

“Welcome to Washington Heights: American Towns and Americanization in Occupied Japan”

Dr. Jeff Hanes

Jeff Hanes teaches modern Japanese history at the University of Oregon, where he also directs the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies. He is the author of *CITY AS SUBJECT:*

SEKI HAJIME AND THE REINVENTION OF MODERN OSAKA as well as numerous articles on modern urban Japan. His current project explores the history of family housing for the American military during and after the Occupation.



From the 1950s, Japanese are said to have embraced the so-called “bright life”—that is, a middle class social ideal inspired by the bright lives led by their American occupiers. As the story’s been told up to now, the “bright life” was enshrined in the American magazines, movies, and TV programs that flooded Japan during and after the Occupation. Yet, in actuality, American middle class life also shone brightly within Japan itself, in places called Lincoln Center, Grant Heights, and Washington Heights. These were communities of “dependent housing” for American troops and their families. Yet, these were communities fashioned not just as comfortable “America towns” for the American occupiers, as one might imagine, but as the “forerunner” to a “a new way of living for the Japanese people” who they were occupying. The surprising story of these communities and their place in postwar Japanese life is the subject of this presentation.

January 20th 3:00-4:30 PM
Institute of Asian Research Room 120
(C.K. Choi Building) 1855 W Mall, Vancouver B.C.

Event hosted by UBC Centre for Japanese Research

