



Matt K. Matsuda

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A PRIMER FOR
TEACHING
PACIFIC
HISTORIES

— — — — — Ten Design Principles — — — — —

← A Primer for Teaching Pacific Histories →

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A series edited by Antoinette Burton

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A PRIMER FOR TEACHING
PACIFIC HISTORIES

← Ten Design Principles →

Matt K. Matsuda

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Introduction

OBJECTIVES

Begin with What You Think You Know

When I first entertained the notion of teaching something like Pacific histories, I had a different scholarly background, coming as I did out of more general global-comparative and European studies. With parents both born in the Hawaiian Islands to nineteenth-century immigrant Japanese, I thought I was familiar enough with Asia and the Pacific through personal family lore. This made me interested in other parts of the world — such as Europe, which was utterly unknown and outside my experience. And so I spent most of my early teaching and writing career in European studies — a fascinating realm — where I focused on historical memory, political cultures, and the constitution of global imperialism. The latter, especially, led me to reengage with the Pacific. By that time, I had spent decades pointedly studying other things and had learned to appreciate how little I knew about different histories, certainly Pacific histories. I asked myself: What is it I think I know, even before I begin? I soon discovered that much of my knowledge

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of this thing called “the Pacific” came from images, assumptions, stereotypes, and general narratives picked up from popular culture.

You, or your students, might very likely find yourselves in similar situations. Who is presumed to be the student—or teacher—is, naturally, an important launching question. The approach in what follows obeys a couple of assumptions. One is that the reader here is an instructor who might be considering the possibilities for teaching Pacific histories to a largely high school or undergraduate college audience, one with relatively little knowledge of Pacific histories as a subject or field. A volume like this one is intended less to provide comprehensive content than to offer my thinking about what scholars in a particular discipline consider to be useful examples or important questions. In my own case, in transitioning my teaching between overlapping but distinctive academic specialties, what I first most needed to know was what key issues framed major debates, questions, and shared understandings in Pacific and Oceanian studies.

Listening to my own colleagues, for example, I knew that scholars of the United States might, hypothetically, be initially at a loss if asked to teach the histories of the African continent, or Latin America. Asian specialists could, presumably, be uncomfortable if requested to describe Europe or the Middle East. And yet, you may be called upon to do just that, particularly in teaching programs dedicated to global or world perspectives. Of course, institutional duty isn’t the only motivation to study the history of a particular area. All teachers have strong intellectual curiosities and over time may decide they want to expand their knowledge. For history teachers in particular, this generally means expanding one’s subject matter by moving in time (say, from modern to medieval or ancient, or the reverse, toward the contemporary period) and in space, incorporating a potentially daunting array of cultures, civilizations, empires, and lines of transmission and influence drawn from around the globe. For many instructors, the Pacific has long been peripheral and only recently engaged—beyond obligatory gestures to East Asia—as a realm of teaching.

In my first efforts at teaching Pacific histories, I was well aware that the

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field was populated by great scholars and teachers from a stunning array of cultures who were born and resided in the places they studied, and had built scholarship out of not only research and erudition, but everyday engagements with communities, languages, and their own families, ancestors, and lived experiences. Those who wrote academic histories could have generated knowledge not just through research subjects, but by telling stories around questions formulated with neighbors and personal connections. You might wonder, as did I, how exactly one approaches a subject other than as an interloper. One answer is to acknowledge the outsider's perspective — with questions and openness. So, I thought, what might be some introductory frameworks for addressing the Pacific? It is necessary to become a student oneself, a learner, and step away for a moment from being the teacher. If we begin by assembling our Pacific histories, what are the fragments? They can be anything from popular culture to archival knowledge, cultural experience to scholarly analysis. This teaching approach can be particularly resonant when focalized through images, for these parts of the world often are not familiar enough for audiences to have visual references. I regularly let students exercise their understanding and imagination through received knowledge, stereotypes, or whatever they can think of: all become points of discussion. The point of teaching then becomes to shape, counterpoint, and correct where appropriate, and deepen these understandings.

