Nebraska Wesleyan University

HIST 4840 Meiji - The Making of Modern Japan

Catalog

2026-2027

Course Description

The Meiji period in Japan lasted from 1868 to 1912. Over that period of roughly four decades, Japan embarked on an ambitious program of Western-style modernization that left no aspect of the nation untouched. It was a period of rapid economic growth and industrialization that allowed Japan to challenge the Western powers and create its own empire in East Asia by the early twentieth century, but the accompanying social, political, and economic transformations were as dislocating for many Japanese as they were empowering. In this seminar, we will read widely in the political, social, and cultural history of the Meiji period to develop an understanding of the period's powerful shaping influence on the course Japan took in the twentieth century. In addition to secondary scholarship by leading authorities on the Meiji period, we will read works of literature and view several films that illuminate the complexities and tensions within Meiji society. HIST-4840 meets with HIST 3840. The requirements of the courses are the same EXCEPT that a research paper is required for students in 4840.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Diversity Instructive: Global
Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Innovation Thread

Course Hours

4 hours

Departments

1. History