

HIST289/CAST289
Japanese American Internment and Public History
Professors Shelley Lee and Renee Romano
Spring 2018, First Module
Thursdays, 7:00-9:00pm

This first module course focuses on the history and legacies of Japanese American internment during World War II, with special attention paid to Oberlin's response to internment and the experiences of former internees at the College. Taught in conjunction with a major exhibit about Japanese American students who attended Oberlin during the war, the class also foregrounds practices and methods in public history, with particular focus on activism around and commemoration of internment. The course will include lectures by outside speakers as well as the opportunity to learn about public history and to do outreach and education associated with the exhibit. Class will meet on Thursday evenings with two additional meetings on Fridays at noon to talk with outside speakers. Our course TA is Ava Prince (aprince@oberlin.edu).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Explain the reasons for and experience of Japanese American internment
- Understand Oberlin's specific local history in relation to WWII internment
- Evaluate major scholarly interpretations and debates about the history of internment
- Recognize how survivors of internment and their descendants have shaped historical memory of internment
- Gain an awareness of and introduction to public history as a practice and method
- Learn about doing public history through hands on experience working at an exhibit and producing materials

READINGS:

There are no required books for this class. All readings listed on the syllabus are available on the course blackboard site.

ASSIGNMENTS:

History 289 is a P/NP course only. To earn a grade of "P," students must attend every class; must spend at least two hours working at the "Courage and Compassion" exhibit; and must earn at least 35 points out of a total of 50 possible points on the three required short writing assignments and the required final project.

1) **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory; you must attend every class session in order to earn a "P" for the module unless you can provide documentation of illness or a family emergency. **Please send any necessary documentation about excused absences to our TA, Ava Prince at aprince@oberlin.edu.** Please also note that there are two extra meetings with guest speakers on Friday, March 2 and Friday, March 16th from 12:00-1:00pm. There will be a sign-up sheet at every class session. If you don't sign in, you will be considered absent.

2) **Two Event Responses:** All students must attend **at least two events** related to the exhibit besides those that are required as part of the course and write a cogent summary and analysis of that event in a response of no more than 500-words. Responses must be uploaded via blackboard within 48 hours of the event. Late responses will not be counted. You may attend and write about any of the following four events to complete this assignment:

Tuesday, February 13, 12:20-1:15, King 106

“What is Sanctuary?”

A panel featuring faculty from Classics, Comparative American Studies, History, and Africana Studies

Saturday, February 24, 7:30pm, Finney Chapel

Presentation and Lecture by San Jose Taiko

In this 90 minute program, the legendary performance group San Jose Taiko will intersperse their performance with a presentation on Taiko’s history in the United States, its relation to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and how the group connects its art to that history and to current events today

Wednesday, March 7, 7:00pm, Apollo Theater, 119 E. College St., Oberlin

“Relocation, Arkansas: Aftermath of Incarceration”

The documentary “Relocation, Arkansas” tells the story of the legacies of Japanese incarceration in Arkansas. It features the story of Oberlin alum Alice Takemoto, and her son, Paul. Filmmaker Vivienne Schiffer, Alice, and Paul Takemoto will hold a panel discussion following the screening.

Saturday, March 10, 2:00pm, First Church, 106 N. Main St., Oberlin

Roy Ebihara, “Wartime Incarceration: A Survivor’s Story”

3) **Exhibit Volunteer:** Every student must serve one shift as either an exhibit docent, field trip facilitator, or lunch escort over the course of the module. **Docent shifts** of 2.5 hours are available primarily on weekends during the exhibit’s public visiting hours. Two docents will be on hand at all times to greet visitors, answer questions, and watch over the use of the exhibit. **Field trip facilitators** will help run school field trips to the exhibit; students must apply and will be selected based on knowledge and experience working with children. Facilitators will be required to attend additional training sessions. Field trips shifts are primarily in the mornings during the week. **Lunch escorts** will meet field trip groups either at the exhibit or the Allen Art Museum, walk them to their lunch site, and spend lunchtime talking with students about life in college. Sign-ups for all shifts will take place via a google doc. Each of you must sign up for your shift(s) by February 13th at 5:00pm. You must complete at least one shift related to the exhibit in order to earn a grade of “P” in the class.

