



# Dark Pasts:

## CHANGING THE STATE'S STORY IN TURKEY AND JAPAN

A Lecture by Dr. Jennifer Dixon

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,  
Villanova University

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Weatherhead East Asian Institute  
at Columbia University

420 W 118th St, Room 918 (9th Floor)  
New York, NY 10027

Contact Prof. Khatchig Mouradian at  
[km3253@columbia.edu](mailto:km3253@columbia.edu) for more information.

Unpacking the complex processes through which international pressures and domestic dynamics shape states' narratives, Jennifer M. Dixon analyzes the trajectories over the past sixty years of Turkey's narrative of the 1915–17 Armenian Genocide and Japan's narrative of the 1937–38 Nanjing Massacre. While both states' narratives started from similar positions of silencing, relativizing, and denial, Japan has come to express regret and apologize for the Nanjing Massacre, while Turkey has continued to reject official wrongdoing and deny the genocidal nature of the violence.

*Dark Pasts* argues that international pressures increase the likelihood of change in official narratives about dark pasts, but domestic considerations determine the content of such change. Rather than simply changing with the passage of time, persistence, or rightness, official narratives of dark pasts are shaped by interactions between political factors at the domestic and international levels.

Jennifer Dixon is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Villanova University. She has published articles in *Perspectives on Politics*, *South European Society and Politics*, and *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

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