

**Japan Across the Disciplines**

Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas October 6-8, 2022

Thursday, October 6th

Time Location Activity

8:30 – 9:00 RC 101 Registration and Welcome

9:00 – 10:30 RC 101 **“Anime Beyond Japan: Approaches to Studying Anime”**

David Mai

Assistant Teaching Professor, Film and Media Studies, University of Kansas

10:30 – 10:50 RC 101 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 RC 101 **"Teaching Japan on American TV: Gentle Ways to Approach**

**Difficult Issues"**

Dr. Alisa Freedman

Professor, Japanese Literature, Cultural Studies, & Gender, University of Oregon

12:30 – 1:30 RC 101 Lunch

1:30 – 2:55 RC 101 **Strategies for Integrating Japan Across the Disciplines**

Dr. Stacia Bensyl & JSA Board Members

2:55 – 3:15 RC 101 Coffee Break

3:15 – 4:45 RC 101 **“Involuntary Consent: The Illusion of Choice in Japan’s Adult**

**Video Industry”**

Dr. Akiko Takeyama

Director, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas

6:00 BBQ Dinner at Dawn Gale’s home

Friday, October 7th

Time Location Activity

8:30 – 10:00 RC 175 **“‘Japaneseness’ as an unmarked category: What does it**

**mean to be “Japanese” or “not truly Japanese” in an increasingly diverse Japanese society?”**

Dr. Ayako Mizumura

Academic Director, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas

10:00 – 10:20 RC 175 Coffee Break

10:20 – 11:50 RC 175 **“Japanese Territorial Disputes”**

Dr. Alexis Dudden

Professor, Department of History, University of Connecticut

12:00 – 1:30 RC 270 Lunch Presentation

**“Japanese Art in and out of Context: Four Themes Within**

**the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art”**

Dr. Sherry Fowler

Professor of Japanese Art History, University of Kansas

2:30 – 5:30 Nelson - **Tour the Japan gallery and visit other galleries of interest**

Atkins

Museum

5:30 Rozzelle **Sips, Snacks, and Live Music**

Court

Saturday, October 8th

10:00 – 7:00 JCCC **Greater Kansas City Japan Festival**

\*\*Enjoy cultural displays, performances, workshops, and presentations

Of particular interest: additional presentations by Dr. Alisa Freedman and Dr. Ayako Mizumura, as well as presentations by JSA members: Dr. Sarah Aptilon, Dr. Fay Beauchamp, Dr. Michael Charlton, Dr. Paul Dunscomb, Dr. Andrea Stover, and Dr. Jennifer Welsh.

Abstracts

**“Anime Beyond Japan: Approaches to Studying Anime”**

David Mai

Why should we study anime? Anime functions as a cultural barometer, but it is not only a reflection of Japan but of global culture as well. Anime has shifted from being a Japanese product and has become a phenomenon received across many cultures—influencing Western sensibilities of aesthetics, consumership, and identity. For these reasons, I aim to provide a variety of approaches to studying anime both as a globally influential art form and industry. The strategies I provide will allow educators to engage students with anime to make inquiries about history, gender and sexuality, industry production, national identity, fan cultures, and other topics.

**"Teaching Japan on American TV: Gentle Ways to Approach Difficult Issues"**

Dr. Alisa Freedman

American TV comedies about Japan can be powerful teaching tools. TV comedies from the 1950s to the present have reflected how Americans have felt about Japan. These programs show changing patterns of cultural globalization and perpetuate national stereotypes while verifying Japan’s international influence. Television presents an alternative history of American fascinations with and fears of Japan. Drawing from my book, *Japan on American TV*, I will offer strategies for using TV comedies to teach serious historical issues and to gently approach racism, cultural essentialism, cultural appropriation, and other issues otherwise difficult to discuss.

**“Involuntary Consent: The Illusion of Choice in Japan's Adult Video Industry”**

Dr. Akiko Takeyama

The popularity of pornography is predicated on the idea those participating have given their consent. That is what allows the porn industry to dominate the media economy today, generating staggering sums of money. Looking at behind-the-scenes negotiations and abuses in Japan's massive adult video industry, this talk challenges this pervasive notion with the idea of "involuntary consent." This phenomenon, Dr. Takeyama argues, is ubiquitous, not only in the porn industry but in our everyday lives, and yet modern society, built on beliefs of autonomy, free choice, and equality, renders it all but invisible.

**“‘Japaneseness’ as an unmarked category: What does it mean to be “Japanese” or “not truly**

**Japanese” in an increasingly diverse Japanese society?”**

Dr. Ayako Mizumura

Japan is often perceived as a homogenous country. Many Japanese people still view themselves

as a mono-ethnic people. Japanese politicians have embraced racial and cultural homogeneity to

assert Japan’s uniqueness as the source of success and power that enabled Japan to attain world

economic advancement. Is Japan a homogeneous country? Absolutely not. The myth of

homogeneity continues to exclude Japan’s minority groups such as the Ainu, Okinawans,

Burakumin, and Zainichi Koreans from master narratives of Japanese history. Growing numbers

of laborer immigrants and mixed-race Japanese have gained attention in and outside Japan. Many

of these minority populations are Japanese citizens, yet they are often perceived as “not truly

Japanese,” marginalized, and treated as Other. This presentation is an overview of some minority

groups in Japan. I discuss how “Japaneseness” excludes anyone who does not fit characteristics

that constitute “Japanese.” What does it mean to be “Japanese” or “not truly Japanese” in an

increasingly diverse Japanese society?