Examples of such starting points that I often hear include islands with palm trees, neon and glass skyscrapers, harbors, tattoos and bodies, burning battleships at Pearl Harbor, undersea volcanoes, Polynesian voyaging canoes, mushroom clouds over Pacific atolls, container ships and passenger liners, littoral encounters between Islanders and outlanders, Japanese anime characters, banquets of Chinese cuisine, submerged islands, monolithic architecture and stone ruins, ancient temples, sugarcane plantations, San Francisco gold miners, Spanish galleons . . . the list is inexhaustible. Are any of these “wrong”? No, certainly. The point, though, is to rescue them from the merely anecdotal or the simple image or stereotype and re-incorporate them into a wider comparative and analytic understanding.

The idea here is not to present a catalog or even an overview, but to im-

mediately frame the state of our knowledge. Regarding the Pacific, what narratives and tropes are already familiar and accessible?¹ Many students will claim they don't know any, but in fact they do: the Pacific War, islands and paradise, cannibals and missionaries, the Pacific Rim and Asian tigers, consumer goods and touristic representations. Teaching this way organizes inquiries around the principle of what we think we know — beginning not with the historical record and evidence, but with received wisdom and imaginings. Through this, questions can develop, such as, what do we conjure or pull from deep cultural references about the Pacific? Be aware and even reassured that neither scholars nor even inhabitants of the region necessarily agree about the defining parameters. More specifically, how has the Pacific been differently imagined from west to east, and east to west (or north to south)?

The Pacific can be understood as denominated through a number of big stories, even while no standard approach has yet evolved. From a time of ancient migrations and seaborne empires to one of trade and global power with the Chinese (Zheng He's Treasure Fleets), then the Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish (following Vasco da Gama, Cornelis de Houtmann, and Ferdinand Magellan), the bigger picture has constantly shifted. By the eighteenth century, the site of the search for souls and treasure was reimagined as an eighteenth-century paradise for Enlightenment Europe and then despoiled by the encroachments of traders, missionaries, and military forces — though the idyllic imaginary remains the constant in modern tourism. By the middle of the nineteenth century, an age of European empire was in full force, with conquests from Tahiti to Canton and settler colonies stretching across Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawai'i, the Philippines, and California.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked the Pacific as a theater of global warfare, beginning in East Asia, from the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese conflicts, spreading through Korea, Taiwan, and coastal China and the Philippines to Singapore, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Guam, and the Marshall Islands. The United States recognizes the primacy of Pearl Harbor in the struggle, as well as Iwo Jima,

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just as the Japanese underscore the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The later twentieth and twenty-first centuries are marked by postwar colonial legacies and sovereignty struggles, from China and Vietnam to New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands, claims for redress from indigenous peoples, and issues of global impact: nuclear testing and environmental destruction, including overfishing, coral bleaching, and rising waters due to climate change. Concomitantly, this has also been the moment of the postwar eminence of the Japanese export economy, superseded by China as a political and foreign investment behemoth, and the spread of Asian consumer products and popular culture all around the world. Questions remain as to whether the globe faces a Pacific Century. All of these issues address the main points about how I might underscore key elements, themes, events, and stories in an introductory approach. My point here, however, is not to determine a standard narrative but to indicate precisely that the Pacific is a subject that must be defined, assembled, shaped, and bounded before it can be discussed.

You might notice that in the above paragraphs I have organized my touchstones around the most venerable of historical conventions: chronology. Ancient migrations and treasure fleets are located in a time recorded in archaeological and early documentary records, moving up through an early modern, Enlightenment, colonial, and then Pacific Century narrative. Still, the work need not be followed or employed in a linear fashion. Teachers interested in general knowledge from archaeology, folklore, linguistics, and the ancient Pacific can focus first on the early sections. Instructors more concerned about postcolonial and contemporary sovereignty and identity struggles can begin later in the narrative.

Perhaps the most interesting teaching experiences come, to my view, where these intersect, for example, in discussing the ways that twentieth-century anthropological studies of Pacific peoples still framed cultures as somehow primitive or surviving from primordial ages, or the ways that archaeological sites and ancestral remains become points of debate and political contest between indigenous communities, museums, and scientific

researchers. Any section or chapter can be unpacked by theme, evidence, or example. As a teacher, I favor consistently relating the past and present to each other, and in what follows I have presented an array of particular cases that I find well suited to elucidate particular themes or issues. I've included many and encourage instructors to develop their own with their students. You will find that every other paragraph or section concludes with questions I use or concepts around which I have students reflect, comparing their own lived experience in the present with an understanding of the past. These are key to my approach. Almost all instructors can search for materials, summaries, overviews, and lesson plans independently, suiting their own interests and priorities. I find, however, that when approaching a new field, my principal challenges are to know what questions are asked in the field and what debates frame the discussions, and to figure out how academic and historiographical inquiries can become everyday questions for my students. These questions — always connecting touchstones in the discipline with what students might already imagine or think about — run throughout the primer as a sort of continuous dialogue with the reader.

