

Questions of Indigeneity in the Asia-Pacific Speaker Series

Lecture by Professor Mark Watson (Concordia University)

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018 | 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

208N - North House, Munk School of Global Affairs, 1 Devonshire Place



Photo Credit: Ui Makiko

In recent years, the task of “restorying” has been identified as an important strategy in making space for the counternarratives of the nation-state from the perspective of Indigenous histories. Here, I use four stories to start to tell a different history of Indigenous Ainu life in Japan. The stories recount Ainu experiences of migration to Tokyo and other cities since the early 1900s. Beyond their narrative content, I explain how these stories are part of a broader political project that urban Ainu leaders have used for over forty years to contest and resist the ‘regionalization’ of Indigenous Ainu affairs to Hokkaido. Using the Ainu situation as my reference point, I develop a comparative conversation about the transformation of Indigenous geographies across the Pacific and elaborate on the fraught politics but also moral value of thinking with urban mobilities. I end with reflections on an exchange between Tokyo Ainu and Montreal Inuit in Osaka 2003 and its relevance for my current project.

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MARK WATSON is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University. His main area of research concerns the comparative analysis of urban Indigenous collectivity, self-organization and mobility. This focus informs broader, on-going interest in practices and theories of action-oriented and collaborative research.

REGISTRATION >> <http://uoft.me/MarkWatson>