



Faculty Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS)

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GSAPS Faculty = Expertise × Humanism

At the Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS), students are taught by diverse faculty members with high-level research skills and practical abilities, who conduct cutting-edge research in their field, and who have real world experience, such as in international institutions like UNICEF and the World Bank, in diplomacy, and in the mass media.

In this edition of Faculty Spotlights, we take a look at the attractive learning experience and the three specializations-‘Area Studies’, ‘International Relations’ and ‘International Development/Policy Studies’-offered by GSAPS through the voices of its teaching staff and their unique expertise and rich humanism cultivated from various backgrounds.

File 01

Nana Okura Gagné

Field of specialization : Cultural Anthropology

Researching Diverse Social Issues

Cultural anthropology is the study of humanity -- how we/humans live in society -- by historicizing and unpacking social processes. Specifically, in my own research, I study "Work, Culture, and Capitalism" -- where I look at how Japanese labor relations have evolved and shifted, what are the ramifications of current changes of global capitalism on workers, and how this affects the meanings of employment/unemployment. Moreover, I also study "ART, Reproductive Health, and Families," analyzing how the increasing medicalization of reproductive technologies have impacted couples who are wrestling with fertility challenges as well as the changing forms and meanings of families.

Focusing on issues that are often overlooked in society and giving voice to the "voiceless"

I research on men and women. And this process allowed me to see the unique historical processes and social restrictions, liberations and challenges for men and women. In other words, I believe that understanding the problems and relationships of both sides (i.e., men and women, and employers and employees) has led me to see the larger and more fundamental issues in society. Through my research, I aim to raise social awareness and people's understanding of social issues, which can lead to better solutions, by rethinking what is taken for granted, going deeper with questions, and reflecting the voices of those who are often silenced or feel voiceless.

Through Anthropology, A New Way of Seeing and Understanding Society and Problem Solving

In the past, women were not allowed to work inside the brewery in some areas of Japan. At first glance, this rule appears to be a limitation established because of the privileges men held. At the same time, it was said that due to the high concentration of alcohol and the frequent physical and sexual abuse of women inside the brewery, the restrictions were also designed to protect women. Understanding historical and social process, the view we see also becomes more complex. By unpacking historical and social processes, I hope that students will also discover joy in exploring societies from fresh perspectives.

Proposing Better Solutions to New Challenges that Humanity Faces

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and more and more people live and interact with people from different societies, anthropology offers important insights not only to better understand each other, but also to help guide us to better solutions to the various problems and challenges facing human society. The issues that we engage with in our classes such as gender and family, labor and inequalities, or globalization are not just abstract concepts and issues confined to the classroom but are real forces that people encounter in their everyday lives. I hope to cultivate critical, reflective, and proactive students who can become responsible actors and leaders on the global stage.



Unraveling the complex social economies of Asia's emerging economies from an interdisciplinary perspective

I conduct urban studies and area studies in Southeast Asia, primarily in Thailand. My main research interests are urban informality, urban inequality, and gentrification associated with urban redevelopment. Asia is currently experiencing rapid economic growth. However, up to 70% of the population is engaged in informal economy that are not covered by social security or taxation. The digitally mediated gig economy is also growing rapidly. Economic approach alone cannot explain the complex socioeconomics of emerging Asia. I aim to conduct interdisciplinary research in the field of area studies.

Deepening Understanding of Inequality and Poverty through Urban Studies

When I was in high school in UK, I lived with students from dozens of countries. Through various discussions with them, I became interested in international issues of inequality and poverty. This led me to my current research on urban informality. A "city" is a place where a wide variety of people and goods interact. Innovation and social problems also occur in agglomerations. I would like to deepen our understanding of urban dynamics and issues of inequality and poverty by unraveling their complex interactions.

