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## **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 nationalistically, 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/](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

Required reading: *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration*, 1-27.

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

Required readings: *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration*, 95-113.

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

Meiji Emperor



Meiji Emperor



Required reading: *Politics and Society in Japan's Meiji Restoration*, 142-151.

Fukuzawa Yukichi



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.

Russo-Japanese War



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?