracy of things like the “Rape of Nanking” or even the “Holocaust” that there are still people who will argue that these things never happened and are more likely a conspiracy or propaganda to spread hate, or to attack those that are supposedly involved or at fault. Japanese ultranationalists or revisionists refute parts if not the entire account of the “Rape or Massacre of Nanking” and seem set on destroying anyone and any evidence that may prove the account at Nanking credible (Wikipedia – Nanjing Massacre denial; Japanese revisionists).

I am sure it is also looked down on by the conservatives or the ultranationalists of Japan to be talking about this stuff. In the Video – “14 Rape of Nanking 2007” (at 12:52 into the clip) when Tamaki Matsuoka is interviewing a Japanese soldier, the wife comes in the room and is shocked to see her husband candidly answering the questions about his role in Nanking, and is being asked who else (like his commanding officers name) was involved in these things that she interrupts and say’s “Stop asking him questions, He doesn’t remember anything”; in other words shut up you idiot you are going to get yourself in trouble for talking about this! You can tell she is more than likely afraid of repercussions of her husband’s actions, I mean he is speaking openly about what are now considered under the Geneva Convention as War Crimes. Just as the Nazi’s were held accountable at the Nuremberg Trials for their atrocities, ALL the soldiers that were involved in Nanking should be charged as well.

The object of war is not to die for your country but to make the other bastard die for his. – George S. Patton

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We All Like to Forget
by [Maximillian Prentice](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 6:45 PM

Every country has a history. Every country has started in one place and grown into the nations of the world that we know today. History has been happening for a long time, and I feel it goes without saying that every country has some parts of their history that they would rather not talk about. Some histories may be more brutal than others, such as Germany or Japan’s, and those events of the past may be hard to reckon with, but that does not mean it is okay to whitewash the history books. I think the most important thing for a country is to acknowledge the actions, no matter how awful, before they able to move on. People need closure, especially the victims of acts like the Rape of Nanking, and when they don’t get closure it can, “severely hurt the Chinese people’s feelings and constitute[s] an insult to the Chinese people” (Article #2). And that goes for more than just the Chinese people. It is also interesting to note that Japan is now paying for the lack of acknowledgement of the Nanking Massacre as, “China may use it veto power to prevent Japan from joining the [U.N.] council” (Article #2). I think at least apologizing could go a long way for Japan, but you have to acknowledge the event first.

I think it is important to have some type of "code of war," but I think they will always to hard to enforce. People will do what they will do, regardless of a law that may be stopping them. Thinking back to the Civil War, General William Tecumseh Sherman took advantage of "total war" and essentially burned the south and everything else in his way. We also dropped a bomb on Japan that killed "68,000 people outright, injured another 30,000, and left 10,000 missing" (Text, 871). I know that is different than the Nanking Massacre, but there were plenty of people counted in that death toll that were innocent civilians. I think it is important to remember that every country has questionable things in their past, but how you move forward after those events makes all the difference.

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Atrocities of war
by [Adam Moore](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 10:30 PM

This course's main intent is to survey US history. It would be impossible for us to cover all the horrible things that happened during WW II in intricate detail within a ten-week course. Especially since the focus of our course is US History, and the United States did not even enter WWII until 1941. Even if we neglected all other US history topics covered by this course, there still would be an insignificant amount of time to cover everything ad nauseum. The horrific acts which transpired in Nanking are inexcusable and should be addressed in more than just a few words; however, what could be removed in the text in order to fit it into our curriculum, especially considering it falls outside the scope of US History?

Perhaps, discussing Nanking more in our text would give students an excellent opportunity to discuss them outside of class like this – but how does it tie into US History? I feel this is more related to World History on whole. A better tie into events transpiring in China as it relates to US History, would be mentioning the Magnuson Act, which passed in 1943 during WWII and gave US citizenship rights to the Chinese. And familiarizing students with how the US and China became allies during WWII.

Also, the Bataan death march is not even mentioned in our textbook and it effected thousands of American soldiers. Why is this not even discussed in our text? The simple answer is scope of the course and available time to cover all presented material. It is important to realize that this course is just a simple bird's eye view of history and is certainly not all encompassing.