**“Japanese Territorial Disputes”**

Dr. Alexis Dudden, University of Connecticut

Japan has territorial disputes with each of its international neighbors in the form of sovereignty contests over small islands that are shards of its once vast 20th-century empire. Recently emerging global ocean laws have taken root that make it in every nation’s interests to lay claim to exclusively controlled ocean space. As a result, a new kind of ocean imperialism is underway, compelling some nations to take maximalist approaches and others more flexible positions toward defining their countries’ respective claims. Since the 1990s, Japanese leaders have made clear that they are collectively committed to national policies and planning that reorient Japan as a maritime nation, which was not the case in the wake of the nation’s devastating losses in World War II. The question now is whether Japanese leaders will adopt a rigid definition for Japan or a more fluid one that emphasizes borderlines in the sea around it.

**“Japanese Art in and out of Context: Four Themes within the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

**Japan Studies Association Workshop”**

Dr. Sherry Fowler, University of Kansas

This workshop explores the rich holdings of Japanese art on display at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. An art museum is a space to admire and study objects removed from one context and placed into a new one. What can we learn about things that have been displaced from their original environments? What do they tell us about Japan of the past and how may we interpret them in the present? Since the museum offers the opportunity to see actual pieces, as opposed to virtual images, how should we make the most of this experience and help others to do so? We will consider these questions alongside four themes - Buddhism, tea culture, *ukiyo-e*, and landscape-painting formats - found among the artworks displayed in the Japan gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Presenter Bios

**Dr. Alexis Dudden**

Alexis Dudden is professor of history at the University of Connecticut and was recently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC (2021-2022). She holds degrees from Columbia (1991) and the University of Chicago (1998). Since 1985, Dudden has lived and studied for extended periods of time in Japan and South Korea and is the recipient of the *Chosun Ilbo*2015 Manhae Peace Prize. She appears regularly on *NPR* and in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Guardian*, and her ongoing research concerns maritime Northeast Asia and focuses on the globally changing meaning of oceans and islands.

**Dr. Sherry Fowler**

Sherry Fowler is a Professor of Japanese Art History at the University of Kansas. Her publications include the books, *Accounts and Images of Six Kannon in Japan* in 2016 and *Murōji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple* in 2005. This year she co-authored the article “Japanese Buddhist Sculpture” with Yui Suzuki for *Oxford Bibliographies in Art History*. Dr. Fowler's interests include pre-modern Japanese sculpture, pilgrimage prints, foreign interactions with Japanese art, issues of collecting, and ritual. She is now finishing a book on the relationship between dragons, water, and Buddhist temple bells in Japan, which was supported last year by an American Council of Learned Society / Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Research Fellowship in Buddhist Studies.

**Dr. Alisa Freedman**

Alisa Freedman is a Professor of Japanese Literature, Cultural Studies, and Gender at the University of Oregon*.* Her books include *Japan on American TV: Screaming Samurai Form Anime Clubs in the Land of the Lost*, *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road*, an annotated translation of Kawabata Yasunari’s *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa*, and co-edited volumes on *Modern Girls on the Go: Gender, Mobility, and Labor in Japan* and *Introducing Japanese Popular Culture.*

**David Mai**

David Mai is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of Kansas. As a filmmaker and visual artist, his creative work in films and interactive media is centered on experimental forms of aesthetics. His research examines affective sensations through cinematic kinesis and the audio haptics. His notable programs include San Francisco’s Chinatown Community Development Center, SF’s historic Roxie, and the Berkeley Art Museum Pacific Film Archive.

**Dr. Ayako Mizumura**

Ayako Mizumura earned her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Kansas and a B.A. in International Studies from the University of Oregon. Since 2014 she has worked at the Center for East Asian Studies at

KU. As Academic Program Director, Dr. Mizumura manages the M.A. program in Contemporary East Asian

Studies. She has taught numerous courses, including Minorities in Japan, which she created. Her

current research is on the life history of Japanese women, so-called “war brides,” who moved to the U.S,

particularly to the Midwest. As KU’s 2022-23 Digital Humanities fellow, Dr. Mizumura will create an

interactive digital exhibition website to disseminate their migrant stories widely. Finally, as part

of outreach activities and personal interest, Dr. Mizumura reaches out to students, educators, and communities to promote East Asian cultures, focusing on the Japanese tea ceremony as a practitioner of the *Urasenke* school tea ceremony.

**Dr. Akiko Takeyama**

Akiko Takeyama is Director of the Center for East Asian Studies and Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on changing gender, sexuality, and class dynamics in contemporary Japan. Her first book, *Staged Seduction: Selling Dreams in a Tokyo Host Club* (2016, Stanford University Press), explores the commercialization of intimate relationships in Japan's so-called host clubs. Her second book, *Involuntary Consent: The Illusion of Choice in Japan's Adult Video Industry* (2023, Stanford University Press), rethinks the liberal notion of autonomy, freedom, and equality under the law.