RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY

College of International Relations
Department of International Relations

2027

GS | GLOBAL STUDIES MAJOR



GLOBAL STUDIES MAJOR

Ritsumeikan University | College of International Relations | Department of International Relations

www.ritsumei.ac.jp/ir/eng/
College of International Relations
Ritsumeikan University

Futurize.









GLOBAL STUDIES

Since its establishment in 2011, the Global Studies program has provided students with an opportunity to learn about international relations in English.
With 100 students per grade and a ratio of 50:50 Japanese to international students, students from approximately 35 different countries can learn together in a diverse, international environment while living in Kyoto.

Global Studies Major

Department of International Relations
College of International Relations | Ritsumeikan University

GS



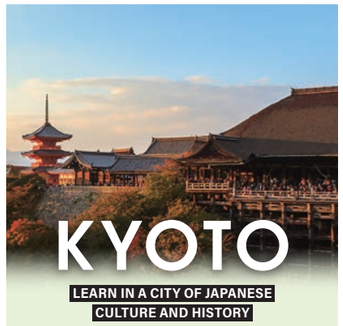
Learn with students from all over the world

Our students come from approximately 30 different countries and regions around the globe, including Japan, South Korea, China, the United States, Indonesia, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Sweden, France, and Switzerland. In addition, many short-term exchange students also come to Ritsumeikan University to learn in the Global Studies Program.

The many nations represented at Ritsumeikan

Japan, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, United States, Myanmar, India, Philippines, Taiwan, Ukraine, Nepal, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Brazil, France, Lithuania, Peru, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Türkiye

*As of March 2026



Discover a unique campus life experience

Being located in the city of Kyoto, we attract international students from various countries and regions. JDP/SKP program exchange students also come to study in the program, which makes for an international campus experience while studying in the traditional surroundings of the city.



Learn in an international environment while in Japan

In this major, all courses are conducted in English. Across the entire college of International Relations, approximately 30% of all courses are English-based. In addition to English-based courses, students may also take courses conducted in Japanese, depending on their goals and interests.



The many diverse backgrounds of our faculty are another one of our strengths

Global Studies instructors at Ritsumeikan hail from many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Hungary, India, South Korea, and Taiwan. They also cover a wide range of disciplines, creating an atmosphere perfect for raising international professionals.



Learn among a diverse student population

The GS program's ratio of Japanese to international alumni is 5:5. Many international students come from Asia, but there are also many others from virtually every continent on the globe.

International Relations

Curriculum

In the first year, students take Introductory Seminar I and II, fundamental subjects, and core subjects to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to study International Relations. There are three main areas of specialization, as follows.

GOVERNANCE and PEACE CLUSTER



Peace and Conflict Studies, Security Studies, International Human Rights, International Law, Global Political Economy, International Organizations

DEVELOPMENT and SUSTAINABILITY CLUSTER



Global Environmental Issues, International Development Cooperation, International Finance, International Trade and Investment, North-South Relations, Social Development

CULTURE and SOCIETY CLUSTER



Global Sociology, Media and Society, Cultural Awareness and Communication, Topics in Identity, Race and Ethnicity in the Modern World, International Migration

Courses (e.g.)

- Introductory Seminar I・II
- Academic Skills I・II・III
- Introduction to International Relations
- Introduction to the United Nations
- Introduction to Peace Studies
- Introduction to Law
- Introduction to Justice
- Introduction to Linguistics
- Introduction to Anthropology
- Japan and the World
- Modern World History
- Global Simulation Gaming
- Theories of International Relations
- Politics for Global Studies
- Economics for Global Studies
- Sociology for Global Studies
- International Law
- Global Political Economy
- Peace and Conflict Studies
- International Organizations
- International Human Rights
- Development Studies
- Global Environmental Issues
- International Trade and Investment
- Global Civil Society and Development
- Media and Society
- International Migration
- Professional Workshop
- Advanced Seminar
- Graduation Research

Curriculum Characteristics #01

Cross-Enrollment System

Many courses are offered in both English and Japanese, and can be taken regardless of one's major. This system allows students with sufficient language ability to take courses in either language.

