

Proseminar 2025

Hosted by Rikkyo University

Co-hosted by Japanese Association for American Studies, ASA, OAH

Sponsored by Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission

In association with Doshisha University, Shirayuri University

Date: Tuesday June 3rd, 2025

Time: 13:30–17:00 *Japan Standard Time

Venue: Tachikawa Memorial Hall, Rikkyo University (Ikebukuro Campus)

Commentators:

Moustafa Bayoumi (ASA, Brooklyn College) [online]

Krystyn Moon (ASA, University of Mary Washington) [online]

Jolie Sheffer (ASA, Bowling Green State University)

Cara Caddoo (OAH, Indiana University Bloomington)

Rebecca Davis (OAH, University of Delaware)

Timetable

Part I: 13:30–15:30

(1) Takuya TOKUHARA (Yokohama Senior High School of International Studies) 13:30–14:10
““Shared Historical Authority” as a Negotiated Historical Practice: Examining the Negotiation and Allocation of “Authority,” “Authorship,” and “Expertise” in the History-Making Process of Manga”

Comment: Krystyn Moon

(2) Soichiro TEZUKA (graduate student, Keio University) 14:10–14:50

“From Partner to Challenge: How Far does American Influence Extend within NATO?”

Comment: Moustafa Bayoumi

(3) Daiki KABA (graduate student, Hitotsubashi University) 14:50–15:30

“Swinging the Black and White: The Italo-Ethiopian War and Race-Making among Italian Americans and African Americans in 1930s Harlem”

Comment: Cara Caddoo

(break)

Part II: 15:40–17:00

(4) Issay MATSUMOTO (Ph.D. candidate, University of Southern California) 15:40–16:20

“Native Hawaiian and Samoan Migrant Women Lei Vendors in Transpacific Honolulu”

Comment: Rebecca Davis

(5) Runan ZHANG (graduate student, Waseda University) 16:20–17:00

“The Path to Personhood: The Posthumanist Worldview in Kiln People”

Comment: Jolie Sheffer

Chair: Hiroyuki MATSUBARA (Rikkyo University)

2025 Proseminar Report

2025 Proseminar Report

Daiki Kaba (Master's Student, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University)

I had the privilege of participating in the JAAS Proseminar 2025 held at Rikkyo University, where I presented my paper titled "Swinging the Black and White: The Process of Race-Making Between Italian Americans and African Americans in 1930s Harlem, New York." My research examines how the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–36), a critical moment of fascist aggression, influenced interracial dynamics in Harlem. I explored the differing yet intersecting political responses of Italian American and African American residents, and how these revealed internal diversities within both communities. The concept of Harlem as a "transnational anchor point" served as the central analytical framework, highlighting the convergence of two diasporas in a shared urban space shaped by global politics.

My presentation emphasized that neither group was racially or ideologically monolithic. Pro-fascist Italian Americans mobilized resources for Mussolini's campaign, while anti-fascist Italian labor activists like Luigi Antonini forged solidarity with African Americans. In parallel, African American responses ranged from nationalist-led boycotts of Italian businesses to multiracial, communist-led organizations like the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, which rejected racial binaries in favor of anti-fascist unity.

The feedback I received from Professor Cara Caddoo was particularly instrumental, as her questions were grounded even in the primary sources related to my research. Her insights prompted me to clarify the historical continuity of Black Nationalism, the effects of New Deal policies on Harlem, and the issue of representation concerning historical figures. I was also challenged to reflect more deeply on the asymmetries of power within interracial collaborations and the ways in which ethnic media shaped public narratives. Additionally, questions from other participants pushed me to refine my conceptualization of Harlem as a "transnational anchor point."

Engaging with other presenters' research allowed me to situate my work within broader discourses in American Studies, spanning literature, visual culture, international relations, and postcolonial historiography. The variety of topics and theoretical approaches was intellectually stimulating and pushed me to further consider how local urban histories intersect with global dynamics.

The Proseminar not only provided rigorous academic feedback but also offered a supportive, collegial space for critical exchange. I am grateful to the Japanese Association of American Studies, the American Studies Association, the Organization of American

Historians, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and the Institute for American Studies, Rikkyo University for making this invaluable experience possible.

