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Dr. Anne Blankenship is Associate Professor of Religious Studies in NDSU's History, Philosophy, & Religious Studies Department. Her research investigates religious responses to injustice and relationships between national, racial, and religious identities. Blankenship's current book project is titled *Religion, Race, and Immigration: How Jews, Catholics, and Protestants Faced Mass Immigration, 1882-1924*. The project has received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Academy of Religion, and several other institutions. She received her doctoral degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Abstract: At the turn of the twentieth century, millions of southern Italians and Eastern Europeans entered the United States. Their presence alarmed most Americans, not least their Catholic and Jewish co-religionists. By the late 1800's, Irish Catholics and German Jews had gained tentative acceptance within American society, and many felt that these new immigrants with their Old World dress, language, religious practices, and food threatened that status. Thus began concerted campaigns of Americanization, one white Protestants supported as well. This presentation explores how their differing definitions of Americanization coincided or clashed and the closely related role of religion.

By Dr. Blankenship

[Just Immigration and the Social Gospel](#) This essay reconsiders the nation's current immigration problems by examining how social gospel leaders faced the country's first immigration laws based on the standards they devised and asks who, if any, exemplified the heart of the social gospel in relation to immigration. It focuses on four leaders of the social gospel: Washington Gladden, the so-called Father of the Social Gospel; Walter Rauschenbusch, the movement's most prominent theologian; Josiah Strong, a leader of the social gospel most often, if perhaps unfairly, remembered for his proclamations of Anglo-Protestant superiority; and Sidney Gulick, a missionary and social activist. While immigration was a major issue in the United States then and now, scholars have given little attention to the relationship between the social gospel and positions on immigration policy. The essay argues that while founders of the movement like Gladden and Rauschenbusch did not live up to the movement's potential in regard to immigration, leaders like Strong and, to a much greater degree, Gulick did.

[Religion and Japanese American Incarceration](#) Abundant scholarship analyzes the United States' incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, but the subject of religion in the camps and religious responses to the incarceration has been long overlooked. The government promised freedom of religion in the camps while encouraging Japanese Americans to consolidate worship into one Buddhist, one Catholic, and one Protestant church in each incarceration center. Incarcerated found strength through fellowship and religious faith. Outside of the camps, progressive Christians tried to alleviate the harms caused by the injustice and increase tolerance around the country. The field offers examples of early race relations work within American Protestantism and introduces the ways in which the government prioritized and attempted to enforce freedom of religion within a fabricated and restricted wartime environment. Further examination of these events will complement studies of 20th century liberal Christianity, American Buddhism, religious liberty and the state, the early civil rights movement, religion and World War II, and Asian American theology.

[Civil Religious Dissent: Patriotism and Resistance in a Japanese American Incarceration Camp](#) During the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans, the largely Buddhist population of Idaho's Minidoka incarceration camp organized elaborate Christmas festivities each year. Many outsiders and white employees at the camp saw these celebrations as signs of assimilation into American culture, but this article argues that the material productions of the festivities expressed more complicated attitudes. Christmas cards, decorations, and trees contained messages of dissent and patriotism within an adoption of American civil religious practices. Incarcerated demonstrated the flexibility of that contentious category, civil religion, by using iconic symbols and practices of the American holiday to express their frustrations with the nation. Christmas cards replaced the classic image of snow-covered houses with one of snow-covered barracks. Decorative displays juxtaposed idealistic portrayals of past family holidays with their current, grim reality. The voluntary substitution of sagebrush trees for evergreens acknowledged their transformed circumstances and showed resolve to sustain tradition. Through these acts of civil religious dissent, incarcerated visually depicted the wounds caused by a government stripping its citizens of their fundamental rights.

Articles

[How Italians Became White](#) (2019)

[The Long History of Xenophobia in America](#) (2020)

[Immigrant Memoirs in the Service of Americanization: Between "the Melting Pot" and Cultural Pluralism](#) (2021)

Government Sources

[Amendment of Immigration Laws](#), Resolutions, views of Southern Governors, and Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House of Representatives Relative to Excluding the Undesirable Immigrants by Amending the Immigration Laws (1912)

[Proceedings Americanization Conference](#), held under the auspices of the Americanization Division Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior (1919)

[Training Teachers for Americanization](#), a Course of Study for Normal Schools and Teachers' Institutes (1920)

Books

[The Problem of Americanization](#) by Peter Roberts (1920)

Multimedia - Ellis Island

[Arrival of Immigrants, Ellis Island](#) (3:47 minutes)

[Island of Hope, Island of Tears](#) (28:24 minutes)

[Virtual Tour](#) of Ellis Island (2015)

Virtual Exhibit

[The Tenement Museum "In Praise of Stuff"](#) view life in largely immigrant NYC neighborhoods through the 19