"Compressed development" of emerging economies and an important role of urban studies in Asia

The 21st century is not only the century of Asia, but also the century of cities. Asia is becoming a center of economic development and innovation, but at the same time, it has become a source of risk and crisis. Emerging economies have developed at a rapid pace and in "compressed development" rather than in stages. They face complexities which developed countries never experienced before. Tokyo is no exception and is facing the same challenges as Bangkok and Shanghai, such as the increasing informalization of labor and residence. Against this backdrop, I think that the study of Asian cities will have important academic and policy implications in the future. However, I must say that Japan is still weak in terms of both transmission and accumulation of researches on Asian cities. Since GSAPS has a multinational student body, we hope that our students will contribute to the international discussion and promote Asian urban studies from a global perspective.

Valuing the new understanding gained from the fieldwork

In our research, we believe it is important to combine the "ant's eye" view, which involves actually going out into the field and observing various things with the "bird's eye" view, which is a structural, macro view. By learning about the actual situation through fieldworks and re-examining existing theories, new perspectives and understanding can be gained. In today's complex society, area study approaches are needed in international organizations, business, government, and the private sector, as well as in all parts of the world. I hope that students will find a research topics that they are passionate about and work on it with sincerity, knowing that they are responsible for the future.



TAMAKI ENDO

Field of specialization : Comparative and international education, educational policy, education and international development, international higher education.



A portrait of Makoto Seta, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light-colored striped shirt and khaki pants. He is standing with his hands clasped in front of him.

The Law of the Sea Makes a Major Contribution to the Internationally Essential Management of the High Seas

My area of expertise, the law of the sea, is a discipline focused on "establishing and enforcing rules for the ocean". Approximately 70% of the Earth's surface is covered by oceans, and of that, roughly 70%—equivalent to about half of the Earth's total surface area—consists of the high seas, which are beyond the sovereignty of any single State. For this reason, the management of the high seas is an essential international concern. The law of the sea contributes to this management in two major ways. First, it facilitates the coordination of interests among States, addressing issues such as maritime boundary disputes between Japan and neighboring States like China and South Korea. Second, it promotes shared interests among States by considering how to protect the marine environment and what legal frameworks should be established and implemented to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources. These are the two roles that the law of the sea plays.

Pirates as the “Common Enemy of Mankind” : Encountering an Interesting Theory in a Moot Court

When I was a first-year undergraduate, I joined the Waseda International Law Commission. During a moot court competition, we tackled a case concerning the exercise of jurisdiction over ships. While exploring the practical application of law, I became deeply interested in the theoretical aspects of the law of the sea. Specifically, it is said that "any State may prosecute and punish" pirates, and in textbooks, this is explained as "because pirates are the common enemy of mankind". "What is a common enemy of mankind? Why is it okay for any State to punish them?". These questions stimulated my research, perhaps influenced by my love of "One Piece" since the beginning of its serialization. In order to solve this question, I decided to choose as my research topic "how each State applies its own law in the ocean".

Unleashing the Ocean's Potential : The Need for Advancing the Law of the Sea

The ocean is vast, and there are many things scientifically unknown about it, but it holds great potential. As part of global efforts to address climate change, renewable energy initiatives such as offshore wind power generation and technologies harnessing tidal and wave energy are gaining attention. Additionally, projects utilizing the seabed for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) are underway, aiming to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the climate. Moreover, new energy resources that are useful to humanity, such as methane hydrates and rare-earth mud, are also coming into focus. With advancements in science and technology, the use of marine space and resources will become more diverse, so the law of the sea is required to develop in response to these developments.

Studying International Law and International Organizations : A Foundation for Success Across Various Fields

While my specialization is in the law of the sea, students in my seminar engage in a broad study of international law and international organizations. I respect the students' interests and try to teach them from a broader interdisciplinary perspective, not just my specialty of the law of the sea. In addition, exchanging opinions in an environment with students from various countries leads to thinking about things from various perspectives. As knowledge of international law and international organizations becomes increasingly valued in private enterprises, the experiences gained here can open doors not only for those pursuing academic research but also for careers in other fields. Through their studies at GSAPS, I hope students will confidently pursue their chosen paths.

