In 1912, Japanese government railways embarked on a mission to remake how Europeans and Americans thought about Japan—through tourism. In this talk, historian Kate McDonald will explore how Japanese tourist organizations fought to transform the image of Japan from a looming threat to European and American interests in East Asia into a peaceful, industrial nation with a sophisticated culture and a progressive empire. World War II brought an abrupt end to this mission, but the Japanese did eventually succeed—with the support of the U.S. Occupation.

Join us on a journey through Japan as Professor McDonald discusses the turbulent history of tourist politics, and what this means for how we travel today. A wine-and-cheese reception will precede the talk.

About our Speaker

Prof. Kate McDonald teaches modern Japanese History at UCSB. Her research focuses on the cultural and technological history of mobility, especially the way transportation technologies and networks affect the way we see our world. Her current project examines how the Japanese transportation network shaped what travelers saw and learned about the Japanese empire in the 1910s-1930s.