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Historical war crimes & cover-ups
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 1:32 PM

While learning about the horrific crimes committed by the Japanese military on the Chinese before and during WWII, my gravest concern is: how many more acts just like this have been covered up and forgotten in history? I mean, this can't be the only instance of gruesome, barbaric practice that has been lost in world history. This makes me wonder about stories of our own country's practices at war. What war crimes have we committed that perhaps is not included in textbooks? Not to suggest that there are any in our history such as bad as what happened in Nanking, but my gravest concern is that many other unfortunate events are susceptible to nondisclosure, and many great secrets go to the grave with those who hold the key information we need to uncover the truth.

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Whats the harm in erasing a little history?
by [Adam Moore](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 7:31 PM

When a nation forgets the past, the consequences can be devastating. While I am certain Japan regrets and is shamed by the way they acted in Nanking during WW II, erasing those events from history is dangerous business.

Those that do not remember their history are doomed to echo it. "History does not repeat itself"(Professor Escobar) but it can seem eerily close to the same. If Japan is successful at completely erasing the rape of Nanking from the history books, whole generations will grow up without knowing a very brutal part of Japanese history. This may not seem like such a bad thing, even in the United States of America we erase historical events that would paint us in a bad light globally, but when you dig a little under the surface that is where real dangers lie. Having a deep understanding of history is important, with that you can make changes so those events do not have a similar result in the future.

Japanese leadership armed with the knowledge of the past can ensure that a soldier's orders are carefully worded to prevent such events from occurring. If the solders who are going to war have learned their countries history, they too can prescribe to a different course while fighting. Even those left at home should understand the history of war so they can be better equipped

to deal with some of the issues that arise from soldiers returning home.

To forget your past is to erase your future. If we forget our past our future will continue to echo times long forgotten, ensuring that no real advancements can take place. If we do not learn from the mistakes of those who came before us they will creep back into our nation, not in the exact same way but with the same devils.

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Re: Historical Amnesia

by [Kaleah Holmes](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 10:23 PM

I think it is absolutely awful that people in Japan are trying to erase their history. It is important to not forget about your nation's past so that you can avoid any type of repetition. Especially with the bad stuff. "Ultrationalists have threatened to burn down the museum, prompting the elderly staff members to look into the unfamiliar world of high-tech security." (found in Article #1). This threat is unacceptable to have against a place filled with history, and memories. I am glad that the staff is taking steps to secure the museum.

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Forgotten History

by [Kaleah Holmes](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 1:42 PM

I had never heard of The Rape of Nanking before now. That blew my mind a little. "There are some wartime events of such senseless brutality that they defy comprehension" (0:08 Rape of Nanking Overview video). This is so true it is scary. I do not want to believe anything like this has ever happened in the world's history, but sadly this is not the only horrific event to be ashamed of. Because of how brutal this is I understand why the Japanese want to bury their heads in the sand, and forget this ever happened. Like I said earlier though, it is important to not erase or forget your history because then you may go down a similar path. Especially for the Japanese army. Since they do not even know about this then what if they do the same thing again? They should be educated on their past. This way they can take stronger, and more ethical oaths to be in the army. It is also good for the citizens to know because then maybe they can change their government. They could get people in charge who will keep tight reins on the army, and be more responsible with the foreign affairs.

My biggest concern about this is, if you are going to ban your people of ever knowing this event occurred then you are almost welcoming it to happen again. If you do not learn from your mistakes then you can not get better. Their people can not learn from their mistakes if they do not even know about them.

The same goes for America. What do I not know about our past, and will we ever find out our own country's secrets? I want to know my history so that I can be shocked, possibly even feel awful about it. At least then we will know, and strive for not being repetitive.

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Censorship and war

by [Cristian Alamo](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 10:06 PM

I completed the entire documentary. It was extremely hard to watch. Japan's loyalty to the emperor during WWII lead to some of the most brutal combat because it was considered an ultimate shame to the emperor to fail. When failure is not an option, one will do anything to succeed. I believe in this instance the a "code of war" would be virtually impossible to enforce. Eventually the leaders were brought to justice but very little soldiers. During the documentary, men went behind the backs of higher ranking officers to commit heinous acts on women when directly instructed not to. In current day, we have the UN and NATO who set what could be considered "code of war" but countries have disobeyed these laws in the past. The leader of whichever country must set it's "code of war" but many times the leader has very little morals so there is no code. What concerns me about this type of historical amnesia is that since China became a communist state, the rest of the world didn't care about these people or at least didn't know. Hence the downplay of this awful incident that got lost until the 1980's 35+ years later. Japan censoring this dark secret instead of accepting the past and apologizing seems like a way to distance itself from China so it wouldn't expect an apology and a reparation which would be a lot of money. I believe everyone must learn from the past and accept its history even if its dark.

