

Waseda to offer new English-based Master's degree program in global Japanese literary and cultural studies

The Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University in Tokyo will launch the Global Japanese Literary and Cultural Studies Master's Degree Program (Global-J) on April 1, 2021.

The objective of Global-J is to bring together the methodologies and outcomes of Japanese literary and cultural studies that have been developed in both Japan and other regions of the world, to conduct interdisciplinary education and research activities both in English and Japanese, and to create a new field of global Japanese literary and cultural studies under the guidance of leading researchers active on the front line of education worldwide.

Global-J will produce scholars and educators who will lead the future course of Japanese literary and cultural studies on the international stage, as well as a host of non-academic professionals working in companies or international organizations, who will possess specialized knowledge and skills relating to the field of Japan Studies.

Global-J realizes a new vision in global Japanese literary and cultural studies, aiming to rethink Japanese culture from a truly global perspective and to disseminate its outcomes based on the Waseda Goes Global Plan initiative of the Top Global University Project. The goal of the Waseda Goes Global Plan is to establish research and education systems for creating the future, with an eye toward Waseda Vision 150, and promoting complete internationalization in research and education.

Notes

Waseda Goes Global Plan: Selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Top Global University Project for priority funding, Waseda Goes Global Plan aims to build a worldwide academic network that is open, dynamic, and diverse through innovative research and global education.

Waseda Vision 150: Waseda Vision 150 is a strategic plan implemented to establish Waseda as a globally leading university by its 150th anniversary in 2032.

Establishing the Global Japanese Literary and Cultural Studies Master's Degree Program (Global-J)

Since its literary studies course was established by Shoyo Tsubouchi and others in 1890, Waseda University has been a driving force in humanities and social science scholarship on Japan's various cultural traditions. In 2014, the university established a plan to promote the globalization of its Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences, aimed at setting a global standard for the humanities based on initiatives of the Waseda Vision 150 strategic plan. The new Global Japanese Literary and Cultural Studies Master's Degree Program (Global-J) in the Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences represents an innovative venture that will embody and achieve the goals of these initiatives. Furthermore, this new program will foster non-academic professionals, working in companies or international organizations, who possess specialized knowledge and skills related to the field of Japan studies.

Global-J will offer postgraduate training that meets the highest international standards in order to develop excellent scholars who are also first-class educators that will meet the needs of universities worldwide. In cooperation with internationally-acclaimed participants, Global-J will conduct education and research activities both in English and Japanese—including interdisciplinary research guidance and coursework—and will utilize its connections with leading universities around the world to provide first-class training.

The university launched a doctoral program in September 2018, and plans to follow with a master's program to be launched by the fiscal year 2021.

1. Vision

Global-J develops human resources who are fully capable of participating in overseas English-language scholarly environments, grounded in the scholarly accomplishments in Japanese literature and culture of the Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences. In contrast to existing conventional Japanese-language courses in Japanese literature, which aim to produce research papers for Japanese-language academic journals and to train graduates to work specifically in educational environments using the Japanese language, Global-J aims to disseminate English-language research that proactively incorporates European and American literary theories and comparative literary methodologies in addition to strong foundations in existing Japanese literary and cultural scholarship. Global-J also aims to train researchers and experts who will support emerging new fields in European and American studies of Japanese literature and culture. Lectures and research guidance are provided both in English and Japanese; however, these should,

as a rule, be written in English.

2. Characteristics

(1) Mentoring by cutting-edge scholars from around the world

Global-J invites leading scholars from around the world to mentor its students. In addition to full-time dedicated faculty members, Global-J through its joint appointment system promotes collaborative education and research with scholars who are playing leading roles around the globe. Moreover, Global-J offers seminars and lectures in both English and Japanese, including a range of classes that provide the full range of knowledge, the flexible tools, and the repertoire of skills needed to become researchers, educators, and experts who will become future leaders of Japanology on the international stage.

(2) Making full use of the scholarly accomplishments and resources of Waseda University

Waseda faculty members in Japanese literature and other relevant fields jointly provide mentoring, and Japanese-language coursework and scholarly training. The students of Global-J enroll in lecture courses together with the students from Waseda's Japanese-language Japanese literary courses, as well as participate in joint workshops and other relevant scholarly activities. Global-J fully capitalizes on the geographical advantage of its location in Tokyo, the capital of Japan, and it takes full advantage of the intellectual resources accumulated through the more than 125-year history of literary studies at Waseda University.

(3) The fields of global Japanology

Japanese literary studies can provide a starting point for other relevant fields of Japanology (including Japanese language, history, theater, art history, subculture studies, among others). In concrete terms, Global-J maintains a focus on fields essential to Japanology such as literary and critical theory, media studies, translation studies, world literature, history of writing systems and literacy, theater and performance studies, as well as on other emerging new fields of scholarship.

(4) Developing human resources who can thrive in today's global environment

Recent years have seen an increasing demand for faculty who can teach in English and individuals who can spread Japanese culture in English. Global-J develops human resources who can answer to this need and meet the demand for Japanology, not only in Japan but around the world, including in the United States, Asia and Europe.

(5) Studying abroad and overseas cooperation

Waseda University has conducted a double degree program for Japanese literature with Columbia University since 2008. Moreover, the university has promoted cooperative programs such as exchanges of students and teachers with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) under the Tadashi Yanai Initiative for Globalizing Japanese Humanities since 2014. As part of the Top Global University Project, Waseda University's Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences established a network of global Japanese literary and cultural studies with Columbia University and UCLA as hub universities in 2014. The education and research activities of Global-J are likewise conducted in cooperation with these overseas research institutes that are world leaders in the field of Japanology.

(6) Cooperation with the Ryusaku Tsunoda Center of Japanese Culture

The Ryusaku Tsunoda Center of Japanese Culture was opened in January 2015 in Waseda University's Research Institute for Letters, Arts and Sciences as a global center for Japanese literary and cultural studies with the mission of promoting the dissemination and exchange of humanities scholarship in the field of Japanology. Since then, Waseda University has regularly hosted faculty from European and American universities, working with them to establish a joint research network of the highest quality involving the world's topmost researchers. The students of Global-J can make full use of this system of intellectual exchange that connects participating universities through Waseda University as its central hub, participating in workshops and symposiums and presenting research findings in both Japanese and English.

(7) Entrance examination

Students will be evaluated based on written and oral examination, mainly through evaluation of academic writing samples, English proficiency, and general knowledge about Japanese literature.

(8) Entrance dates

Applicants may choose to enroll starting in either April or September.

(9) Degree

Master of Arts in Literature

(10) Areas of research guidance

Comparative literature, cultural criticism, gender studies, performance studies, popular culture studies, translation studies

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