

2026

7.15 (wed.) 12:10
12:50

12:10-12:15

◆ Introduction

12:15-12:40

◆ Seminar
(Presentation)

12:40-12:50

◆ Q&A

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Democratic Backsliding and African Politics: The Autocratic Use of Democratic Institutions

**Key Words****Democratic Backsliding****Autocratization****African Politics****Rule of Law****Rule by Law****Assistant Professor Yu Ajishi**

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Yu Ajishi is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Asian and Oceanian Studies (Q-AOS), Kyushu University. He specializes in comparative politics, African area studies, and cultural anthropology. He graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo, and completed the doctoral coursework (withdrew with research credit) at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo. Prior to his current appointment in 2025, he served as a Research Fellow (DC2) of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). Drawing on extensive fieldwork in Tanzania, his research examines the dynamics of democracy and states in Africa, focusing on corruption, clientelism, and voter perceptions. His major publications include "Beyond Corruption as 'Cancer': An approach to 'public' concept and its dynamism" (Journal of African Studies).

In recent years, the phenomenon of "democratic backsliding" has been observed across the globe. This trend is characterized not by a dramatic, sudden transition into outright dictatorship, but rather by a modern shift in how power is maintained: while the formal institutional frameworks of democracy—such as elections and the law—remain intact, incumbent governments strategically manipulate them to their own advantage. As a case study to examine this global trend, this presentation explores recent political dynamics in Africa. In the past, the primary concern regarding African politics was the dysfunction of democratic institutions. Today, however, we observe a different challenge: laws and elections, originally designed to limit power and protect citizens, are instead functioning as strategic tools to legally safeguard incumbent regimes and eliminate political opposition. Through these African examples, this session will unpack the critical challenges confronting contemporary democracy.