**The Global Media Festival Course Module**

Title of Course Module: Sustainability and Nuclear Resistance in Japan

Course prepared by: Amanda Weiss, Visiting Assistant Professor of Japanese, Georgia Tech

Issues: energy, nuclear power, sustainability self-sufficiency, environmental activism, antinuclear movements, Japan, Sweden

Time commitment: 6 hours

Overview: The community of Iwaishima, an island in Japan’s Inland Sea, has been fighting the construction of a nuclear power plant in their community for nearly three decades. Because local fishermen rely on the clean waters surrounding the island, they believe it is of paramount importance to avoid reliance on nuclear power. This module examines the efforts of Japanese communities to become self-sufficient, sustainable, and independent of nuclear power.

Media content: The documentary *Ashes to Honey: The Search for Energy Independence in Sweden and Japan* (2010) examines how to avoid nuclear power and create a sustainable community in Iwaishima. It also looks to Sweden for some possible answers.

Reading sources:

* Article #1: Dusinberre, Martin, and Daniel P. Aldrich. “Hatoko Comes Home: Civil Society and Nuclear Power in Japan." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70.3 (2011): 683-705. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911811000866
* Article #2: Kingston, Jeff. "Japan's Nuclear Village," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 10, Issue 37, No. 1, September 10, 2012. https://apjjf.org/2012/10/37/Jeff-Kingston/3822/article.html

Instructions: Ask the students to read the two articles above, then conduct the two “Previewing Activities” in class (about 2 hours of activities). During the film screening, have them complete the two “Viewing Activities” and submit to you either via e-mail or Canvas. After the film screening, complete the two “Post-Viewing” activities in class (about 2 hours).

Learning Outcomes:

1. To engage students in thinking critically about sustainability and nuclear power.
2. To teach students about the history of pronuclear and antinuclear power movements in Japan.
3. To explore the importance of media and literature as tools to advocate for sustainable communities.

*Previewing Activities:*

**Activity A: Class Discussion of Articles**

After reading the two articles listed above, discuss the following questions in small groups. After you finish discussing, present your findings to the class.

Article #1:

1. What is Japan’s so-called “nuclear allergy”? What are the historical reasons for this “allergy”? What efforts have been made to overcome this “allergy”?
2. How have the debates over the nuclear power industry in Kaminoseki changed over time? What caused those changes?
3. What is the importance of horizontal and vertical bonds in civil societies, according to the authors?
4. Why do the authors refer to the NHK drama *Hatoko’s Sea* (1974)? How does the drama connect to their argument?

Article #2:

1. What is Japan’s “nuclear village”? Does America have a similar institution?
2. What is “regulatory capture” and what are some issues with it?
3. What are some of the problems of the Japanese nuclear industry?
4. According to the author, what is Japanese public opinion on nuclear power? How does the government/nuclear industry feel about this?
5. What is your opinion on nuclear power? How does your opinion overlap with/differ from the majority opinion described in the article?

**Activity B: Japan’s Nuclear History Mini PPT**

Prepare a brief PowerPoint of no more than five minutes on one of the following topics (you will be assigned one). Introduce the term listed and how it connects to the theme of nuclear power. If it is an historical event or person: What happened, who are they, and how might this event or person have influenced Japanese feelings about nuclear energy? If it is a film, character or concept: What is it, how influential was it in Japan, and how might it reflect Japanese attitudes towards nuclear power?

1) 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima

2) 1945 atomic bombing of Nagasaki

3) 1954 Lucky Dragon incident

4) 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster

5) Godzilla (1954 film)

6) Barefoot Gen (character)

7) Sadako Sasaki (atomic bomb survivor)

7) hibakusha

8) black rain

Viewing Activities:

**Activity C) Guided Questions**

Note your responses to these questions during the film. Afterwards, submit to your answers as a .doc or .docx file to your instructor:

1. Who are the main subjects of the film? (Names, jobs, ages, etc.) Why do you think the filmmaker selected these subjects?
2. What are the main issues/challenges facing the people of Iwaishima? How do the townspeople hope to deal with these issues? How successful are they in their efforts?
3. Why does the filmmaker go to Sweden? How do these scenes contribute to her overall argument? Do they detract at all from her storytelling?
4. What was the most effective part of the film for you? Why?
5. What was the least effective part of the film for you? Why?

**Activity D) Film Review**

Write a short film review of 600-800 words. Your opinion on the film should be implied throughout, and you should discuss both the formal techniques in the film (lighting, mise-en-scene, editing, sound, etc.) and thematic elements (Japanese history, rural societies, sustainability, nuclear power, activism, etc.). A typical film review consists of the following elements:

* General introduction (who made it, when, what is it generally about)
* Plot summary (no spoilers)
* Analysis of the film’s thematic and formal elements (your opinion)
* Conclusion (your final impressions and evaluation of the film)

Post-viewing Activities:

**Activity E) “Wall of Indifference”**

In her director’s statement for the film, Kamanaka expresses her reasons for making this film. She writes, “How to let people know? How to break the wall of indifference and get more people to think about these issues? How to make them see that the question of future energy sources is one that directly concerns them? These were my motives for making this movie.” In a small group, discuss how effective Kamanaka’s film was in “breaking the wall of indifference” for you. Then, brainstorm your own answers to these questions, i.e., how you would “break the wall of indifference” and encourage people to act on environmental issues.

**Activity F) Post-Film Discussion**

1. Why is public opinion mostly against nuclear power in Japan? Do you agree or disagree with this position?
2. What are some of the solutions proposed by the film? What do you think of these solutions?
3. How can Japan better regulate its “nuclear village”?
4. What was something new or striking that you learned from this module?

Assignments:

**Assignment A) Response Paper**

Although we often discuss documentaries as if they are simply “documenting the truth,” in reality these are edited works with a thesis arguing a certain perspective. What did you think of director Kamanaka’s argument in the film? In a 600-800-word response, summarize what you felt she was trying to say, how effective she was at saying it, and respond to her argument. Your paper should have a thesis and use specific examples drawn from the film to support your argument (dialogue, choice of interview subjects and encounters, editing, framing, music, etc).

**Assignment B) Pecha Kucha**

For this assignment, you will select an environmental issue that you think is of paramount importance and present a Pecha Kucha style PowerPoint on that issue in class. A Pecha Kucha presentation is 20 slides of 20 seconds each. See examples here: http://www.pechakucha.org.

You may pick any environmental issue for this presentation. Your presentation should attempt to “break the wall of indifference” by making a persuasive argument about your environmental issue. What is the issue, why should we care, and what do we need to do? Use images, sound, video, etc. to make the most persuasive argument you can.

**Further Reading:**

Aldrich, Daniel P. "Rethinking Civil Society–State Relations in Japan after the Fukushima accident." *Polity* 45.2 (2013): 249-264.

Avenell, Simon. "From Fearsome Pollution to Fukushima: Environmental Activism and the Nuclear Blind spot in Contemporary Japan." *Environmental History* 17.2 (2012): 244-276.

Field, Norma. "Complicit and Victimhood: Director Kamanaka Hitomi's Nuclear Warnings." *The Asia-Pacific Journal| Japan Focus* 9.18 (2011).

Hein, Laura E., and Mark Selden. *Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age*. Routledge, 2015.

Kamanaka, Hitomi, Noriaki, Tsuchimoto and Norma Field. "Rokkasho, Minamata and Japan's Future: Capturing Humanity on Film." *The Asia-Pacific Journal| Japan Focus Volume* 5.12 (2007).

Hook, Glenn D. "Evolution of the Anti-Nuclear Discourse in Japan." *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10.1 (1987): 32-43.