

Center for Japanese Studies Seminar Series

Japan's Visible Minorities: Appearance and Prejudice in Japanese Society



Dr. ARUDOU, Debito

Ph.D., Meiji Gakuin University, 2014

Columnist, The Japan Times



Japan has several minority populations that suffer from unequal treatment. There has been extensive research about the Ainu, Okinawans, Burakumin, “Zainichi” Korean and Chinese generational foreigners, South American workers of Japanese descent, and a total of about two million registered foreign residents. Less studied, however, are what Arudou calls “Visible Minorities:” people who do not “look Japanese.” Arudou was raised in Upstate New York but became a naturalized Japanese in 2000. He received his Ph.D. from Meiji Gakuin University in 2014 with research on how “Japaneseness” depends on physical appearance, as seen in “Japanese Only” signs and other practices. How Japan treats “foreigners” has significant implications for Japan's future because as its population ages and shrinks, immigration is becoming one of the only remaining viable options for economic rejuvenation. Arudou will discuss some of the legal and social processes linking Japanese nationality with phenotype, and will offer a few suggestions for how Japan's government might consider ways to make new and old entrants into Japan into “new Japanese.”



Tokioka Room (Moore Hall 319)
Friday, November 7 3:00 - 4:30 pm