The term “residual sovereignty” has been used to describe Japan’s claim on what is now Okinawa Prefecture from the time that the San Francisco Peace Settlement went into effect in April 1952 to Okinawa’s “reversion” to Japan in May 1972. Conventional wisdom assumes that residual sovereignty was accompanied by a complete suspension of the Japanese legal and administrative authority in the US-administered Ryukyu Islands. Through an overview and analysis of the institutions that mediated Japan’s relations with Okinawa during the period of US administration, the presentation will make the case that the conventional wisdom is incorrect and that in practice Japanese law and government administration was effectively exercised there in a number of non-trivial ways during the period. It is also contended that it is important for students of Okinawa to adopt a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of residual sovereignty as the conventional wisdom significantly distorts our understanding of social and political processes in Okinawa during this critical historical period.

Speaker: Dr. Lonny E. Carlile, Asian Studies & Center for Japanese Studies
Date: September 30, 2014 (Tuesday)
Time: 3:00-4:30 pm
Location: Moore Hall 319 (Tokioka Room)