

Kyoto and the Meiji Restoration
Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies
Fall 2018
Professor Mark Lincicome

TOPIC

2018 marks the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration (明治維新); long regarded as the event that precipitated the “rise of modern Japan” during the ensuing Meiji Period (1868-1912). To commemorate this anniversary—and take advantage of our KCJS location—this course will highlight Kyoto’s seminal role between 1850 and 1868 in precipitating the Restoration, and the Restoration’s seminal role in reinventing Kyoto as both a modern city and the cradle of Japanese traditional culture. It will trace the city’s transformation from staging ground for the Restoration, to early victim of the new government’s drive to modernize (which included relocating the imperial court from Kyoto to Tokyo), to its eventual rejuvenation as Japan’s iconic bridge between past and present, traditional and modern. To that end, the course will also examine the foreign and domestic crises that triggered the Restoration; survey the major political, social and cultural changes that followed during Emperor Meiji’s 45-year reign; and consider how the “legacy of Meiji” has been reinterpreted over the past 150 years.

FORMAT

Class meetings alternate between occasional lectures, field trips in and around Kyoto, and student-led discussions based on the field trips and assigned readings. Tentative field trip destinations include: Nijo Castle; Former Imperial Palace; several Shinto shrines; the Kyoto National Museum; Biwa Canal Museum; and the Emperor Meiji’s mausoleum. A Saturday field trip to the Meiji Mura Museum (Aichi Prefecture) is also planned.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Fieldtrip Journal

Four reaction/discussion papers (500 words each) based on assigned readings

One essay paper (1800 words)

Final Project

SAMPLE ASSIGNED READINGS

Anne Walthall and William Steele, *Politics and Society in Japan’s Meiji Restoration*

Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912*