File

03

MAKOTO
SETA

Field of specialization : International Law, Law of the Sea

File 04

Alexander BUKH

Field of specialization : International relations, international relations in Northeast Asia,
Japan-Korea relations, Japan-Russia relations

Studying the Influence of Non-State Actors on International Politics

My specialty is international politics in Northeast Asia, with a focus on Japan-Korea and Japan-Russia relations. For example, in the case of the Takeshima (Dokdo) and Northern Territories issues, citizen movements such as those for the return of Takeshima and those for the protection of the territories can influence the policies of states. I have researched how non-state actors such as citizen groups, social movements, and local governments influence international politics.

Beginning to rethink education and common sense in my home country while traveling in Asian countries

After graduating from high school, I became interested in languages while traveling in Asian countries. This interest gradually turned into an interest in international relations. I was raised and educated in the Soviet Union and Israel, where there were strong ideologies, but I came to realize that we need to question what is considered common sense. I now believe that a critical perspective on authority and common sense is essential for the healthy development of democracy.

Believe in critical thinking as a researcher and educator

I believe in challenging conventional wisdom and common sense. It is easy to gather and accumulate information from the Internet and the literature, but that is not enough. I want students to be able to understand the claims being made and to examine them in depth to see what questions and critiques can be considered and what new issues can be identified. I believe that the analytical and critical thinking skills cultivated through this process will lead to success not only in international politics, but in all areas of society.

[Curiosity in learning] Providing opportunities for interest and growth

GSAPS attracts students from many different countries, including countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. The opportunity to communicate with students from many different countries is one of the most attractive features of GSAPS. As an educator, I value equality and curiosity. I want to treat students of all nationalities, genders, and backgrounds equally and meet their individual learning needs. I want students to be curious about learning and to enjoy their research. Therefore, I focus on stimulating their interest and developing their budding curiosity.



Faculty Profile



File 01 / Nana OKURA GAGNÉ

Field of specialization : Cultural Anthropology

Research theme : Work & Well-being, Work & Leisure, Gender & Family, Reproductive Health & Diversification of Families

[Professional background]

Research Associate, Institute of Social Sciences, The University of Tokyo (2012-2014)

Assistant/Associate Professor, Department of Japanese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2014-2024)

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University (2024-present)



File 02 / Tamaki ENDO

Field of specialization : Regional economics, urban studies (East and Southeast Asia), development studies, area studies (Southeast Asia)

Research theme : Informality, urban economy and society, labor, inequality, care, risk/crisis response, gentrification

[Professional background]

Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University (2007-2008)

Full-time Lecturer, Faculty of Economics, Saitama University (2008-2011)

Visiting Fellow, The University of London (SOAS) (2012-2013)

Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Saitama University (2011-2015)

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University (2015-2021)

Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics (LSE), The Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre (SEAC) (2020.10-2021.6)

Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University (2022.1-3)

Professor, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University (2021-2024)

Visiting Professor, London School of Economics (LSE), The Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre (SEAC) (2022.10-2023.1)

Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University (2024-present)



File 03 / Makoto SETA

Field of specialization : International Law, Law of the Sea

Research theme : The role of international law in the establishment and maintenance of maritime order

[Professional background]

Research Associate, Institute of Comparative Law, Waseda University (2013-2015)

Associate Professor, Faculty of International and Integrated Studies, Yokohama City University (2015-2019) Associate

Professor, Faculty of International Studies, Yokohama City University (2019-2023)

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University (2023-present)



File 04 / Alexander BUKH

Field of specialization : International relations, international relations in Northeast Asia, Japan-Korea relations, Japan-Russia relations

Research theme : Post-war Japan-Korea relations, territorial issues in Northeast Asia, identity and non-state actors in international relations

[Professional background]

Research Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation (2000-2001)

Lecturer, London School of Economics (2002-2004)

Research Fellow, Waseda University (2006-2008)

Associate Professor, University of Tsukuba (2008-2012)

Senior Lecturer, Victoria University of Wellington (2012-2019)

Associate Professor, Victoria University (2020-2024)

Professor, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University (2024-present)

