

DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

Japan has learnt many things from the West in the political, economic and cultural spheres since the Meiji period, but it was not until after World War II that the academic pursuit of research and education in European history in Japan started afresh. To build peaceful and friendly relations with other countries, it is essential to understand the history of those countries and regions; that is a lesson learned through the experience of the Second World War. This is the role European history studies have come to play in Japan. There is still much that Japanese people can learn from Europe and its history.

Many aspects of politics, economics and other systems that envelop us as well as much of the art and culture with which we are familiar originated in Europe. These elements originate from historical phenomena peculiar to Europe such as the ancient Greek polis, the Roman Empire, medieval feudalism, Christian culture, communes, universities, the Renaissance, the Reformation and conflicts between religious sects, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, civil society, constitutions, parliaments or the nation-state.

As long as we keep on studying these multifaceted areas of history and pondering what the reception of Western culture has meant for Japan, a country with a different historical background, we will never lose sight of the knowledge required for building mutual understanding between Japan and Europe in this fast-changing globalized world.

The Kyoto University European history major offers introductory courses, special lectures on specific topics, reading courses in relevant languages, and seminar courses in which participants learn how to read and analyze academic articles or historical material, and how to construct their own arguments from these sources. These courses are taught by full-time faculty members specializing respectively in antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern period and the modern age, as well as by part-time lecturers from other universities. Students are expected to develop an understanding of various issues in different regions of Europe in diverse periods, and finally, to choose a research topic to work on for the completion of a graduation thesis that will demonstrate their own original findings.

西洋史学専修



PHOTO : Some major works by the former and current professors during the past century