2025 Proseminar Report

Issay Matsumoto

The Japanese Association for American Studies 2025 Proseminar was a valuable opportunity to receive feedback from esteemed scholars and gain exposure to exciting new work by early career researchers in Japan. My paper, “Transpacific Honolulu: Native Hawaiian Urban Politics as Cold War History,” examined the vexed meanings of Native Hawaiian citizenship and cosmopolitanism during the Cold War through an exploration of conflicts between Indigenous municipal officials and women lei vendors in Honolulu. In this report I will briefly summarize my experience and the comments I received on this work in progress.

I would like to thank Professor Rebecca Davis for providing such generous, encouraging, and critical feedback as my commenter. It is a joy to be read by others who help you see new value in your work that you did not see before. I feel lucky to have received precisely this kind of feedback from such a prolific, publicly engaged scholar with expertise on histories of American gender and sexuality. For my discussion of Native Hawaiian municipal officials and lei vendors, Dr. Davis encouraged me to look into literature on the body, particularly historiography of US Cold War masculinities and scholarship on the policing of “problem bodies.” Descriptions of the bodies, style, and comportment of my subjects were all over my sources, and now I know that they mean something to think historically about. I look forward to delving deeper into this secondary literature and the other works on policing and Cold War consumer culture that Dr. Davis cited in her comments.

I also am grateful to have received comments during the Q&A from Professors Jolie Sheffer, Cara Caddoo, and Hiro Matsubara. Highlighting scholarship on American Chinatowns, Dr. Sheffer helped me see more clearly the relationship between the *right kind* of entrepreneurship and citizenship. Dr. Caddoo’s comments on *settler colonial* citizenship helped me grasp the spatial dynamics of colonial and imperial power at play in Honolulu. In addition to being a fantastic chair and host, Dr. Matsubara reminded me of the importance in thinking about Honolulu’s Cold War context in more expansive terms, inclusive of Japanese colonial legacies.

Excellent company and conversation over a delicious dinner was a superb way to finish our day after the presentations. I am grateful to the JAAS, in particular, Professor Masaya Sato, for assembling this rich forum for international scholarly exchange. In sum, this was an overwhelmingly positive experience that I will take with me as I complete my dissertation!

2025 Proseminar Report

Soichiro Tezuka (Keio University)

On June 3, 2025, I presented at the 2025 JAAS Proseminar held at Rikkyo University's Ikebukuro Campus. My presentation, titled “From Partner to Challenge: How far does American influence extend within NATO?”, focused on the evolution of NATO's perception of China and the degree to which this shift was influenced by U.S. strategic thinking.

Specifically, my presentation examined NATO's Strategic Concepts, Summit Declarations, and Secretary General statements in comparison with U.S. policy documents such as the National Security Strategy and Indo-Pacific Strategy. While the United States has maintained a consistently strong stance toward China, framing it as a threat, NATO's descriptions have remained more cautious, referring to China as a “systemic challenge” in the 2022 Strategic Concept. The gap between these positions reflects internal differences among NATO member states, particularly between the U.S. and countries such as France and Germany.

In the Q&A session, commentators raised insightful questions regarding differences in strategic culture between the U.S. and Europe, as well as diverging threat perceptions. These comments were invaluable for refining my research focus and suggested potential avenues for further development.

Preparing for and delivering a 15-minute presentation in English under strict time constraints proved to be an excellent opportunity for improving my academic communication skills. The process of organizing my argument, refining slides, and practicing delivery has strengthened my ability to convey complex research findings in international settings.

Moving forward, I intend to further develop this presentation into a full-length academic article examining how U.S. strategic framing influences multilateral organizations like NATO. This case has broader implications for understanding how great powers shape institutional responses to rising global challenges such as the rise of China.