For example, early reconstructions and contemporary identity struggles need not be iterations of general analytic categories like “bodies,” “races,” or “cultures.” Rather, I find that engaging teaching places subjects and points of contact in real, material contexts. So here are some ways I might enter a conversation: the history of tattooing and body art, including scarification, can be referred to and then discussed in endless variations. What do these practices mean to our students, specifically when situated within particular familial or peer relationships? Movies (even movies about pirates) feature themes that cross over maritime and Pacific histories, water sports, notably surfing (the Hawaiian sport of kings), and other forms that come down from Oceania. How do popular entertainments or recreational practices become artifacts of historical inquiry when placed back within their own times? Equally, many students know about the Pacific Ring of Fire, and illustrations of volcanic activity or, equally, world-noted archaeological splendors like Easter Island both become subjects perennially accessible for discussion. How do we get beyond

stories of marvels and mysteries? Also, comparative looks at pictographs and other forms of ideographic language and representation are all ways to begin discussions without prior knowledge, which is where in most cases the teaching begins.

Think beyond the Discipline

Having explored the possibilities — there is no correct or comprehensive narration — of what Pacific histories might be, it seems appropriate to then turn to what can be organized as foundational principles and stories. I find it useful to think about putting together a teaching syllabus as analogous to other creative endeavors. My family, for a time, was in the Japanese restaurant business, and I have more than once likened teaching to preparing and serving a multicourse dinner. It takes time to conceptualize the menu and imagine the dishes, distinguish appetizers and entrees, and decide which elements go together — salty, sweet, sour, light, heavy. Actual writing and presentation I liken to creating a reduction — begin with a large pot of boiling stock and innumerable vegetables, bones, and seasonings, and evaporate them until only a fine glaze remains at the bottom — a small quantity of liquid, but intensely concentrated and flavorful.

Likewise, I encourage teachers to bring whatever experiences they carry to a teaching project. I've learned a lot from hearing my colleagues talk about their backgrounds in sports, art, dance, or business. Students come with lives: get them to think about that. For example, I have a background in music performing and recording. When I began teaching, I did not know much about writing books or lectures, but I did know how to write and make a record album. I knew we would have, say, ten tracks that constitute a complete statement or concept. Yet each track — and the sequencing is important — would do something different. One track is the lead-off tune to set a mood, one is the hit single with the catchy motif, one is the expressive ballad, and one is a piece that gets everyone up and dancing. To me, writing books and teaching plans are both this way, and so is a syllabus. The different sections do different things, even as they cohere as a complete statement of the author. Each piece has different elements or instrumentation, a rhythm, and a chorus or refrain.

This is not such an odd way of thinking about academic teaching as it may first appear. I could make a case for insisting on the multiple ways in which histories are expressed as a function of Pacific approaches. Students should hear that the ways they understand history teaching and learning often obey a rather standard Western set of materials and practices—the archive, document, scholarly monograph, textbook, and the teacher who lectures or presents evidence, analysis, and ideas. Yet it is worth noting that Pacific Island studies, particularly, evolved and were formalized in the mid-twentieth century and so developed as a discipline in tandem with, and supported by, the approaches and methodologies of anthropologists, linguists, archaeologists, artists, storytellers, political activists, community leaders, and a wide, nonacademic imperative.

