

TAHPDX: Great Decisions in U.S. History

Winter 2011 Speaker Symposium

Saturday February 12th 9:00am – 4:00pm
PSU (Urban Center) URBN Room #270

Japanese Internment: “The Japanese Problem” and Japanese American Responses

*Dr. Lon Kurashige, Associate Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnicity
University of Southern California*

Abstract: Three are at least three different objectives in teaching the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. First, and most basic, is to provide an awareness that the internment happened. Second is to get students to think about its causes and consequences; and third is to enable them to appreciate its many open questions. This presentation focuses on the third objective by considering perceptions of the “Japanese problem” as well as Japanese American responses to internment. The discussion will center on careful reading and analysis of primary sources rooted in the Oregon experience. The small group discussion that follows will engage in planning school curriculum that combines the three teaching objectives. This means imagining a lesson plan that describes the internment, analyzes its causes and consequences, and invites students to use the past as a mirror for seeing themselves and their contemporary communities and circumstances.



Dr. Kurashige is Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern California. His research and teaching focus on racial ideologies, the politics of identity, emigration/immigration issues, cultural enactments, and social reproduction, particularly as they pertain to Asians in the United States. He has published widely on Asian American history including recent books including “Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival, 1934-1990” and “Major Problems in Asian American History.”

The Salem Witch Trials: Confessions and Denials

*Dr. Elizabeth Reis, Associate Professor of History
University of Oregon, Eugene*



Dr. Reis is Associate Professor at the University of Oregon in the Department of History. Her research interests include U.S. Women’s History, the History of Sexuality, Medical Ethics, and Women and Religion. Dr. Reis’s published works include “Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England” and “Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America.”

Abstract: In 1692, in Salem Massachusetts, many women confessed to being witches, even though they had done nothing wrong. They were ordinary Puritan women living in an extraordinary tense time of accusations and executions. Why did these women confess if they were innocent? Would they have been better off if they had denied the charges? How did their piety and their horror of witchcraft actually help seal their fate? This workshop will explore the witchcraft crisis in Salem, tracing the ways in which women and men both accepted and denied the accusations. We will examine primary documents from the trials to better understand the climate of fear that so many faced and what it might reveal about this most interesting of episodes and how it has been treated in contemporary times (have any of you visited Salem, Massachusetts lately?). Discussions will focus on how to make this content available to students from 5th grade and beyond.