VOICE



IWATA Ai
GS Major, 4th-year

I took courses like Introduction to Peace Studies, International Cooperation, and International Journalism. One thing I really enjoyed was that each class had a different approach to learning. Some were centered on discussion and exchanging ideas, while others focused more on building in-depth knowledge and understanding complex global issues. These experiences showed me how important it is to be able to discuss topics in English while also developing a strong understanding of them in Japanese. Studying alongside students from different backgrounds challenged me to rethink my own assumptions and perspectives. It taught me to view issues from multiple viewpoints and deepened my appreciation for diversity.

Curriculum Characteristics #02

Foreign Language Studies

Academic Skills is a compulsory course for all first and second-year students. This course is designed to improve students' reading, writing, presentation, and discussion skills in English. Students are placed in classes according to ability and set targets based on their level of proficiency. This is meant to help students improve their language skills in preparation for more advanced-level courses offered in English as well as for study abroad programs. Optional intensive courses are also offered (Intensive English I–VI) to help students improve their TOEFL® or IELTS scores.

Upon admission, all native and high-level (N1) Japanese-speaking first-year students will select a primary foreign language course from French, German, Spanish, Chinese, or Korean. All other overseas students will take a Japanese language course.

There are also intermediate and advanced-level language, communications and specialized courses, etc. for students wishing to continue their foreign language studies beyond their second year.

Curriculum Characteristics #03

Group Studies



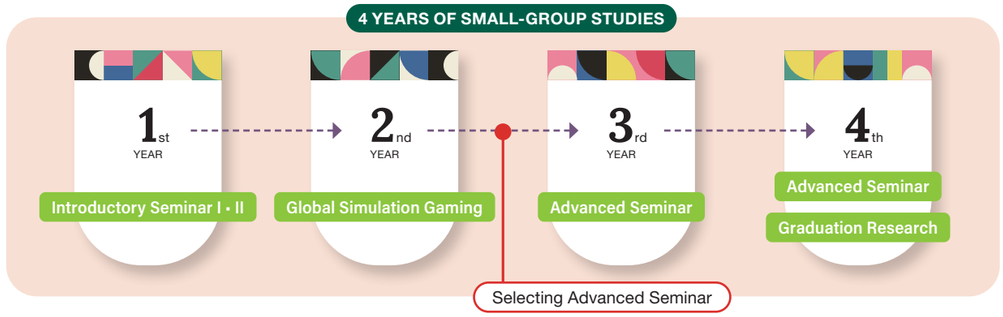
Students take small-group courses from their first year through to their fourth year. They acquire academic skills through discussing and presenting in small classes, gradually developing the ability to organize their graduation research. At the end of the second year, students select a seminar (a class of specialized exercises) to which they will belong for two years. In the third and fourth years, students research a topic of their interest under the guidance of their seminar supervisor, culminating in a graduation research project in the final semester of the fourth year.

Advanced Seminar

In the 3rd and 4th years, students will select a seminar based on their aspirations. Here, along with other students who share a similar interest, they will learn for two years under the guidance of a supervisor and begin preparations for their graduation research. All students will be part of an Advanced Seminar, and in this atmosphere of friendly competition, they will compose a term paper that will serve as the basis for their graduation research.

Graduation Research

With the assistance of their supervisor and peers in the form of discussions and debates, students' studies will culminate in the completion of their graduation research project. What they learn over those four years will serve as the base from which they develop as members of society. The knowledge gained in the process of completing their graduation research in the College of International Relations will be vital when planning their future careers.



Curriculum Characteristics #04

Regional Studies

In addition to theory, the College of International Relations places great importance on studying world regions. Students take courses in regional studies to deepen their knowledge of the history and culture of areas of interest to them from their second year.

