

Letters / Humanities



Associate Professor Sociology

Shoko Hirai

What is Sociology? Literally, it is the *-logy* (study) of society. A study based on themes that are related to various groups within society. It also focuses on various kinds of human behaviors related to play, sports, performance, or even crime. Another emphasis rests on particular relationships within the contemporary society such as sex,

ethnicity, fashion, and mass media. By focusing on the family, a primary institution which exists in any society, I explored the impact of modernization, industrialization, and globalization on the basic relationship within and outside the family. Comparisons with foreign families also reveal significant findings for my research. I very much look forward to discussing these various aspects of family with people who have an interest in the humanities here at Kobe University.



International Student | Kingdom of Sweden

Jens Östlund

I find studying here at the humanities department of Kobe University to be a very interesting experience. The classes and discussions with the professors are always stimulating and help keep my enthusiasm at max.

My main field of research is linguistic typology, which means looking at the structures and characteristics of

different languages. It is very stimulating to be able to study together with people from as diverse places as Japan, China, Kenya, Russia and USA. It also gives me an opportunity to learn more about not only their languages, but also about their cultures. But what I like most about studying here at Kobe University is the friendly atmosphere amongst fellow students. Thanks to friends like these, I never feel far away from home even when I am at the other side of the world.

Faculty of Letters

The Faculty of Letters explores the field of humanities. The study of humanities is to inquire into cultural frameworks that mankind has created, and ponder their meanings by going back to their roots. What is human being? How has mankind shaped its long history? How have humans exercised their imaginative abilities to create literature and arts? What really are human cognitive mechanisms and languages, which are essential for human cultures? How has mankind created its societies and its various related spaces? Questions such as these are the central themes in the field of humanities.

In recent years, the world is undergoing significant changes due to globalization and information-technology revolution. However, it is during times like this when the Faculty must stand by its main theme of “humanities” to ceaselessly explore the fundamentals of humans and to be engaged in the creation

of new values toward the next century.

The Faculty has one department (Department of Humanities) consisting of five principal research divisions, which are further divided into fifteen majors. During the first year of the undergraduate course, the students can take a wide variety of introductory classes. After the first year, they move on to study their major subjects. There is an outstanding student-to-teacher ratio at the Faculty; the number of students in each undergraduate level is approximately 100, and 60 faculty members are assigned to teach them.

Graduate School of Humanities

The five-year curriculum of the Graduate School is designed to be consistent and systematic to enable its students more in-depth research and study in their fields, as well as to achieve innovative results in their research fields. Practical courses are offered in both the Master’s and Doctoral Degree Programs to cultivate students who are capable of recognizing the social significance of the humanities and returning the benefits of humanities research to society.

The Graduate School consists of two divisions: “Human Cultural Studies” and “Human Social Dynamics”. “Human Cultural Studies” focuses on its principles, by studying the classical literature related to humans and societies accumulated by mankind. This division also aims to foster human resources who have the ability to investigate the significance of each cultural phenomenon to the contemporary society. “Human Social Dynamics” focuses on the development of students’ abilities for the dynamic analysis of societies and cultures, based on research of classics. This process will enable students to contribute to the creation of new social norms and cultures.

“Human Cultural Studies” encompasses two courses: “Philosophy” and “Literature”. “Human Social Dynamics” consists of three courses of “History”, “Cognitive System Studies”, and “Socio-Cultural Studies”. Each of the courses is divided into multiple areas of research and education. Through this system, students can do a more detailed research into the areas of their expertise.

Undergraduate Program

Divisions	Majors
Philosophy	•Philosophy
Literature	•Japanese Literature and Language •Chinese Literature and Language •British and American Literature •German Literature •French Literature
History	•Japanese History •Asian History •European and American History
Cognitive Studies	•Psychology •Linguistics •Art Theory
Social Culture	•Sociology •Art History •Geography

Doctoral Program (five years) and Master’s Degree Program (two years)

Divisions	Courses	Research Areas
Division of Human Cultural Studies	Philosophy Literature	•Philosophy •Ethics •Japanese Language and Literature •Chinese and Korean Literature •British and American Literature •European Literature
Division of Human Social Dynamics	History Cognitive Studies Socio-Cultural Studies	•Japanese History •Asian History •European and American History •Psychology •Linguistics •Art Theory •Sociology •Art History •Geography •Cultural Resources

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