HSTR 342: JAPAN’S LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY  
(TTh 13:40-14:22, LEWH 306)

Course Description
This course explores what many historians consider to be among the most tumultuous and important episodes in Japanese history: the transformation from the feudal regime of the Tokugawa shoguns to the modern nation-state of the Meiji oligarchs. The Meiji oligarchs claimed to be “restoring” the emperor to power—using interchangeably vocabularies such as isshin (renovate) and ishin (renewal) to describe their political project, while others, such as Ernest Satow, a member of the British Foreign Service, noted that many people on the ground spoke of an ongoing “revolution.” What really happened to Japan in the decades around 1868? Did the Meiji government really restore the emperor to power, something he had not exercised (with one brief exception in the fourteenth century) since the decline of the Heian imperial order in the late twelfth century? Or did the Meiji oligarchs invent a new constitutional monarchy, one later characterized by what historians call the emperor system ideology? What about the social, cultural, and ecological legacies of decisions made during the Meiji period?

To answer these and other questions, this course investigates the entire nineteenth century—in some instances, indeed, even centuries before and after the nineteenth century—and exposes the historical roots and profound consequences of Japan’s imperial restoration. Topics include an exploration of late-Tokugawa “restorationism,” the challenge posed by Euro-American imperialism, crime and punishment, the re-invention of Japanese society, the birth of a Meiji ideology, and modern ecologies and technologies. Most agree that the Japanese “imagined community”—the nation called Nihon or, more nationally, Nippon—was born sometime in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and so we will concern ourselves with this nation-building process and its broader implications for the people and environments of Japan.

Required readings (available at the MSU bookstore):
Tetsuo Najita, *Japan: The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics*  
Anne Walthall and M. William Steele, *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration*  
E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*  
Brett L. Walker, *The Lost Wolves of Japan*

Required Assignments (all assignments must be completed to pass course).  
(10%) Attendance and discussion  
(30%) Paper Assignment #1
(30%) Paper Assignment #2
(30%) Final Examination

Student Conduct
For the Montana State student conduct code, see:
http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/. Any cheating,
plagiarism, or other forms of student misconduct in this course will
earn an F in the class and a reprimand on the student record.

Lecture Schedule
WEEK ONE: Imperial legacies
  08/29: Course introduction
  08/31: Imperial restoration in Japanese history

WEEK TWO: Centralizing states
  09/05: The Tokugawa state: Feudalism vs. early modernity
  09/07: Neo-Confucianism and the status system
  Required readings: Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration, 31-94.

WEEK THREE: Imperial “restorationism”
  09/12: Bakufu destroying—the nativist critique
  09/14: Bakufu destroying—the Confucian critique

WEEK FOUR: Collapse of the Tokugawa bakufu
  09/19: Patriots and terrorists—tracking men of high purpose
  09/21: Collapse of Tokugawa rule
  Required readings: Japan, 1-68.

WEEK FIVE: Meiji revolution
  09/26: Meiji’s revolutionary restoration
  09/28: Meiji’s modern artifacts
  Required readings: Japan, 69-148.

WEEK SIX: Creating a sovereign’s capital
  10/03: Primary source discussion from Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration
  10/05: Emperors in Japanese history: The real legacies of imperial rule
  Required reading: Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration, 114-141.

WEEK SEVEN: Meiji enlightenment
  10/10: Meiji Constitution and notions of sovereignty
  10/12: Historicizing Meiji’s restoration
**Required reading:** *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration*, 142-151.

**WEEK EIGHT:** Struggle for Popular Rights  
10/17: No class: Reading Day  
10/19: Japan’s enlightenment  
**Required reading:** *Factory Girls*, 3-58.

**WEEK NINE:** Women in the Late Tokugawa and Meiji orders  
10/24: People’s Rights Movement  
10/26: Natural rights and Meiji politics  
**Required reading:** *Factory Girls*, 59-120.

**WEEK TEN:** Redefining nature  
10/31: Matsuo Taseko and restorationism  
11/02: Meiji modernity and women  
**Required readings:** *Factory Girls*, 121-198.

**WEEK ELEVEN:** Meiji’s modern ecologies: toward the Anthropocene  
11/07: Natural extinctions: the rise of fall of Japan’s wolves  
11/09: The Ashio copper mine and Tanaka Shôzô  
Required readings: *The Lost Wolves of Japan*, xi-95.

**WEEK TWELVE:** Emperor system ideology  
11/14: Fossil fuel transformations  
11/16: Birth of the emperor system ideology  
**Required reading:** *The Lost Wolves of Japan*, 96-157.

**WEEK THIRTEEN:** Imperialism  
11/21: No class: Reading Day  
11/23: Thanksgiving  
**Required reading:** *The Lost Wolves of Japan*, 158-230.

**WEEK FOURTEEN:** Imperial legacies  
11/28: Primary source discussion from *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration*  
11/30: Late Tokugawa and Early Meiji relations with China

**WEEK FIFTEEN:** Meiji ecologies  
12/05: Imperialism, nationalism, and the Pacific War  
12/07: Final review

**FINAL EXAMINATION:** Ganbatte!  
Our final examination is scheduled for 2:00-3:50, Friday (12/15). Bring a bluebook (or two).
Paper Assignments

*Each paper should be 10-12 typed pages, carefully proofread, and meticulously documented from the assigned readings.
*Please turn in the papers to the Assignments in D2L, using MSWord with 12-point font.
* The best papers will be rich with ideas and details from the assigned books.

Assigned Paper #1 (due 10/03): Najita’s *Japan: The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics* is a short but complicated little book. In it, Najita traces the rise of the twin pillars of “bureaucratism” and “idealism” (or loyalty, radicalism) in modern Japanese political thought. They manifested themselves in the late Tokugawa period, defined much of the nineteenth-century Meiji experience, guided Japanese thinking during empire creation and war, and even characterized the more contemporary “salaryman,” whose existence revolved around his corporation. Your assignment: first, define “restorationism” in late Tokugawa history? How does it, in Najita’s mind, come to define the Meiji experience? Second, use at least five primary sources from *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration* to either critique, or concur, with Nagita’s argument regarding modern Japanese political thought. What role does idealism play in the Meiji Restoration?

Assigned Paper #2 (due 11/28): The Meiji Restoration thrust Japan into the modern world, but it also left many behind, as well as the environment. *Factory Girls* documents the textile workers who labored in the mills of Meiji Japan, often in slave-like conditions, while *The Lost Wolves of Japan* traces the demise of an animal that was once revered in Japan’s pre-Meiji era. Your assignment: Using at least five primary sources from *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration*, as well as *Factory Girls* and *The Lost Wolves of Japan*, describe the human and nonhuman costs of Japan’s modernization. In your opinion, did the benefits of the Meiji Restoration outweigh the costs?