Courses (e.g.)

- Japanese Politics
- Japanese Society
- Japanese Culture
- Japanese Economy
- Japan-United States Relations
- Modern Japanese History
- Foreign Relations of Japan
- Korean Studies
- Chinese Studies
- Southeast Asian Studies
- Global Issues (Area Studies)

VOICE



MIYAWAKI Christine Hana
GS Major, 3rd-year

Growing up in both Japan and the United States sparked my interest in politics, media, and U.S.-Japan relations. At GS, I have explored these interests through courses, discussions, and the Global Simulation Gaming (GSG) program, while also participating in the U.S. Consulate's Ambassadors Youth Council and UNITAR's Youth Leaders Forum. These experiences have strengthened my confidence in expressing my ideas and broadened my perspective on international affairs. In the future, I hope to build a career that connects Japan and the United States through policy, communication, and international collaboration.

VOICE



Jameel Mikaheel Yamaguchi
GS Major, 4th-year

Originally from Ghana, I chose Global Studies to explore international issues and develop the skills needed to contribute to positive change. Through courses such as GSG, international law moot court competitions, and my current study abroad experience in Kuwait, I have deepened my understanding of international relations, law, and cross-cultural communication. These experiences have strengthened my research, communication, and leadership skills while broadening my global perspective. In the future, I hope to pursue graduate studies and contribute to addressing global challenges through environmental economics or international law.

GSG Global Simulation Gaming

Simulation gaming to solve real international problems as an actor in the international community

Students act out the roles of federations (international organizations, NGOs, states, etc.) and engage in simulated international negotiations in order to solve real global issues. They take the initiative by developing a plan of action and carrying out negotiations in order to solve problems. In this way, they are able to utilize the knowledge they have acquired and apply it to the challenges facing modern society.





Zemi Research Convention

Annual convention to present research results in the College of IR

In the College of International Relations, students cultivate the ability to examine various issues faced by the international community from diverse political, economic, social, or cultural perspectives and then seek various ways to approach those issues. The Zemi Research Convention is a research convention that began in 2000, allowing students to give concrete shape to their learning and giving them a chance to make their studies known to people outside of the university. At the convention, students belonging to various seminars give presentations concerning their learning achievements to not only their peers and university faculty, but to a range of people from various walks of life. Since 2019, all teams have been required to make a poster for their presentations.





International Organizations Training Program in Bangkok

The College of International Relations offers “International Organizations Training Program in Bangkok” for students in the College of International Relations who are interested in building their careers at international organizations in the future.
Students will visit several international organizations (UNESCAP, UNHCR, etc.) in Bangkok, and Thai government agencies that work in collaboration with the United Nations, as well as local universities, to observe the activities of these organizations. The aim of the program is to motivate the participating students through briefing sessions and workshops with staff from each organization, as well as international exchange with students from local universities, and to help them to make plans reality for finding employment at international organizations.



Peace Studies Seminar

In this seminar, students will learn about the importance of world peace and international cooperation through a series of activities, including off-campus training in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds and nationalities will gather to engage in group discussions and fieldwork, with the aim of deep understanding of peace and cooperation.



Studying Abroad

While studying abroad is optional, 30-40% of students from International Relations participate in long-term study abroad programs of six months to a year. Before or after studying abroad, students can maintain and improve their English by taking specialized courses offered in English. For more information, please visit the International Education Center's Study Abroad Program website.

www.ritsumei.ac.jp/studyabroad/eng/



Interviews with our faculty

Voices

So, what makes the GS program unique compared to other programs?
Visit our website to see interviews with some of our instructors and find out.

RAJKAI Zsombor Tibor



Globalization means viewing the world from the perspective of people from many different countries. For this, you first need to understand your own country. Identify its unique qualities, the differences and similarities compared to other countries, and learn and understand its distinctive traits. From there, the study of other countries begins. Being a global professional is not simply a matter of English language ability. It also means having a "globalized mind," a quality that we would like students to gain in our program.

