



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE



The Department of Philosophy and History of Science looks into the question “What is science?” from philosophical and historical points of view. The philosophy of science deepens our understanding of science through consideration of proper scientific methodologies and analyses of fundamental concepts of a discipline (such as ‘space’ in physics or ‘natural selection’ in evolutionary biology). The history of science elucidates aspects of science by investigating temporal changes in scientific theories and science-society relationships in different periods and regions. The teaching staff of the department represents the two disciplines, i.e. one is a philosopher of science and the other a historian of science, allowing students to see the sciences from various angles.

Since our research subject is science, it is necessary for students to have concrete knowledge in scientific disciplines. However, even though we use the singular science, in fact there is great diversity within the sciences, from physics to biology to social sciences, and sometimes mathematics. Thus, students will acquire knowledge in the field of their greatest interest, getting advice from teachers and senior students.

Another characteristic of the educational pro-

gram in the department is that it assigns logic as a mandatory class. Since we cannot acquire logical skills simply by listening to lectures, the class focuses on exercises so that students can master logical reasoning. Such a practical skill in logic will be useful not only in research but also in our lives outside academia.

There are various closely related fields to the philosophy and history of science. One of these is the burgeoning discipline of Science, Technology and Society (STS), which examines various aspects of the relationship between science and technology on the one hand and the society on the other, such as science communication and public decision making on science and technology. Undergraduate students in this department are allowed to choose their research topics from STS.

More information in English:

http://www.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/philosophy_and_history_of_science/phs-top_page/

PHOTO : a study group organized by graduate students

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