



Movement and Memory: An Introduction to Okinawan Literature

Hilson Reidpath
University of Hawai'i, Manoa

While in recent years Okinawan literature has received increased attention in both translation and scholarship, it has long occupied a unique and liminal place in the larger scope of Japanese and global literatures. Despite the region having multiple unique indigenous languages, most Okinawan literature is written in Japanese while still engaging with topics and issues that differ from the modern mainland Japanese experience. Thus, Okinawan literature has been seen as a minor or sub-genre in the larger context of Japanese studies. Through a discussion of major writers and themes, this talk will historicize Okinawan literature, highlighting poems, short stories and novels ranging from the Meiji period to contemporary works published in the past decade. In doing so, I will show how issues such as marginalization, colonialism, conflicted identity, transnational movement, and wartime memory have maintained a central place in the discourse of the literature while also reflecting a nuanced and evolving legacy in the social consciousness of the islands. Additionally, I will draw attention to an established history of transnational elements, working to situate Okinawan literature on its own footing and placing it at the center of its own story of resilience and adaptability.

April 17, 2026
12:45-2:05 pm
185 Mendenhall Lab



**Register to attend
in person. The
lecture will be
delivered via Zoom.**



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

Contact: Dr. Keita Moore
moore.5323@osu.edu