FUKUMI Sayaka



Upon joining GS, you will come to realize the diversity of the community. You will find that some things that you had thought of as "normal" may not be so normal at all. You will also discover that things about your way of thinking that you assumed to be strange are surprisingly common in other countries and regions.
It is our hope that this will make for an enjoyable college experience in which you are able to gain inspiration from others while you learn.

AMEKAWA Yuichiro



My desire is to foster in students the ability to look at people as "individuals" and not be swayed by nationality. It is not uncommon for people in Japan to view people from other nations through a political or economic filter. In reality, even people from the same country or region may have markedly different characters and points of view. It goes without saying, but let us not forget that every person has their own individual idiosyncrasies.

SMITH Nathaniel M.



There are many professors in the College of International Relations who, in their respective fields of expertise, possess a broad range of knowledge, an open mind, and the ability to approach concepts from various perspectives. Personally, I have a wide range of interests and have been doing research on the changes that Kabuki-Cho in Tokyo's Shinjuku ward is experiencing as a community. As an instructor, my desire is to help students harness their distinctive viewpoints and interests and guide them through their own unique, successful research experience.

OCHI Megumi



The environment of the GS program is one in which cliques are uncommon and groups of students from the same country are not usually seen, making for an atmosphere conducive to creating friendships regardless of country of origin. Some students come from binational families, and their identities are not defined by either country. Students from such families have the advantage of being able to view things from two different national perspectives.

KOGA BROWES Scott



The Global Studies program has now been in existence for more than ten years. Over that time, I have explored ways of teaching within the program. Today, we have developed a support system for those students who choose to study in English and a program that focuses on the next five to ten years. I feel that a continued emphasis should be placed on the execution of a curriculum in which students are able to focus even more on fields that are of interest to them.

ATAKA Hiroaki



It has been 11 years since the establishment of the Global Studies program. Word of mouth from alumni in their home countries and at their alma maters has resulted in more applications from new students, creating a positive cycle. Tuition in Japan is relatively low, and the country is considered extremely safe, making it an excellent place for students. And many of our alumni have moved on to graduate schools overseas after using the Global Studies program as a stepping stone. I feel that our program has gained a reputation for generating a broad range of opportunities for students' future studies.

GS Major

10th ANNIVERSARY Site



www.ritsumei.ac.jp/ir/gs-10th/eng/

Interviews with our alumni

Careers

Global and diverse career path of Alumni

Alumni have taken the expertise, communication skills and vitality that they gained over their four years in the program, and put those abilities to use in various fields around the globe. Many of them discovered career paths in international fields as government officials working for foreign ministries and embassies, multinational corporations, and domestic global companies.
Also, some have gone on to further their studies and brush up skills in graduate programs both domestically and overseas.

Joyce Lo

Working at Mindshare
Class of 2017



After graduating from GS, I built my career in Japan's marketing and advertising industry and now work as a Media Planning Manager at Mindshare in Tokyo. The communication, negotiation, and presentation skills I developed through GS and GSG continue to support me in a global business environment. Looking back, studying in such a diverse and international community was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. GS gave me the confidence to express my ideas, develop my own values, and build lifelong friendships. My advice to future students is simple: make the most of your time in Kyoto, learn as much as you can, and enjoy every moment of the journey.

Pranjal Modi

Working at RIMOWA
Class of 2022



After graduating from GS, I joined RIMOWA Japan as an E-commerce Specialist, combining my passion for the luxury industry with the skills I developed at Ritsumeikan. Through internships with LVMH Group brands, I discovered my interest in luxury retail and digital business. Looking back, GS helped me develop communication, presentation, research, and analytical skills that I use every day in my work. My advice to students is to make the most of the diverse community at Ritsumeikan, connect with people from different backgrounds, and take every opportunity both on and off campus, as those experiences may open unexpected paths for your future.