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Codes of war & enforcement
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 12:34 AM

Codes of war is kind of a tricky topic and seemingly somewhat of a contradictory phrase because over the course of history most, if not all codes of war have been broken. Not only have codes of war been broken--codes of humanity as well, as we saw in the holocaust and in Nanjing. When asked the question: "how should codes of war be enforced?" -- I guess with more violence? Has anything else ever worked? It's a tough question, and one that I really don't have a great answer for. The whole "peace and reasoning" idea hasn't seemed to work well this those who breach on the codes of war, and sadly sometimes physical force has been the only answer.

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Key info missing in our textbook
by [Cameron Lindsey](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 11:17 AM

In response to: **"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?"**

This is a really tough question, because it feels like we have enough information from this event that the textbook should be able to cover more about it. One thing that comes to mind is the fact that US involvement in WWII had nothing to do with this particular event. We focus on Pearl Harbor because that was an attack against *us*. We study The Great War and WWII because *we* were involved--*Americans* were fighting and dying. I think the Holocaust gets far more coverage in our textbook than Nanjing because we played a crucial role in ending it and people of all creeds and colors were massacred--unlike Nanjing which was seemingly only an attack on Chinese people. When brutal events hit closer to home and American people are involved, these events are covered and studied more. As sad as the rape of Nanjing is, at the end of the day we aren't studying world history, we're studying US history and this event happened before the war and before US involvement.

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You want the truth? Can't handle the truth! (Jack Nicolson a few good men.)
by [Adam Moore](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 7:47 PM

On what authority can codes of war be written? Only on the authority given to those codes by the countries reading them. There have always been rules of war and in the last hundred years we have added laws. The UN and NATO are driving forces of legislating the laws of war. However, if you look at the history of war only those on the loosing side are ever tried for war crimes. We as a world have signed and agreed to follow certain codes of conduct and have written international laws that dictate the kinds of weapons allowed to be used during war. Even with all of this it boils down to the countries choosing to adopt them or not.

When you make these laws and rules someone must enforce them. This usually falls on the UN to deal with, in some cases they do a good job others not so much. I agree that codes, laws and rules of war should exist, but if we do not equally apply these rules to all nations do, we have the moral high ground? No, as a world if we have decided that there should be rules for war than we as a world need to uphold them equally.

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Re: Historical Amnesia
by [Aaron Richards](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 9:27 PM

In today's political world, nations as a whole are trying to erase history. We don't want to look bad on the international stage so we downplay atrocities that we have committed in the past. WWII was one of if not the most violent conflict in recent history. To deny history like in the case of the Rape of Nanking is to disrespect the memory of both the victims and perpetrators. History is a teacher of what he have done and how far we have progressed, if we don't know the entire story, we can't learn the entire lesson.

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Re: Historical Amnesia
by [Sebastian Garcin](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 10:33 PM

Starting off, I think that historical Amnesia is a big issue. I can honestly say that I never heard of this historical event happening until now. And I think it is incredibly disrespectful to the people who were murdered, raped, and mutilated, to not tell their story. The common well known saying of History repeats itself, like Professor Escobar said is not completely true. History take similar paths and rhymes, so it is important to know what happened in the past to be better prepared for what is to come in the future.

If we're just talking about this class and textbook, I don't think the Authors found it relative enough for a U.S. history class. While I don't agree it should have happened, I can't deny the fact that Japan effectively covered up this event. Of course there were gaps where information got through and people who survived but overall it until pretty recently was wiped away from history. I think probably the biggest reason that this information isn't in our textbooks is the fact that until more recently there wasn't anyone willing to tell the story of this atrocity, whether they were Chinese survivors just trying to get over what happened or the Japanese soldiers who are afraid to suffer punishment for the war crimes. Most of the evidence was destroyed buried deep so it wouldn't be found. This was done and understandably so find a Japanese to protect their own integrity and image.

We can't cover up history like that, no matter how horrible it is, we need to move forward and to do that we need to know what's in our past.

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