

Leaders Fit for the Masses: Du Bois and Japan's Transnational Democratic Leadership

Thursday, April 6, 2023

4:45 p.m.

Beam Classroom

Visual Arts Center

From the 1890s to the 1960s, W.E.B. Du Bois was committed to a vision of transnational leadership accountable to the democratic masses. In this talk, Dr. Haskins will discuss how Japan was an important potential model for Du Bois as he attempted to envision models of leadership distinct from a Western-centric focus—and what he saw as Western democratic despotism. Indeed, his writings on Japan—despite failing to critique its imperialism—have strong parallels to his writings on the US, such as his restatement of his “Talented Tenth” thesis in his 1948 Boulé address. Despite frustrating Du Bois (and losing the mantle of democratic leadership), Japan still provided a basis for Du Bois to develop his vision of accountable leadership to other actors—whether in Asia, Africa, the United States, or elsewhere.



Alex Haskins '11, Assistant Professor of Politics and International Relations at Wheaton College

Born in Okinawa, but a native of St. Louis, Dr. Haskins first discovered the field of political theory at Bowdoin College (class of 2011). His teaching and research interests in the field have been sustained over the years by a deeply felt need to grapple with the complex histories of imperialism, colonialism, and Christianity in the modern world—particularly in Africa, the Americas, and Asia—and what implications such grappling might have for global justice, international law, multiculturalism, and global missions. He is currently revising his book manuscript on transnational approaches to non-domination in the political thought of Montesquieu (1689-1755), Wei Yuan (1794-1856), and W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963).

Open to the public free of charge.

For more information contact latkinso@bowdoin.edu.

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