



# Midwest Japan Seminar

**MJS Chairperson: Associate Professor Stephen Filler ([filler@oakland.edu](mailto:filler@oakland.edu))**  
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**Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309**

**Friday, April 24 – Saturday, April 25, 2026**  
**In-Person Meeting**  
**Michigan State University**

## **Schedule:**

Events held on MSU campus.

*Dinner to be provided, 5:30 p.m. (Everyday Chinese Restaurant)*

### **Friday evening, 7:00 p.m.**

**Musical performance** by Sato Michiyoshi (shamisen) and the KOTOBUKI band (shamisen, shakuhachi, keyboard), from Hirosaki, Japan. Michiyoshi is a national champion of Tsugaru-jamisen, a dynamic and improvisatory style of Japanese folk music. He is also the leader of the KOTOBUKI band, which combines music, dance, comedy, and audience participation.

### **Saturday, 10:00-11:45 a.m. (Brody 136)**

**MJS Session 1:** Keita Moore, The Ohio State University

“Out Of Time: Boyhood, Consumerism, and the Cultural Techniques of Time in the Japanese 1970s”

Abstract: When videogames first emerged as a commercial medium the late 1970s, they were quickly framed as a waste of time for children. Yet, the idea of wasted time is always relative to valued time—time properly spent. This chapter draft, part of a book project on the early history of videogames in Japan, analyzes the dynamics and forces of this proper time. It outlines the idea of “socio-developmental time.” This formation

signifies the time that was common to the social sphere, and the time that children would grow into through the process of maturation. The chapter shows how this time was figured by the demands around the adult, masculine, laboring subject; how this subjectivity, and its ordering of socio-developmental time, faced a series of threats attendant on postindustrial consumer society; and, ultimately, discusses how time can be approached as a technique of children's subjectification—one that videogames would come to threaten.

*Lunch provided by the MSU Japan Council (in Brody cafeteria)*

**Saturday, 12:45-2:30 p.m. in Brody 136**

**MJS Session 2:** Yuka Doherty, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

**“Gatekeeping the Womb: Racialized Hierarchies of Reproduction in Postcolonial Japan”**

Abstract: This study contends that Japan's falling birthrate exposes gendered and racialized boundaries of reproductive citizenship. Using historical qualitative content analysis of national archives and public discourse from the 1980s to 2020, the article compares state representations of Japanese and Filipina women to examine how reproduction, family formation, and nationality are governed. Findings show that controlling images in legal and bureaucratic frameworks privileged Japanese men, elevated Japanese women as “ideal” mothers, and positioned Filipina women within sexualized and laboring roles, sustaining patriarchal family structures and shaping belonging. The analysis shows how reproduction and nationality became instruments of population management in postcolonial Japan.

**Saturday, 4:00 p.m.**

**Keynote address in Brody 112**

Professor Nakano Koichi, Sophia University (Tokyo)

"Democracy, Stunted: The US Liberal Hegemonic Projection and the Making of Japanese Conservative One-Party Dominance in Cold War Asia"

Professor Nakano has published widely on constitutional politics and civic activism as well as neoliberal globalization and historical revisionism from a comparative and historical perspective. He has also frequently commented on Japanese politics for the media, including the BBC, the Economist, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. He will be discussing aspects of his book forthcoming from Princeton University Press, tentatively titled *Must the Sun Set in the West? Japan's Stunted Democracy and the American Liberal Hegemony*.

## **MIDWEST JAPAN SEMINAR SESSIONS:**

MJS sessions involve the discussion of pre-circulated research papers. Participants are expected to read the papers ahead of time. The sessions themselves will primarily consist of discussion, so we hope that you will join us and consider participating in the discussion. **To receive electronic copies of the papers ahead of the meeting, please e-mail Stephen Filler ([filler@oakland.edu](mailto:filler@oakland.edu)).**

Note that authors are often sharing work-in-progress, so papers should not be further circulated, copied, or cited without the author's permission.