

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GLOBAL STUDIES

OVERVIEW

The Graduate Program in Global Studies (GPGS) is part of Sophia University, a leading private university in Japan. The GPGS, founded in April 2006 (formerly the Graduate Program in Comparative Culture from 1979 to 2005), builds on Sophia's traditional strengths in area studies to study globalization. It emphasizes inquiry into the contemporary world and its historical antecedents through a curriculum that combines the themes of interdisciplinary global studies, theories and methodologies of academic disciplines, and the language training and cross-cultural understandings of Japanese and area studies.

The approximately 30 faculty members in the GPGS have advanced degrees from leading universities around the world and are actively engaged in research and publication in their specializations. They represent many different disciplines, nationalities and cultural backgrounds, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. A number of professors from other graduate programs in the university are also affiliated with the GPGS.

Every semester up to 15 applicants are admitted to pursue the M.A. degree, as well as up to three Ph.D. candidates. The size of the program is kept small to encourage close student-faculty interaction. Graduate students have access to the university's research facilities, while the location in central Tokyo provides easy access to such nearby resources as the National Diet Library.

1. DEGREES

The GPGS offers four degrees that are accredited by MEXT.

The M.A. in Global Studies emphasizes the study of global issues from social science perspectives, focusing on global-local, systemic, and transnational processes. The degree prepares students for research and teaching positions in academia and think tanks, international organizations, as well as entry into doctoral programs.

The M.A. in International Business and Development Studies emphasizes the acquisition of analytical skills to deal with a range of contemporary global business and development problems that focus on Japan and Asia. It prepares students for careers in business firms and development organizations with an international orientation.

The M.A. in Japanese Studies enables an interdisciplinary approach to the study of both historical and contemporary aspects of Japanese history, literature, religion, art

history, society, and culture. It prepares students for further study and research in doctoral programs or in positions that place a premium on knowledge about Japan.

The Ph.D. in Global Studies is designed for the advanced study of specific regions and locales in the context of global processes. It prepares students for academic posts in university, international, and global studies programs, as well as research positions in institutions requiring advanced analysis of countries and regions in a global context.

2. CURRICULUM

The small scale of the GPGS and the diverse disciplinary specializations, broad experience, and research interests of the faculty enable flexible course selection. In consultation with faculty members, students select courses designed to meet their individual interests and to further the acquisition of specialized knowledge in their chosen fields.

The master's degrees have two tracks; each track has different graduation requirements. Students in the credit track complete a graduation project while those in the thesis track write a research thesis. All students enter the GPGS on the credit track, with subsequent entry into the thesis track contingent upon academic performance, availability of a mentor for the proposed topic, and successful defense of a thesis proposal.

Doctoral students work on their dissertation under the guidance of an advisor. While no course work is required, candidates participate in workshops and other program activities and may, in consultation with their dissertation advisor, attend courses.

English is the language of instruction. However, the study of Japanese and other languages is encouraged. Students may take advantage of the comprehensive Japanese language courses and other languages taught at Sophia. Those with a sufficient level of Japanese language proficiency as determined by a language examination may also take courses taught in Japanese as part of their studies.

3. RESOURCES

Sophia University's library system contains about one million volumes and 11,000 periodicals. The central library has open stacks for ease of use while specialized collections are found in smaller libraries and research institutes. The library system has an especially rich collection of books and journals in English related to the study of Japan. The library's digital resources include on-line searches of its holdings (OPAC), extensive databases, e-journals, and specialized search engines for journal and newspaper articles. Holdings from universities throughout Japan can also be obtained through inter-library loan.

Many members of the GPGS faculty are also members of the Institute of Comparative Culture. The Institute sponsors a lecture series in English that invites leading scholars in Global Studies, Japan Studies, International Business and Economics and related fields. Students in the GPGS are strongly encouraged to attend lectures, and are often given a chance to meet with and discuss research with visiting scholars at the Institute. The Institute also sponsors research projects related to the interests of GPGS students, offering the opportunity for some students to participate as research assistants or as presenters at academic workshops sponsored by the Institute.

The GPGS has its own study rooms and computer facilities and provides students with on-campus lockers for storing materials. In addition, graduate students can use the university computing facilities, cafeterias, gymnasium, athletic fields, and medical and counseling facilities. As with urban universities generally in Japan, Sophia has limited dormitory space and most students live off campus.