Stanford



Karen Wigen

Frances and Charles Field Professor of History

Bio

BIO

Kären Wigen teaches Japanese history and the history of cartography at Stanford. A geographer by training, she earned her doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley. Her first book, The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750-1920 (1995), mapped the economic transformation of southern Nagano Prefecture during the heyday of the silk industry. Her second book, A Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan, 1600-1912 (2010), returned to the ground of that study, exploring the roles of cartography, chorography, and regionalism in the making of modern Shinano.

An abiding interest in world history led her to co-author The Myth of Continents (1997) with Martin Lewis, and to co-direct the "Oceans Connect" project at Duke University. She also introduced a forum on oceans in history for the American Historical Review and co-edited Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges (2007) with Jerry Bentley and Renate Bridenthal. Her latest project is another collaboration, Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps, with co-editors Sugimoto Fumiko and Cary Karacas (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2016).

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, History

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Chair, History Department, (2011-2014)
- Director, Center for East Asian Studies, (2009-2011)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Award for Advanced Research in the Social Sciences on Japan, National Endowment for the Humanities (2006)
- Faculty Fellowship, Stanford Humanities Center (2006)
- Research Fellowship, American Council of Learned Societies (2006)
- Bass Fellow (Jack H. Neely Associate Professor), Duke University (1999-2003)
- Research Fellowship, National Humanities Center (1999)
- “Oceans Connect,” Duke University (co-PI with Martin Lewis)., Ford Foundation (1997-2002)
- Research Fellowship, Japan Foundation (1996)
- Arisawa Award, American Association of University Presses (1995)
- Fairbank Prize, American Historical Association (1995)
- Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of History, Duke University (1992)
- Doctoral Fellowship, Social Science Research Council (1988)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Chair, Bentley Prize Committee, American Historical Association (2015 - 2018)
- Advisory Editor, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History (2015 - 2017)
- Editorial Board member, Journal of Historical Geography (2009 - 2012)
- Board of Trustees, Journal of Japanese Studies (2008 - 2014)
- Program Committee Co-chair, American Historical Association (2006 - 2007)
- Advisory Board, Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies (2004 - 2007)
- Editorial Board member, American Historical Review (2001 - 2004)
- Series Editor for "Asia: Local Studies/Global Themes", University of California Press (1998 - 2016)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Center for East Asian Studies

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Approaches to History: HISTORY 304 (Aut)
- Maps in the Modern World: HISTORY 95N (Aut)
- Maps, Borders, and Conflict in East Asia: HISTORY 291E, HISTORY 391E (Win)
- Maps, Borders, and Conflict in East Asia: MLA 402 (Win)

2025-26

- Approaches to History: HISTORY 304 (Aut)
- Global History Colloquium & Pedagogy Workshop: HISTORY 306D (Aut)
- Graduate Research Seminar in U.S. History: HISTORY 468A (Win)
- Graduate Research Seminar in U.S. History: HISTORY 468B (Spr)
- Maps in the Modern World: HISTORY 95N (Spr)

2024-25

- Approaches to History: HISTORY 304 (Aut)
- East Asia Discovers the World: COLLEGE 121 (Spr)
- Maps in the Early Modern World: HISTORY 209F, HISTORY 309F (Spr)
- Maps in the Early Modern World: MLA 384 (Win)
- Maps in the Modern World: HISTORY 95N (Aut)

2023-24

- East Asia Discovers the World: Cartographic Encounters from the Mongols to Meiji: HISTORY 203B, HUMCORE 124 (Aut)
- Global History & Pedagogy Workshop: HISTORY 306D (Spr)
- Japan in the Age of the Samurai: HISTORY 194B (Spr)
- Japan in the Age of the Samurai: HISTORY 94B (Spr)
- Maps in the Modern World: HISTORY 95N (Aut)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Yi-Ting Chung, Hong Song

Orals Evaluator

Yi-Ting Chung, Hong Song

Doctoral (Program)

Yuki Hoshino

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Japan's Ocean Borderlands: Nature and Sovereignty (Book Review)** *JOURNAL OF JAPANESE STUDIES*
  Book Review Authored by: Wigen, K.
  2025; 51 (1): 236-240
- **Picturing the Pacific Seas on Japanese Maps, 1600-1900** *OCEANIC JAPAN*
  Wigen, K.
  edited by Huebner, S., Hee, N., Miller, I. J., Tsutsui, W. M.
  2025: 203-+
- **Territorial Imaginaries: Beyond the Sovereign Map**
  edited by Wigen, K.
  University of Chicago Press.2025
- **The Japanese Buddhist World Map: Religious Vision and the Cartographic Imagination (Book Review)** *IMAGO MUNDI-THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY*
  Book Review Authored by: Wigen, K.
  2022; 74 (2): 318-319
- **Time in Maps: From the Age of Discovery to Our Digital Era**
  edited by Winterer, C., Wigen, K.
  University of Chicago Press.2020
- **Making Time: Astronomical Time Measurement in Tokugawa Japan (Book Review)** *JOURNAL OF JAPANESE STUDIES*
  Book Review Authored by: Wigen, K.
  2019; 45 (2): 436–41
- **Engaging the Other: 'Japan' and Its Alter Egos, 1550-1850 (Book Review)** *MONUMENTA NIPPONICA*
  Book Review Authored by: Wigen, K.
  2019; 74 (2): 272–73
- **Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps. Co-editor with Fumiko Sugimoto and Cary Karacas**
  edited by Wigen, K., Sugimoto, F., Karacas, C.
  University of Chicago Press.2016
- **Japanese Imperial Maps as Sources for East Asian History: The Past and Future of the Gaihozu** *CROSS-CURRENTS-EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW*
  Wigen, K.
  2012
- **Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan, 1600-1912**
  Wigen, K.
  University of California Press.2010

- **Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges**
  edited by Bentley, J. H., Bridenthal, R., Wigen, K.
  2007
- **AHR Forum - Oceans of history - Introduction** *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*
  Wigen, K.
  2006; 111 (3): 717-721
- **Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji mountaineering and the quest for geographical enlightenment** *JOURNAL OF JAPANESE STUDIES*
  Wigen, K.
  2005; 31 (1): 1-26
- **Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography**
  Lewis, M. W., Wigen, K.
  University of California Press.1997