4) **Exhibit Review (Due February 24 by 5:00pm):**

Submit a short review (no more than 500-words) of the “Courage and Compassion” exhibit after we visit as a class during our Thursday, February 22nd evening session. You will have one hour to explore the exhibit and to consider how it presents the history of the Japanese World War II experience in preparation for writing their review. In your review, you should consider what the exhibit includes and what stories it doesn’t tell; what kind of argument it makes; what its themes are and how successfully it develops them; and whether it communicates history in an engaging and

clear fashion. Exhibit reviews are due by February 24th at 5:00pm and should be uploaded to the blackboard site.

5) **Exhibit Design Exercise (Due March 18 by 5:00pm):**

As a final project for History 289, each student is required to design one additional panel to be included in the Courage and Compassion exhibit and to make a case for its inclusion. The panel can be any subject/topic of your choice that relates to the Japanese American World War II experience. Students are required to submit both the design of the panel (using the template posted on blackboard) and a short paper (no more than 500 words) that explains why you think this particular panel is important to add to the exhibit. Both the proposed panel and accompanying paper are due on Sunday, March 18th by 5:00pm and should be uploaded to blackboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

February 8: The History of Japanese Internment

Shelley Lee, "Asian Americans and the Crucible of World War II," from *A New History of Asian America* (2014), pp. 207-244.

"Oberlin Vouches for Them," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, Fall 2013,
<http://www2.oberlin.edu/alummag/fall2013/internmentstudents.html>.

Selected short primary documents (on blackboard)

February 15: Remembering and Forgetting Japanese Wartime Incarceration

Karen Inouye, "Introduction: Unearthing the Past in the Present" from *The Long Afterlife of Nisei Wartime Incarceration* (2016), 1-19.

Elena Tajima Creff, "The Representation of the Japanese American Body in the Documentary Photography of Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and Toyo Miyatake" in *Imaging Japanese America: The Visual Construction of Citizenship, Nation, and the Body* (2004), 13-70.

Selected short primary documents (on blackboard)

Guest Speaker on Internment Photography:

Wendy Kozol, Professor of Comparative American Studies

February 22: Exhibit Visit (Meet at Baron Art Gallery, E. College St. Project, Suite 5)

"What is Public History?" from the website of The National Council of Public History,"
<http://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/> (link on blackboard).

James B. Gardner, "Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public," *The Public Historian* 26:4 (Fall 2004): 11-21

The class will be split into two groups. Group A will meet at the Baron Gallery at 7:00 and stay until 8:00. Group B will meet at the Baron at 8:00 and stay until 9:00. Come ready to take notes on the exhibit in preparation for writing your exhibit review, which is due by 5:00pm on Feb. 24.

March 1: Naomi Paik, “Rightlessness: Sanctuary and the Work Ahead” [Guest Lecture, Dye Lecture Hall]

Naomi Paik, Introduction and Chapter One in *Rightlessness: Testimony and Redress in U.S. Prison Camps Since World War II* (UNC Press, 2016), 1-54.

Friday, March 2, 12:00-1:00, King 306: Discussion with Naomi Paik

Please note that this session will take place in King 306 rather than Dye Lecture Hall. Pizza will be provided.

March 8: Doing Public History about Internment

Elena Tajima Creef, “Museums, Memory, and Manzanar: Contesting Our National Japanese American Past through a Politics of Visibility,” in *Imaging Japanese America*, 119-143.

Robert T. Hayashi, “Transfigured Patterns: Contesting Memories at the Manzanar Historic Site,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2003): 51–71.

Guest Speakers

Vivienne Schiffer, director of *Relocation, Arkansas*

Cassie Guevara OC '13 on teaching internment in Japan

Julie Min, consultant for the Topaz Museum

March 15: Brian Masaru Hayashi, “Inversion: Re-Interpreting the Japanese American Camp Experience” [Guest Lecture, Dye Lecture Hall]

Brian Masaru Hayashi, Introduction and Chapter Seven in *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 1-11, 207-218.

March 16, 12:00-1:00, King 306: Discussion with Brian Hayashi

Please note that this session will take place in King 306 rather than Dye Lecture Hall. Pizza will be provided.

March 18: *Final Project due by 5:00pm*