

Dec 19, 2023

17:30-19:00 (JST)

Room 301, 3F building 10,
Sophia University

In person only

No registration necessary

NUCLEAR MINDS



Cold War Psychological Science and the
Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

RAN ZWIGENBERG

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2023

Nuclear Minds:

Cold War Psychological Science and the Bombings of
Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Ran Zwigenberg

In 1945, American psychological researchers in Hiroshima canvassed survivors of the nuclear attack. This marked the beginning of global efforts to tackle the ways human minds were affected by the advent of the nuclear age. *Nuclear Minds* traces these efforts. Particularly, the book examines how the bomb's psychological impact was understood before the concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Indeed, trauma was not a major category of interpretation. Institutional and political constraints led researchers to concentrate on short-term damage and somatic reactions. As a result, very few doctors tried to ameliorate suffering. Researchers did not “fail” to diagnose PTSD, rather both doctors and survivors understood and experienced psychological suffering differently. This is made clear by comparing and connecting the nuclear case with that of Holocaust, military veterans, and other victims, and flushing out differences and commonalities in the ways that suffering was understood different cultural contexts before PTSD.



Ran Zwigenberg is associate professor at Pennsylvania State University. His research focuses on modern Japanese and European history, with a specialization in memory and cultural history. He has taught and lectured in the United States, Europe, Israel, and Japan, and published on issues of war memory, atomic energy, psychiatry, heritage, regionalism, and survivor politics. Zwigenberg's first book, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), won the 2016 Association for Asian Studies' John W. Hall book award. His latest book, *Nuclear Minds: Cold War Psychological Science and the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2023) deals with the psychological aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. For more information on this and other projects, please see <https://pennstate.academia.edu/RanZwigenberg>

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This talk is organized by Sven Saaler (Professor, Japanese History, Sophia University)

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture: <https://www.icc-sophia.com/>