Many oral traditions have been embodied in performative approaches to teaching, and the presence of image, gesture, chant, artisanal work like carving, poetry, and other forms is readily incorporated into the academic and analytical scholarly format of other histories. It is not impossible, and in some cases not even unusual, to recognize scholars who dance, sing, chant, perform, or otherwise play out, embody, and enact histories as living principles. With proper respect and appreciation, students should understand that this is not a form of entertainment accompanying the scholarship, but a direct expression of a lived past tied to formal instruction. I encourage students to reflect upon and try to understand other examples and traditions of such embodied and enacted knowledge, and to explore ways they could express this as their own learning, drawing on their own personal histories. The caveats here are, of course, to be concerned about reckless and disrespectful cultural appropriation. No student, or teacher, should ever attempt to imitate a cultural form, practice, experience, or tradition except with honest guidance, permission, and genuine commitment. But one should ask questions and be open to learning how to learn, not regarding the unfamiliar only as other and untouchable.

One of the purposes here is to reflect on common and current conversations and debates as I understand them in Pacific histories. To approach this, I focus on placing the Pacific Islands at the center of analysis,

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radiating in a network to connect East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, Australasia, South America, and North America in lessons, discussions, and suggested prompts, rather than focusing on continental or national histories of, for example, Japan and China, Canada, the United States, or western Latin America. Also, I highlight not the Pacific Rim, but a network across the basin. This is certainly a contested perspective, as “Pacific” has been widely and long adopted as a term to describe fundamentally East Asian histories, or North American and East Asian relations, especially in political and socioeconomic terms. In my early years of teaching Pacific histories, I was surprised how often students — and even colleagues at academic conferences — would identify my work as the study of the Pacific Rim. It seemed obvious to them that this was the proper subject of something called the Pacific. Ask students again: What is it that they understand or assume about the Pacific?

Much of this is understandable from an Occidental perspective — in Western-based teaching, the Pacific is often synonymous with war, trade, and political contests, especially between Japan, China, Taiwan, North and South Korea, and the United States, as well as European powers. I knew this geography defined many assumptions about proper subject matter and important global engagements, but felt this was not necessarily where the field should be going. Integrating those dynamics with the histories of Oceanian island peoples, Southeast Asia, and Latin America was something I wanted to do, drawing these narratives into thinking of Pacific histories as forms of world history.

I have found it useful to at least attempt to begin with what students might know about history, often a national, global, or civilizational narrative. What do they understand as the primary categories? I realized I needed to spend some time understanding how chapters in textbooks used by many students are, whether recognized or not, thematically and chronologically arranged to present theses about how time, events, and experience are organized. I had done some teaching, for example, in modern European history. Whatever themes or inflections or perspectives may be followed, generations of scholars and conventions have produced, at mini-

mum, a debated but standard narrative: Enlightenment, French Revolution, Industrial Revolution, nationalist struggles leading up through world wars, Cold War divisions, and then on into the twenty-first century.

These are the classic, even stereotypical, textbook categories of historical writing in a particular field. Emphases and examples may underscore particular interventions—gender, race, or class questions. Yet the textbook frameworks—if only as familiar stories from which to develop counterpoints and contests—are useful. Even Atlantic history, writ large, has key markers: the Atlantic revolutions in the American colonies, France, Haiti and the Caribbean, the mercantile and slaving economies, the triangular trade, and the constant migrations and movements of peoples. Scholars have continued to explore and reexamine these. What textbook chapters and narratives are already ingrained in student thinking? Are they aware how the stories have changed over the generations?²

In a similar fashion, the discussions here are both synchronic and diachronic. That is, they examine relationships and connections between actors and events in a given time period, and also move sequentially across time. For this reason, the chapters do follow a general chronology—from reconstructions of ancient societies and practices up to the contemporary period. Because Pacific history as a narrative has fewer conventions than some fields, I have provided my own version of what that story might look like—from early navigations and prehistoric civilizations to atomic testing and climate change. In the last sections of the volume I am very practical, presenting references, referrals, and what I consider some helpful resources in a straightforward toolbox fashion: the exams and assignments I give, questions I ask, exercises I use, and a running account of course plans, syllabi, and digital collections (newspapers, documents, video, film, illustrations, and photographs) recommended by colleagues and contributed by teachers around the world. A good outcome for this volume would be to take away some general ideas and a few examples and then draw on the vast resources of available collections to piece together appropriate, usable, and customized teaching plans.

