When we think of the importance of the atomic bomb to the Truman presidency, we think of Truman’s weighty decision regarding the use of the weapon on Japan. But historians have known for decades that the narrative of “the decision to use the bomb” is largely mythical, and his actual role was mostly peripheral. But despite this, Truman did make several decisions during the war that would have vast consequences for the future of nuclear weapons, decisions that still resonate today. This talk will look at the making of the Atomic Presidency during the Truman administration: the regulations, norms, and procedures that invest the power to destroy the world in a single man alone, which continue to govern our world to this day.

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