Letters/Humanities

Faculty of Letters

The Faculty of Letters explores the different fields of the 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 a 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, so 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 the IT 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 areas. During the first year of the undergraduate course, students 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 120, and 60 faculty members are assigned to teach them.

Graduate School of Humanities

The five-year curriculum (two years for Master's and 3 years for Doctoral) 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 analyzing the social significance of the humanities and returning the research results to the society.

The Graduate School consists of two departments: Human Cultural Studies and Human Social Dynamics. Human Cultural Studies focuses on its principles, by studying the classical literature related to humans and societies. This department aims to endow students with the ability to investigate the significance of each cultural phenomenon to contemporary society. Human Social Dynamics focuses on the development of students' abilities for the dynamic analysis of societies and cultures. This process will enable students to understand and analyze the formation of new social norms and cultures.

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

FURUICHI Akira

Associate Professor
Japanese History

Kobe has a unique place within Japan, witnessing a great deal of political and cultural change over the centuries. Despite Kobe being a city steeped in ancient Japanese customs and traditions, it has nevertheless been accepting of foreign civilizations and their cultural influences. Kobe's unique marine location as well as its proximity to other important Japanese cities saw it become a preferred destination for foreign traders in the 19th century and which continues to this day.

Many students who study humanities research specific materials such as literature and ancient history and Kobe's early access to global communities as well as the easy access it enjoys to important domestic historical sites makes it an exciting research environment.

Such advantages attract many international students. The Faculty started receiving students from the University of Oxford in the Fall of 2012 as part of an exchange agreement. The Global Humanities Program, a government initiative promoting living and working overseas among Japanese university students, is also flourishing at Kobe University.
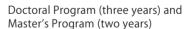

Gabriel Nicklin

International Student
United Kingdom

I am a member of the Kobe Oxford Japanese Studies Programme, an educational initiative launched this year in which the twelve students of Japanese in their second year at Oxford University spend two semesters studying at Kobe University. We take intensive language classes every morning, and since we are members of the Faculty of Letters, enjoy further seminars in the afternoon on topics of our interest.

The amount of support we have received since arriving and the genuine care that has been offered for our social and academic welfare by the scholars and staff of Kobe University has been exceptional. The challenging and stimulating language instruction has greatly helped our studies, but above all, it has been a great pleasure to be a member of such a lively student body with an active interest in intercultural communication, as well as to work alongside some of the top academics in Japan.

Undergraduate Program

Department	Divisions	Areas
Humanities	Philosophy	•Philosophy
	Literature	•Japanese Language and Literature •Chinese Language and Literature •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 (three years) and Master's Program (two years)

Departments	Divisions	Areas
Human Cultural Studies	Philosophy Literature	•Philosophy •Ethics •Japanese Language and Literature •Chinese and Korean Literature •British and American Literature •European Literature
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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