Before that, though, I find it useful to begin with defining terms. I recommend doing this. What do we even mean by “the Pacific”? This is some-

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thing of a fraught question in general Pacific studies, where little consensus has developed as to what might constitute an approach. Anglophone perspectives have long looked to the eighteenth century and the seminal voyages of the English navigator James Cook as foundational. Global Europeanists also focus on antecedent Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch interventions. Asian and comparative scholars recognize Chinese and Malay political and trading networks, and Oceanian scholars emphasize the roles of island polities resulting from early migrations of peoples who would later be denominated with (and then would appropriate) some generalized identities as Pacific Islanders: Melanesians, Polynesians, and Micronesians.

These assertions, of course, seem to pose new questions: Where shall the boundaries of the Pacific be set? Should there be, in fact, many Pacifics, many domains, clustered around archipelagoes, Asian coastal empires, American maritime trading societies? Or, setting aside all but the most general of outlines framed by the continents and arbitrarily marked by the Bering Strait, the Strait of Magellan, and the Strait of Malacca, perhaps Pacific histories should be less about defining geographies than about looking at the places and points of encounter and connection, a network or constellation of shifting locales, more like wave patterns and currents rather than mapped territories.

These are daunting questions that have solid historiography behind them. Any teacher could profitably look to works by historians like Rainer Buschmann, who has designated the multiple narrations of Pacific histories, or to the great cultures and civilizations of Oskar Spate, to the micro-historical insights of Greg Dening, the global Europeanisms of Nicholas Thomas or John Gascoigne, the multisited perspectives of David Armitage and Alison Bashford, the decolonized, indigenous networks of Tracey Banivanua-Mar, or the political culture inflections of Vilsoni Hereniko.³ But most teachers don't have time to read scores of academic studies and meet with and talk to dozens of other researchers and scholars around the world. So here I'm after a more concise overview that offers broad themes and useful examples.

Getting there can be complicated. Indeed, one of the resonant legacies

of the Pacific as an academic domain is the way in which multiple specialties, journals, conferences, and scholars do not readily communicate with each other. Thus Asianists are often focused on China, Korea, and Japan and connected to Southeast Asia. South Asia is often a field apart. There is little regular communication — though there is some newer, bold scholarship — with those working in Oceanian islands (often dominated by anthropologists), and Americanists often look inwardly to the United States (though including Hawai‘i and adding the Philippines), or to studies in Latin America, for political, cultural, and social coherence and geographic acceptance. What do you, or your students, think of as logically — or only tangentially — to be included?

In this way, large surveys are still appropriate. Consider single works by Shane Barter and Michael Wiener, or Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez’s multivolume compendia of thematic essays that survey many disciplines to describe a Pacific domain across centuries and geographies.⁴ One can always begin with an overview — that is, a map and a schematic setting forth of the lands, regions, nations, and cultures to be studied. Yet one can also begin the other way around — with a particular case. This is a notable approach of Barter and Wiener, who launch their survey by focusing, for example, on a drifting, abandoned ship, years after Japan’s devastating tsunami in 2011 and the way the craft transited on currents across the ocean from Japan to North America. As such, it is a figure that bears signs of histories, natural challenges, and human disaster, immediately locating the narratives of connectedness and the fluid nature of Pacific studies. Beginning with such a case — here the *Kazu Maru* — is an engaging technique that gives materiality to the larger themes. The framing here around the what, how, and why of the Pacific Basin is a good approach: one cannot speak much about something without trying to define what it is, and the Pacific is as much a construction as a subject, a point well worth elaborating.

Launching into an overview of terminologies such as the “Asia-Pacific” and the conventions of maps and geography are useful at this point. Rather than just describing regions in terms of labels, I prefer to seek out the use of those terms, those labels, and their origins. How did Polynesia become

“Polynesia?” In this way, I focus instead on the historical development of such categories and the lived experience of the Pacific; this could be also delineated as a potential attraction for readers. Often in textbooks, episodes taken from everyday life are located in sidebars. Make these sidebars, anecdotes, and examples the central ways of telling the story, launching from stories of an individual life, an immigrant tale, a boat, a note from a personal journal, a moment of conflict.

