

Citizen 110: Japanese Internment in America

Course Information

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Japanese Internment in America is class that focuses on the inequalities these citizens faced before, during, and after World War II. The class requires a prerequisite of HIST 222 because students must be well-versed on World War II and other events that occurred during this time period. Students will strengthen their oral presentations skills and discover how to intelligently argue topics.

Course Description

Japanese Internment in America focuses on how a person's ethnicity and connection to Japan defined their rights as Americans and how they were treated as citizens during World War II. Students will exclusively explore the prejudices and harassment Japanese-Americans endured and how it affected them following the war. Topics students will face include; life before internment camps, etiology of these camps, life inside internment camps, analyzing the argument it was a "wartime necessity", life after internment camps, effects on immigration after the war, and connection to policies occurring today.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Lives of Japanese-Americans prior to Pearl Harbor

BIG Question: How prevalent was anti-Japanese Semitism prior to the event of Pearl Harbor and what effects did it have on their bodies?

Argument of the Unit: Prior to Pearl Harbor, Japanese-Americans were subjected to prejudice through immigration laws and propaganda created by American society.

Key Words: Racial integrity, Issei, niche, Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08, and Oriental Exclusion Act of 1927.

Link to Reading: [History: Behind Barbed Wire](#)

Annotation of Reading: In "History: Behind Barbed Wire", the author argues that Japanese-Americans were enduring prejudice before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Starting in the early 1900s, Japanese immigrants began arriving in the US and started dominating the agriculture business which upset Caucasian farmers. The US began creating laws such as Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08 and the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1927 which restricted the amount of Asian immigrants allowed in the US. The US implemented the Alien Land Laws which prevented non-citizens from owning land and stated Japanese immigrants could not become US citizens under any circumstances. Japanese-Americans also were subjected to prejudice through American propaganda where they were depicted as evil and called offensive names like "Jap." This text demonstrates that prior to Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were enduring discrimination against their bodies. The event of Pearl Harbor was used as a way to intensify this discrimination and take drastic measures against them.

Unit 2: Etiology of American Internment Camps

BIG Question: How did the creation of Internment camps strip Japanese-Americans of their citizenship rights?
Argument of the Unit: Americans created Internment Camps as a result of a prominent racial hatred for the Japanese that intensified after Pearl Harbor resulting in the loss of citizenship rights for these Americans.
Key Words: Internment, Anti-Japanese sentiment, resident aliens, imperialist, and detained
Link to Reading: Japanese Americans Internment During World War II
Annotation of Reading: In “Japanese Americans Internment Camps During World War II”, Heather Steven argues the US government created internment camps as a quick way to satisfy the public after the attacks of Pearl Harbor. After the attack, many Americans believed all Japanese-Americans were conspiring the attack and that quick action needed to occur to protect all the “real” Americans. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 requiring all Japanese- Americans to be relocated from their homes for the duration of the War. In 1980, under President Jimmy Carter’s approval, an appointed committee investigated the etiology of internment camps and found Japanese-Americans were not placed in these camps based on their threat to national security, but because of the racial prejudice that was occurring. This text articulates how Japanese-Americans lost their citizenship rights from the installment of Internment Camps and how they were subjected to harsh living conditions.

Unit 3: Inside Internment Camps

BIG Question: How did the conditions Japanese- Americans endured inside internment camps strip them of their citizenship rights?
Argument of the Unit: Japanese- Americans were forced to be relocated from their beloved homes and endure miserable conditions due to predetermined racial prejudices.
Key Words: Canteen, mess hall, American dream, agriculture industry, and hardship
Link to Reading: Experiences of Japanese American women during and after World War II : living in internment camps and rebuilding life afterwards
Annotation of Reading: In “Experiences of Japanese American women during and after World War II: living in internment camps and rebuilding life afterwards,” author Precious Yamaguchi argues Japanese- Americans were forced to live and cohabitate in harsh conditions. After the Executive Order was implemented, the citizens were forced to relocate and were only allowed to bring one suitcase per person. They were placed in stables where they were forced to sleep on straw mattresses and endure the smell of urine. At the actual camps, they were forced to shower and eat prison-like food together. They lived inside barbed wire that was not weather-proof with government officials surrounding

the camp. Prisoners endured hot summers and freezing cold winters. Inside the camps, Japanese- Americans tried to create communities and a sense of normalcy for the children. This text shows how Japanese- Americans were forced to endure harsh conditions and a lack of freedom that belonged to them.

Unit 4: Internment Camps: Wartime Necessity

BIG Question: How did internment camps demonstrate their lack of protection for the United States and instead demonstrate racial prejudice of Japanese- Americans citizens?

Argument of the Unit: Internment Camps were based on racial prejudice, were not used as a mean of protection, and could not be classified as a “wartime necessity.”

