

## Sheldon Garon ('78)



### ORDER OF THE RISING SUN Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon

Sheldon Garon (IUC '78) is the Nissan Professor in Japanese Studies, professor of history, and professor of East Asian studies at Princeton University, where he has taught since 1994. A specialist in modern and contemporary Japanese history, he also writes transnational/global history that spotlights the flow of ideas and institutions between Asia, Europe, and the United States.

His transnational history, *Beyond Our Means: Why America Spends while the World Saves* (2012), examines the connected histories of saving and spending over the past two centuries in Japan, other Asian nations, Europe, and America. It received global attention from media, nonprofit groups, international organizations, museums, and financial institutions because it offers recommendations on what Americans might learn from European and East Asian nations whose policies have vigorously encouraged citizens to save and avoid “overindebtedness.” He also coedited *The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West* (2006).

Garon’s work on Japanese history likewise probes relationships between state and society. His first book, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan* (1987), profiled the shifting relations among the labor movement, bureaucracy, and political parties to chart modern Japan’s rapid transition from oligarchic rule to interwar democracy, wartime authoritarianism, and the present postwar order. In *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (1997), Garon demonstrates how women’s groups and middle-class activists cooperated with government officials to manage and mobilize society in both Imperial and postwar Japan. His five case studies cover welfare, regulation of prostitution, control of heterodox religions, participation of women in public life, and popular support of the state’s ubiquitous campaigns to “improve daily life” and promote saving.

Garon was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, in Spring of 2025 for contributing to the promotion of academic exchanges and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.