

2023-2024

GLOBAL ASIA LECTURE SERIES

SUPPORTED BY AARON MOORE ENDOWMENT

ASU The Asia Center

Arizona State University

WRITING VIOLENCE

THE POLITICS OF FORM IN EARLY MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE

DAVID C. ATHERTON

魁
題
百
撰
相



“The Problem, Promise, and Politics of Form in Early Modern Japanese Literature”

ABSTRACT

Edo-period Japan was a golden age for commercial literature. A host of new narrative genres cast their gaze across the social landscape, probed the realms of history and the fantastic, and breathed new life into literary tradition. But how to understand the politics of this body of literature remains contested, in part because the defining characteristics of much early modern fiction—formulaicness, reuse of narratives, stock characters, linguistic and intertextual play, and heavy allusion to literary canon—can seem to hold social and political realities at arm’s length. *Writing Violence: The Politics of Form in Early Modern Japanese Literature*, offers a new approach to understanding the relationship between the challenging formal features of early modern popular literature and the world beyond its pages. Focusing on depictions of violence, Atherton connects concepts of form and formalization across the aesthetic and social spheres. He shows how the formal features of early modern literature had the potential to alter the perception of time and space, make social and economic forces visible, defamiliarize conventions, give voice to the socially peripheral, and reshape the contours of community. *Writing Violence* reveals the essential role of literary form in constructing the world—and in seeing it anew.

FRIDAY

APRIL 12, 2024

1:00 PM AZT



DAVID C. ATHERTON

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES &
CIVILIZATIONS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LOCATION

DURHAM 240

&

ZOOM

SCAN TO REGISTER



MORE INFO & REGISTRATION VISIT ASIANSTUDIES.ASU.EDU