The Japanese Religion and Culture Seminar will take participants to several wonderful Japanese locations: Tokyo, Kamakura, Yokohama, Kyoto and Hiroshima.

Since ancient times, Kyoto has been a place of religious practice. Located a couple of hours by bullet train from Tokyo, today it is a major religious as well as tourist destination. There are over one thousand temples and countless other sites many of which are cultural heritage sites including the famous Golden Pavilion and the rock gardens of Ryoanji. In Kyoto we will visit temples, travel the famous “Philosopher’s Walk” and learn about some of the oldest religious sites in Japan.

Kamakura is home to the Daibutsu and was once the seat of power in Japan. Yokohama is a major port city with a fascinating history. Following our visit to the headquarters of a major new religion located nearby we will explore this exciting town.

“I never knew that it was possible for one to grow so much within just one month.”

“I have learned more and been exposed to more Buddhism than is possible in a lifetime of reading and studying in the United States.”

> See reverse side for course outline.
"The people of Japan were very kind and helpful. Once it finally came time for me to leave Japan and end trip, I found myself not wanting to leave at all. I only hope that I will be able to eventually return to Japan again."

OUTLINE

We begin our stay in the heart of Tokyo. Students are housed in the classic Japanese style rooms of the priests’ dorms at Zojoji, a centuries old temple located just under Tokyo Tower.

Using Zojoji as our base, we travel each morning to Taisho University for lectures and cultural exchange with Japanese students. We visit major new religious movements, ancient temples, and Shinto shrines. Free days have optional trips to shopping districts and parks.

One highlight is an overnight trip to Takaozan, a training temple and pilgrimage site. Before leaving Takaozan students hike to its waterfall for a rare chance at waterfall practice.

After Takaozan we travel by bullet train to Kyoto to explore the ancient temples and pathways of this beautiful city. From there we hop down to Hiroshima to see the genbaku dome and discuss questions of religion, war and peace. We also spend the night at Daishoin, an ancient temple on Miyajima, a beautiful island just off the coast.

The program offers students the chance to experience the rich religious and cultural life of Japan. Students will visit temples, shrines, new religious movements and museums, and attend lectures by Dr. Covell, Japanese scholars and others.

CONTACT

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For pictures and comments from a past trip see: http://homepages.wmich.edu/~scovell

Dr. Covell earned his Ph.D. in Japanese Religions from Princeton and is currently the Mary Meader Professor of Comparative Religion and Chair of the Department of Comparative Religion at WMU. Dr. Covell has drawn on his experience and contacts in Japan to put together a behind the scenes tour of Japanese religious life.