

When the Emperor Was Divine and the First Year Seminar

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<http://www.mnsu.edu/commonread/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MSUCommonRead>

I. Purchase and read the book over the summer in light of FYEX Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

- Think of yourself as the students' *first model* of what it means to be an educated, critical thinker, member of a university community, and citizen for first-year students.
 1. Goals: *To promote further development of student success skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking; help students gain intellectual confidence; build in the expectation of academic success; and to provide assistance in making the transition to the University.*
 2. Student Learning Outcomes:
 - a. Experience higher personal expectations of his/her ability to meaningfully participate in academic life.
 - b. Define and give examples of critical thinking ("analyzing or evaluating information... in order to work through a problem or decision").
 - c. Interact with other students regarding academic matters.
 - d. Affirm that careful thinking is an important aspect of the educational process.
 - e. Make a comfortable transition to college life.

II. Prepare students to read (or re-read) the book

- Discuss the 1000 Peace Crane Project occurring on campus:
<http://www.mnsu.edu/commonread/cranes/thousandcranes.html>. Why is there a crane on the book cover? What is the symbolism of this image? Why did the artist choose this image. If students have different book covers, compare these covers or look up covers online.
- Ask them to research the Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. This exercise provides historical context for students and provides common ground for instructors to use during discussion. History.com is an excellent resource to provide to students:
<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/japanese-american-relocation>.
- Ask students to find a professional review of *When the Emperor Was Divine*. Use the model of one found in *The New York Times*, by Michael Upchurch:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/22/books/the-last-roundup.html?pagewanted=all>

III. Link whole book, or even specific sections of it, to your recommended topics for the course and/or *Keys to Success* (if you use it).

- Example ideas:
 1. First Weeks of Semester
 - a. Migration to college
 - Compare your chosen migration to MSU with the family's forced migration to the internment camp; relate this transition to the importance of persistence and the struggles inherent within triumph over adversity.
 - b. Research Resources: Link to library tour/reference page assignment

- Link tour to focused research agenda (i.e. not merely a general tour) where students search for information related to the Japanese Internment Camps
 - **OR** The Amazing Library Race activity is themed around Common Read topics. Students will learn how to navigate the library while encountering resources related to the Common Read. Following the library visit, students can reflect on the experience of using an academic library and on how their Amazing Race topic relates to this year's Common Read book.
- c. Diversity Matters: Link to cultural diversity event/culture night.
- What is "culture"? What is your culture?
 - What does cultural competence mean in your own field of interest/prospective profession? Why would it be significant?
 - How might individuals adapt to diverse geographic and cultural environments?
 - Can you identify similarities and differences between your own cultural characteristics and those demonstrated in a university culture night?
2. Current Events
- a. Refugee Crisis as a Global Issue
- Consider using one of these resources to explore the current refugee crisis with your students: <http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtntwtnt-refugees.php>.
 - What are the similarities / differences between the Japanese Internment Camps and some current rhetoric around the refugee crisis?
 - Why is it important for college students and university campuses in general to consider global issues?
 - What can we do as educated individuals to advocate on behalf of those who do not have the power to assert their own voice?

IV. Link course syllabus and activities with Common Read-related events

- For information about campus activities, visit <http://www.mnsu.edu/commonread/>
- Examples:
 1. Campus Involvement: All FYEX 100 students are encouraged to attend at least 3-4 campus activities/events. Here are some you can integrate into your course.
 - a. Otsuka lecture: Wednesday, October 19th at 7 p.m. in the CSU Ballroom
 - b. Informal book group discussions hosted by honors students during fall semester. All staff can invite honors students to attend your FYEX classes to discuss the book.
 2. Service Project: LC students are required to create/participate in a service project during the fall semester.
 - a. One could link the project to several available services on behalf of new immigrants to Minnesota and their families.
 3. Make a peace crane for the 1000 Peace Crane Project. The Library will provide classroom activity packets upon request.