Not surprisingly, my students tend to understand the Pacific in terms of their own generation. That is, their chronological framework sets the Pacific Basin in a globalization paradigm, suggesting that the domain is of interest because of a historic shift away from an Atlantic-centered world in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is probably an indisputable claim, though it is a negative argument — the Pacific is “not” the Atlantic — and looking at maps that feature North America and Europe around the Atlantic with the Pacific divided at the Bering Strait is something of a convention that pictures the globe from an Occidental perspective. Rather, I strongly suggest that the Pacific is not suddenly becoming globalized, but is rather returning to the attention of the Atlantic world after having been advanced in navigation and voyaging, or religious and commercial power, throughout previous millennia.

In tracing out the contours of multiple cultures and civilizations, it is fine to search for common themes or purposes as linking devices, such as a coherent international-political voice, while developing from a staggering complexity of histories, cultures, and traditions. I can also appreciate the teaching approach of student friendliness here. Much classroom work can focus on the purposive energy of a scholarly *Lonely Planet* guide — rendered images of backpacking locales, historical summaries, country information, reflections on colonial legacies, and surveys of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Offer your students material senses of places to visit and understand, foods to eat, people to meet, climates to feel. Sometimes I just bring my own collection of travel books, journals, and guides to class and read from them, which most students find engaging. We share impressions and ideas in the form of travelers’ tales, relating our experiences, our understandings, and of course our misperceptions and lack of

understanding about different parts of the world — all the more reason to want to learn the histories. Getting beyond the picturesque or touristic is key.

Though rich in detail, sights, sounds, and sketches, one thing travel guides often lack is a critical analytic framework. So, in teaching it is worth positing assertions that complex regions, such as, say, Southeast Asia, are coherent in diversity. Such claims can be framed around referencing political and international alliances such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, though thinking about common overlays of “mandala” political rule of local powers allied to royal houses and Buddhist cosmologies are equally important. In some cases, one can also take the almanac approach to complex regions and be more classically encyclopedic — do some prosaic but useful research starting with national surveys and statistics — with a core argument about the radiance and importance of, for example, Chinese civilization in the constitution of East Asia as a geopolitical entity. The national surveys cover the fundamentals and stand out in emphasizing the ways in which borders, boundaries, and occupations have transformed over time. This is a key point historically, of course — the map of today is only a current iteration of transformations and clashes over centuries, even millennia. Don’t hesitate to compare maps across generations as evidence of this point.

Another way to show off a wider range of scholarship is, like the micro-historical case approach, to play with time by presenting histories with a thematic emphasis on memory and forgetting, a compelling lens and one that both engages the imagination and will probably be interesting for students. This approach highlights a tension not always evident in scholarship and introductory teaching: the constructedness of scholarly knowledge. One can interweave lessons that shine a light on the very parties and interests that debate and strive to control the past and present, whereas overviews will tend to hew more closely to the standard textbook approach of presenting data and standardized narratives. This approach can be notable for challenging the conventions that students call “the facts” but which are regularly debated.

Over time, I’ve used any number of examples for in-class debates or

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discussions. These have included contests like geopolitical maneuverings around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands between Japan and China, and how they are named and to whom they belong; or the Japanese war memorial Yasukuni (honoring war criminals or war dead?); or denials of the Rape of Nanjing legacies where commemorations are extolled or denounced. Readers can make their own analogies to other controversies. The pairing of, for example, the Japanese seizure and colonization of Manchuria with U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 and the internment of Japanese Americans gives specificity to the motivations of historical actors by offering comparisons as well as particular contexts. The Australian commemorations, known as Sorry Day, for historical wrongs against Aboriginal populations are also a fraught terrain. Should one apologize for the past? Can one?

All of these are profound teaching opportunities. From slavery in the United States to apartheid in South Africa to the legacies of the European Holocaust, students can certainly think of examples from their own local or national contexts. These events are contested and reinterpreted in every generation. Commemorative sites and apology debates maintain this approach to thinking about political science and history, especially, as fluid, unstable, and constantly reimaged. One hopes that other contributions to the project might reflect some of these issues; cases could be drawn from almost anywhere — Laos and Cambodia, Australia, Chile and Guatemala, coastal Canada, European states, African countries, and certainly the United States. What all of the examples above suggest is that rather than presenting the big map and picture and then trying to populate a domain, my students and I begin by assembling the picture. So, Pacific histories begin with fragments, cases, images, artifacts, and episodes. Like an interoceanic peregrination, these are assembled — it is, in fact, an assemblage approach — into this thing called Pacific histories.

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← Notes →

Introduction

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