Key Words: Hirabayashi v. United States, Korematsu vs. United States, sanctioned, dissent, and scrutiny

Link to Reading: [After camp : portraits in midcentury Japanese American life and politics](#)

Annotation of Reading: In “After camp: portraits in midcentury Japanese American life and politics,” Greg Robinson reviews and refutes the US government's argument that internment camps were necessary during World War II. Korematsu vs United States deals with Fred Korematsu, a Japanese- American who refused to relocate to an internment camp. He was arrested and given five years’ probation. He took his case to court and the prosecution argued for racial discrimination while the government argued that it was a “wartime necessity.” The US stated it was done in an effort to protect the US and West Coast from invasion. They argued it had no relation to race and was only implemented for national protection. The text demonstrates how the United States tried to play victim in this situation, trying to defend their decision but yet nothing will defend this. Robinson argues how internment camps were solely based on racial prejudice of Japanese- American citizens.

Unit 5: Life After Internment Camps

BIG Question: How were Japanese- Americans citizenship rights affected after the war?

Argument of the Unit: Japanese-Americans suffered lifelong effects from their incarceration during World War II.

Key Words: Diaspora, incarcerated, representatives, reestablishment, and discrimination

Link to Reading: [Altered lives, enduring community: Japanese Americans remember their World War II incarceration](#)

Annotation of Reading: In “ Altered Lives, Enduring Community : Japanese Americans Remember Their World War II Incarceration,” Stephen Fugita and Marilyn Fernandez argue that the US used internment camps as a scapegoat during World War II and Japanese Americans suffered lifelong effects from the consequences. After they were released, these Japanese- Americans were forced to restart their lives. Prior to leaving, many Japanese-

Americans sold all their belongings so they had little economic resources to work with. Another problem these Americans faced was the loss of community. Before incarnation, many of them had deep roots in their community and they were forced to leave. For many of them, these communities they loved so much were now destroyed or taken over by new groups of people. Japanese-Americans still faced discrimination in housing and from neighbors after the war. The government's solution to the continuing discrimination was for the Japanese- Americans to remain as "invisible" as possible. This text demonstrates how both Japanese- America's body and citizenship rights were taken and continued to be affected post-war in many ways.

Unit 6: *Effects on Japanese Immigration*

BIG Question: How was immigration affected for Japanese citizens after World War II?

Argument of the Unit: After WWII, immigration for Japanese citizens was slow as they still faced discrimination.

Key Words: McCarran-Walter Act, Asia-Pacific Triangle, quota, naturalization, and nativism

Link to Reading: [Immigration to the United States after 1945](#)
[The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 \(The McCarran-Walter Act\)](#)

Annotation of Reading: In "Immigration to the United States after 1945," author Xiaojian Zhao reviews immigration for multiple races after World War II. In 1943, President Franklin D Roosevelt implemented the end of all Chinese Exclusion Acts furthering Japanese isolation and discrimination by the states. Due to ongoing Japanese discrimination and Japan begin the wartime enemy, Japanese exclusion from immigration laws occurred until 1952. The McCarran-Walter Act brought Asian exclusion to an end and allowed for Japanese immigration to the states to occur. Along with immigration, the McCarran-Walter Act allowed for Asian immigrants to be eligible for naturalization. It also introduced the quota system to Asian countries. This quota system allowed for discrimination to occur once again as the quotas were based on race not nationality. This text demonstrates that even after World War, Japanese citizens were discriminated against with immigration policies and even after the implementation of the McCarran- Walter Act in 1952.

Unit 7: *Resurfacing of ideas linked to internment camps with refugees*

BIG Question: How does recent policies with refugees bodies relate to those of Japanese-Americans?

Argument of the Unit: Immigration opportunities for refugees are slowly declining as a result of discrimination similar to what Japanese- Americans faced during WWII and the government's desire to maintain national security.

Key Words: Syrian refugees, due process, Islamization, diversity, and adherents

Link to Reading: [The Return of Korematsu](#)

Annotation of Reading: In “The Return of Korematsu,” author Matt Fords argues that after the terrorist attack in Paris, Syrian refugees will face many obstacles that are in debate by legislators. Many government officials such as Rhode Island State Senator Elaine Morgan, believed that the refugees should be “rounded-up” and placed in refugee camps to separate them from the rest of the population. Virginia Mayor David Bower argued that internment camps were implemented as a precautionary measure and that the “threat of harm to America from ISIS now is just as real and serious as that from our enemies then,” alluding his desire to prevent immigration or implementation of internment camps for refugees. This situation mirrors the one that occurred with Japanese- Americans during World War II and demonstrates straight racism. Not all of the refugees are associated with ISIS and “rounding them up” and placing them in these camps would be a direct violation of their bodily rights. This text demonstrates that refugees are experiencing discrimination through the immigration process and are being subjected to prejudice by American citizens.