ALVIN Kuek Dao Lin

Working at the Singapore Airlines
Class of 2022



I loved the fact that campus life at the College of International Relations was vibrant and full of energy, with many opportunities to make lifelong friends from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. Many of my friends were made in the classroom, where the College's focus on discussion-based syllabi and interactive learning allowed everyone to express their opinions and, in the process, learn more about each other.
Upon graduating from the GS major, I returned to Singapore and was hired by Singapore Airlines for the position of Partnerships and International Relations Executive. I had recently been promoted to Senior Partnerships and International Relations Executive and plan to focus on the sub-fields of sustainability and governance to grow my career.

SAKAKIBARA Jun

Working at Uniting Vic. Tas
Class of 2015



As a Business Analyst at Uniting Vic Tas, I play a key role in a back-office transformation project. My responsibilities include not only facilitating technology and business process improvements but also navigating people through the change process.
One of the highlights of the College of International Relations is its exceptionally supportive learning environment. The professors have hands-on approaches, offering personalized guidance to ensure that students receive the support they need. The GS major benefits from small class sizes, which encourage active participation and in-depth discussions, facilitating easier collaboration among students. This close-knit setting helps build strong relationships with both peers and professors, creating a comfortable and safe space for learning. Given that many students are far from home, these connections often extend beyond the classroom, leading to lifelong friendships.

THE CAREER PATH OF ALUMNI OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS

JAPANESE COMPANIES THAT HAVE HIRED GS GRADUATES
NISSAN MOTOR CO., LTD, The Kansai Electric Power Company, LIXIL Corporation, ORIX Corporation, Rakuten Group, Inc., JCB Co., Ltd., Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, DESCENTE LTD., Nitto Denko Corporation, SoftBank Corp., CyberAgent, Inc., Nippon Telegraph and Telephone West Corporation, Faurecia Clarion Electronics Co., Ltd., Sharp Corporation, ROHM Co., Ltd., Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corporation, KDDI Corporation, Accenture Japan Ltd.

GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), The Japan Foundation, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Defense, Acquisition, Technology, & Logistics Agency, Japan Coast Guard, National Tax Agency (Senior Specialist), Ministry of Justice Hiroshima Immigration Bureau, International Economy & Work Research Institute

GRADUATE SCHOOLS
Overseas: University of Oxford, Stanford University, London School of Economics and Political Science, George Washington University, University of Manchester, The University of Sydney, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, University of San Diego, Leiden University, The University of Sheffield, Seoul National University, University of Bristol, Université Libre de Bruxelles

Japan: Ritsumeikan University, Tokyo University, Kyoto University, Nagoya University, Osaka University, Kobe University, Tsukuba University, Keio University, Hitotsubashi University, Waseda University

Our Faculty and their Specializations

What is International Relations?

These are the keywords related to the academic discipline of, and research topics in, the area of international relations studies. The number of keywords and possible pairings among them is endless. Our faculty covers a wide range of expertise and are here as your support team as you assemble your course of study in the field of international relations.

