

Christianity in Japan: Cross-Cultural Immersion

January 2025; 2 credit hours (credit/no credit only)

Instructors: Dr. Martin Lohrmann and Dr. Man-Hei Yip

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This cross-cultural trip offers experiences of and reflection upon the history, experiences, and challenges of Christian ministry in Japan. Participants will learn through cultural immersion, conversation, visits to congregations and social ministries, readings, and journaling. A guiding theme will be the relationship between faith and culture facing Christians in Japan.

OBJECTIVES

1. To deepen personal knowledge and faith through experiences of diverse religious cultures and Christian life in Japan.
2. To build relationships with and learn from Lutherans and other Christians in Japan through visits, conversation, and study.
3. To learn the blessings and challenges of being Christian in contexts where Christianity is a minority religion.

PROCEDURE

- A group of approximately 12-20 participants will spend about two weeks in Japan, beginning in Tokyo and the Lutheran college and seminary in Mitaka. The group will then travel to other parts of Japan—including Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Kumamoto—to learn about Japanese culture, Lutheran ministries, and international movements for peace.
- Priority for participation will be given to Wartburg Seminary students completing their cross-cultural immersion requirement. If capacity allows, other WTS community members (including alums and family members) will be welcome, with the understanding that they will participate fully in the immersion.
- Participants should expect significant amounts of walking.
- Tentative dates for travel: leave US on January 5, 2025, to arrive on January 6 in Japan; return trip to the US will take place on January 22, 2025.
- Estimated trip costs (including airfare): \$4000 per student.
- Current passports and updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations are required.

EVALUATION

Course evaluation will be based on active participation and the completion of a journal that records experiences, questions, impressions, and insights.

PROPOSED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Silence by Shūsaku Endō

Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai: A Critique of Idols by Kosuke Koyama

A Song for Nagasaki: The Story of Takashi Nagai by Paul Glynn

The Boy and the Heron (film), directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Studio Ghibli, 2023)