

# College of Sociology

The study of society consists of various specialized academic fields, such as economics and law, and focuses on rules, systems, and laws. Sociology, however, is a practical, extensive discipline that aims to resolve various social issues by emphasizing the relationship between individuals and society based on a comprehensive understanding of these rules, systems, and laws. Contemporary society is becoming increasingly sophisticated but also more complex. There is thus a greater need for sociological studies that focus specifically on human beings and society. Sociology is at the heart of each of the College of Sociology's three departments: the Department of Sociology, the Department of Contemporary Culture and Society, and the Department of Communications and Media Studies. The key concepts of human society, communication, media, culture, and environment form the core around which each department conducts its activities.

## Educational Aspirations

The College emphasizes a basic education for sociological thinking (theory) and methodology (inquiry) to simultaneously enable students to understand various problems of contemporary society in a multifaceted manner and to instill in them the ability to independently take action.

## A College of Sociology Centered on Sociology Researchers

Other universities also have colleges of sociology, but the majority of these educational bodies are interdisciplinary organizations that incorporate scholars from outside the field of sociology. By comparison, Rikkyo University's College of Sociology assembles specialists in sociology, making it one of the most comprehensive programs in Japan.

## Enhanced College-wide Curriculum

The college has established a core curriculum between the three departments that centers on a basic set of courses by establishing a structure whereby students can take elective courses offered by any of the departments within the College of Sociology. Through this format, students develop a personalized understanding of the field.

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## **Department of Sociology**

### **Offering A Broad Range of Subjects**

Although the Department offers a broad range of subjects, the line-up of classes is not for the sake of variety. The subjects are determined by their necessity for students to understand the issues faced by society today. What is distinctive about the subjects is that they cover not just the changes in social phenomena themselves, but also what lies behind these changes.

### **Helping Students Develop Four Types**

First, the Department helps students to discover the major sociological questions facing contemporary society and to understand the issues in relation to their individual lives. Next, students master the methodological tools, particularly the sociological framework, to enable them to think on their own about those questions. Then, they learn to collect and analyze data and form conclusions. Finally, they obtain the ability to develop practical solutions through logical, science-based thought. The Department is designed to foster these abilities in all its students.

### **Clear Study Goals for Each School Year**

During the first year, students receive an introductory education to instill an approach to research that investigates a wide range of social realities and social questions. In their second year, students study the frameworks of sociology and the basic methodologies of social research. In their third and fourth years, students set up their own hypotheses and carry out experiments to collect and analyze data, and then work through their research to logical conclusions.

### **A Curriculum Systematized into Five Fields**

The Department's specialized subjects have been systematized into five groups: "Theory and Methodology," a fundamental field for learning sociological research methods; "Self and Relationships" (keywords: deviation and normalcy; prejudice and discrimination); "Living and Life" (life and the body; gender); "Public Need and Policy" (equality and fairness; freedom and control); and "Structure and Change" (structure of industry; globalization).

## **Department of Contemporary Culture and Society**

### **From Lifestyle to Globalization: Four Fields of Contemporary Culture**

In Theory and Methodology, students learn basic perspectives and methodologies that serve as a foundation for further study in contemporary society and culture in four fields. These are: Values and Lifestyle, which focuses on the diversity of contemporary culture

and mechanisms of production and consumption; Environment and Ecology, which examines the relationship between people/groups and their environments; Globalization and Ethnicity, which examines relationships among various diverse cultures within the context of globalization; and Cities and Communities, which explores the sites and locations where various cultures are concentrated and interact with one another, focusing on the cities and communities where this interaction is acutely visible.

### **Hitting the Streets with Book in Hand: Firmly Committed to Fieldwork**

Studies within the Department emphasize direct contact with the non-university world. The curriculum stresses field work through such classes as the third-year Field Seminar.

### **A Kaleidoscopic View of Contemporary Culture: Extensive Course Structure**

In addition to foundational sociology courses, the Department provides courses that cover a wide range of related fields, such as theology, anthropology, environmental studies, and philosophy and cultural theory, from which students can configure their own extensive studies.

## **Department of Communication and Media Studies**

### **Formation of a Comprehensive Intellect**

The curriculum of the Department strikes a balance between logic, on the one hand, and investigation, data collection, and other practical activities on the other. Students pursue a theme that is of interest to them and study a broad range of subjects. Students may take electives offered by other Departments in the College of Social Relations.

### **Small Seminars and Practical-Training Classes**

The mainstays of the curriculum are seminars and practical-training classes. In seminars, students explore their individual themes with the guidance of faculty members. In practical-training classes, students develop practical skills, with a particular emphasis on written expression, the most important skill for anyone hoping to work in a media-related company.

### **The Ability to Envision a Citizen-Based Society**

Here students learn to use the media as a proactive method of contributing to society. The Department cultivates citizens who envision society from a broad perspective and who have a full range of media-related skills, enabling them to broadcast and express their visions. The goal is for them to contribute to the realization of a democratic society where people can fully express themselves and trust each other.

### **Basic Subjects and Three-Course Fields**

Sociology forms the foundation of the Department. After gaining an introduction to the field in Principles of Sociology and Social Research, students enter specialized subjects in three fields: Information Society, Mass Communication, and Media Communication, selecting their field of concentration based on their own awareness of issues in the field.

### **Education That Leads to Practical Action**

The Department regards careers in journalism or the media as important post-graduation paths for its students. Therefore, in addition to practical classes, students also join extended internships at media companies. Starting in their first year, students are provided with guidance assessing the media fields and issues of greatest importance to them. This helps them establish their own goals for study.