2025 Proseminar Report

Takuya Tokuhara (Yokohama Senior High School for International Studies)

It was a valuable opportunity to present my research at the JAAS Proseminar held on 3 June 2025 at Rikkyo University. My presentation, titled “History-Manga as a Negotiated Historical Practice: 'Authority,' 'Authorship,' and 'Expertise' in History-Making,” was based on my MA thesis and examined how historical authority is practiced in the production of educational history manga. While previous studies primarily assessing historical accuracy or authenticity within manga representations, my research shifts the lens to the broader context of historical authority, which includes interviews with the actual participants: academic historians, editors, and manga artists.

The discussion with Professor Krystyn Moon, who served as the session’s discussant, provided especially valuable insights. We focused on the importance of manga as a popular medium that enables diverse ways of representing the past. One key point that emerged was manga’s capacity to convey plural historical narratives through its unique combination of 3 depicted layers: visual panels, narrative text, and character dialogues. Unlike traditional historical texts that typically follow a linear structure, manga allows for the depiction of multiple voices to simultaneously actions within a single frame, offering a more multifaceted view of history.

Another significant topic of discussion was the intersection between popular history and shared authority. Professor Moon posed a question: “in what ways can the manga production process involve community members, as we see in other shared historical authority practices?” This inquiry was essential, as it challenged my research topic choice based on the assumption that an analytical framework which focuses on the popular medium can shed light on the hidden public previous research in public history been overlooked. My RQ is still indispensable because previous research tended to deal with SHA in public sector and dismissed the importance of consuming culture, yet the observation of Moon gave me a valuable opportunity to reconsider who the public is.

In response to this point, Professor Jolie A. Sheffer, a scholar of American literature and African American history, introduced examples of collaborative historical storytelling that actively involve civic participants. Similarly, Professor Cara C. Caddoo, whose research focuses on media history and race, highlighted the significance of educational uses of popular media as a form of public engagement. These suggestions encouraged me to reflect more deeply on how my research might expand to consider the educational and participatory potential of manga in diverse settings.

Overall, the proseminar offered me a rare and valuable chance to refine my research scope through constructive dialogue with scholars from multiple disciplines. Their critical

feedback not only affirmed the value of my project but also challenged me to broaden its implications within the field of Public History.

2025 Proseminar Report

ZHANG Runan (PhD student, Waseda University)

I learned about the JAAS proseminar from my supervisor, who recommended it to me as a valuable opportunity for growth and something that would surely benefit my research. Trusting his advice, I applied to give a presentation and was accepted. However, I have to admit that I was nervous about presenting from the very beginning and struggled to find the courage to go through with it. I have presented at various academic conferences before, both large and small, and each time I feel very anxious before I begin. But this proseminar felt especially intimidating to me—not only because my supervisor would be attending (in fact, due to various circumstances, he had been unable to attend many of my previous presentations), but also because I realized that the proseminar was far more formal and rigorous than I had anticipated. Even a second before I walked into the conference room, I was desperately searching for an excuse to leave. But I found none—and now I'm truly glad that I didn't. I participated and completed my presentation successfully.

I must confess that I did not expect to receive such insightful and constructive feedback. The comments and questions I received were far more helpful than any I had encountered at previous conferences. My commentator, Professor Sheffer, had clearly read my manuscript with great care and offered detailed questions and thought-provoking reflections. Building on my existing research ideas, she opened up new avenues for inquiry, and I felt genuinely excited and deeply grateful. This kind of intellectual engagement and emotional resonance is exactly what I hope to experience through academic research and conference presentations. I am sincerely thankful—to Professor Sheffer, and to all the faculty members who organized this proseminar.

Aside from the presentation itself, I was also deeply impressed by the after party. Right after it ended, I messaged all my close friends to tell them how I felt: that it was, without a doubt, the best after party I had ever attended. The professors were all so open and engaging. Beyond academic discussions related to the presentations, we spoke freely about our thoughts on literary and cultural studies, the joy we find in them, the dilemmas and humorous moments brought by the rapid development of modern technology in our academic lives, and so much more. The openness and heartfelt conversations brought me immense joy and satisfaction.

I'm truly glad I didn't let my nerves and fear get the better of me. This kind of academic experience is exactly what I aspire to participate in throughout my graduate career. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.