GOVERNANCE and PEACE CLUSTER

- Diplomacy
  - AIBOSHI Koichi
  - FRENCH Thomas William
  - MINAMINO Yasuyoshi
  - U.K.
  - Cold War
- Japan-U.S. Relations
  - U.S.-China Era
  - U.S.A.
  - Economic Friction
  - TPP
  - NAKATO Sachio
  - North Korea
- Conflict Resolution
  - Article 9 of The Japanese Constitution
  - SONODA Setsuko
  - KIMIJIMA Akihiko
  - Peace Studies
- Nationalism
  - Immigration
  - Transnationalism
  - International Marriage
  - MATSUSAKA Hiroaki
  - MOSNEAGA Ana
  - MASUDA Minoru
  - France
  - Race
  - Africa
  - IWATA Takuo
  - Decentralization of Power
  - NAKAMOTO Maoko
  - Japanese American
- International Politics
- Globalization
- World Social Theory
- Theory of International Relations
- Nuclear Weapons
  - ADACHI Kenki
- Disarmament
  - FUKUMI Sayaka
- ATAKA Hiroaki
- International Norms
- NGO
- Civil Society
- Political Activities & Movements
  - SMITH Nathaniel M.
  - Urban Studies
- Democratization
  - Israel
  - Syria
  - Middle East
  - Narcotics
  - International Organized Crime
- Terrorism
  - Pirate
  - Islam
  - DANISMAN Idris
  - SUECHIKA Kota
  - Indonesia
  - Peace Building
- Fieldwork
  - Ethnic Minorities
- Area Studies
- Southeast Asia
  - HO Thanh Tam
  - Cambodia
  - Thailand
  - AMEKAWA Yuichiro
- Mekong Region Development
- International Cooperation
  - Peace Building
- ODA
  - Fair Trade
  - KOBAYASHI Kazushige
  - LU Wanxue
- Poverty Reduction
  - SHIMADA Haruyuki
- International Organizations
  - ISHIKAWA Sachiko
  - Human Security
- PKO
- Myanmar
- Rural
- National Border
- Population
- Food
- Agriculture
- ASEAN
- United Nations
- MATSUDA Masahiko
- Comparative Literature of Japan and China
- Asia
- China
- Economic Growth
- Smart Phone
- IT Industry
- NAKAGAWA Ryoji
- SUN Junyue
- Food Chain
- East Asian Community
- Regional Integration
- EU
- Taiwan
- HOSHINO Kaoru
- WATANABE Hiroaki
- Financial Crisis
- IMF
- Euro
- US Dollar
- Trade
- Currency
- MORIOKA Masashi
- Economic Theory
- Abenomics
- Economic Policy
- ITAKI Masahiko
- International Economy
- Foreign Direct Investment
- Development Economics
- Multinational Corporation
- YANE Haruka
- WANGTong
- Global Warming
- HAYASHI Daisuke
- Energy Conversion
- Environmental Conservation
- Technology Transfer
- UEMATSU Hiroki
- Sustainable Development
- WATANABE Matsuo
- UNPKO
- TAGAWA Shohei
- Renewable Energy
- International Human Rights Law
- Nuclear Power
- KANEKO Mai
- Biodiversity
- NISHIMURA Tomoaki
- Advanced Science
- Cloning Technology
- Nanotechnology
- International Criminal Justice
- OCHI Megumi
- Space Science
- KAWAMURA Satoko
- KITAMURA Rieko

DEVELOPMENT and SUSTAINABILITY CLUSTER

CULTURE and SOCIETY CLUSTER

- Japanese Language Education
  - Translation & Interpretation
  - MITSUI Kumiko
  - BONG Hyunkyung
- Language
- Intercultural Communication
- English Language Education
  - Foreign Language Education
  - KUNSCHAK Claudia
  - SAKO Takayoshi
  - IGARASHI Yuko
  - O'MOCHAIN Robert
- Cultural Anthropology
- Religion
- Gender
  - YAMAGUCHI Tomomi
  - TORIYAMA Junko
  - KIM Viktoriya
  - Philippines
  - Peru
  - TSUJIMOTO Toshiko
- Family
- Latin America
- International Migration
  - RAJKAI Zsombor Tibor
- English and American Literature
  - Japanese Subculture
  - CHEUNG Yukman
- Sociology
- Movies
  - Godzilla
  - IKEDA Yoshiko
  - SF
- Japan Studies
  - TAILLANDIER Denis
- Cultural Diplomacy
- Cultural Diplomacy
  - SAEKI Chizuru
- Cultural Studies
- Creative Industries
  - OYAMA Shinji
- Mass Communication
- Media
  - KOGA BROWES Scott Philammon
- TV News
- Journalism
  - SHIRATO Keiichi
- Internet
- SNS
- Korea
  - KIM Wooja
- Chinatown

Research fields and subjects

Faculty members

*Faculty Members as of April 2025