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Informal Diplomacy – Journalists and the Making of Sino-Japanese Relations in the Cold War

During the period when China and Japan did not have diplomatic relations (1949-1972), there were very few Chinese citizens in Japan and vice versa. It was therefore a significant development when an unusually large contingent of foreign correspondents was exchanged beginning in 1964. These journalists were in a unique position to play an outsized role in interaction and mediation, and served as a rich source of information, especially for the Chinese. Drawing on both archival materials and interviews, Dr. Wits will focus on the nature of the journalists’ work in the early period as they established themselves in Tokyo and Beijing, and will examine the ways in which the PRC government aimed to utilize the Japanese journalists’ presence in China.

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