



The Lawrence Badash Memorial Lecture Series:

Truman's Bomb and the Making of the Atomic Presidency

MAY
9
WED

ALEX WELLERSTEIN

Science and Technology Studies, Stevens Institute of Technology

4:00 pm

McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB

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.

Alex Wellerstein is an Assistant Professor of Science and Technology Studies (STS) in the College of Arts and Letters at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey. He received his PhD from the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University in 2010, and has BA in History from the University of California, Berkeley. He is completing a manuscript on the history of nuclear secrecy in the United States, under contract with the University of Chicago Press. He is the author of "Restricted Data: The Nuclear Secrecy Blog," the creator of the heavily-used nuclear weapons effects simulator website NUKEMAP, and is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker's Elements* blog, among other outlets for his more popular writing.

Sponsored by the Badash Lecture Fund and the IHC's Machines, People, and Politics Research Focus Group.

