

A Message from the Dean of SILS at the Entrance Ceremony  
On 1 April 2021

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Hello everybody, and welcome to the School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) at Waseda University! On behalf of SILS, I would like to offer my congratulations and a warm welcome to all the new students who are entering this school.

I teach international law, Japan's foreign policy, and other related courses at SILS. It is our great pleasure to see you all here today.

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Since its foundation seventeen years ago, SILS has steadily acquired an extremely dynamic and diverse culture, which is evident in the campus's international atmosphere. Certainly, English is the de facto *lingua franca* at our school. However, our unique diversity is based on the multicultural backgrounds and plurilingual perspectives of our students and faculty members. We hope that you will take full advantage of our curriculum, especially our liberal arts education, as you choose which courses to take.

However, freedom and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. You must take responsibility for your own decisions and conduct—not only in your selection of courses but also in your daily life. When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do. In a society, your freedom ends where someone else's freedom begins.

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We live in a time of uncertainty. The world is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which is likely its most serious challenge since the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918–1920. How should we cope with it? What should we learn to overcome this adversity?

It is amazing that both Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, and Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, are quoted as having said almost the same thing about 2,500 years ago: 'The only constant is change.' You will, therefore, need to be flexible and resilient in order to adapt to new situations and find ways to cope—and prevail.

Let us think about and discuss solutions to the world's problems while we are here together at SILS. It is your will to succeed and your effort to learn here at our school that will largely decide your future—in the broadest sense of the term. Please continue to think and decide for yourself, no matter how reliable artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet may seem. Classics and history, among others, are of great value for our study under these circumstances.

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We hope that you will freely and responsibly maximise your life as a student at SILS and Waseda University. Our particular academic environment is sure to profoundly enrich your experience here, and to enable you to lead a fruitful and prosperous life in the future.

We wish you good luck and all the best!  
Many congratulations and a heartfelt welcome to you all!