Nebraska Wesleyan University

HIST 4860 Japanese Popular Culture, Past and Present

Catalog

2025-2026

Course Description

In this course we will be investigating the cultural history of history of Japan in the early modern and modern periods, with an emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specifically, we will focus on “popular culture,” a term whose multiple (and conflicting) connotations we will consider throughout the semester. Our exploration of “popular culture” will extend to aspects of everyday life (or “lifestyles”) as well as works of art, literature, music, and film. Together we will examine a variety of texts, musical genres, comics, and films (both live action and animation), always attempting to interpret them in the context of historical change. This will be a rigorous and intellectually challenging course, but it is also meant to provide an enjoyable overview of Japan’s rich cultural heritage.
HIST 4860 meets with HIST 3860. The content of the courses are the same EXCEPT students enrolled in 3860 write analytical essays and give presentations, while students enrolled in 4860 concentrate on writing a research paper in lieu of the essays and presentations.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing or instructor permission.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Going Global Thread

Course Hours

4 hours

Departments

1. History