



## SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL ARTS NEWSLETTER

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### SUPPORTING STUDENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

IN THIS ISSUE: THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL ARTS – ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE FIRST YEAR – THE SILA ACADEMIC PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL – TOEIC 500 BEFORE ENTERING THE 3RD YEAR – MY EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE: NAGISA TOKUNAGA – MEET THE FACULTY: ELLEN HEAD – 2017 ACTIVE LEARNING SYMPOSIUM IN SEAGAIA

#### THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL ARTS

The 2017 academic year is coming to an end, and the administration and faculty of the School of International Liberal Arts have been very busy preparing for the incoming 2018 cohort.

One significant educational improvement we have made is in our English Teacher Certification Program. Students pursuing a teacher license will be assisted by instructors whose credentials and syllabi are vetted by the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) to ensure compliance with new regulations. This is beneficial to students because it assures them that all MEXT

requirements for their future profession are being addressed in our classes.

Furthermore, we remain committed to providing the best educational environment. One of MIC's educational pillars has been our small size classes, and for the incoming class, we will be offering 4 sections of all English-language related courses. Not only will we maintain our commitment to small classes, we will also guarantee that active learning practices are present in every course.

#### ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE FIRST YEAR

One of the team-taught courses for first year students in the School of International Liberal Arts is "Introduction to

Anthropology". Dr. Debra Occhi, an anthropologist, is the content teacher for this subject, and in Fall of 2017 Hugh Nicoll was the teacher in charge of English. Though many people consider anthropology to be the study of people very unlike ourselves, with customs we may find unusual, this course begins with a qualitative and quantitative investigation of student life both at MIC and abroad. This allowed students to consider their patterns of behavior as fledgling college students, to compare their findings to those of anthropology students at a large public university in the USA, and to critically examine the problems of survey research and self-reported data. Taking anthropology as the systems analysis of human behavior, as Dr. Occhi does, allows students to

apply anthropological methods and theories in a variety of settings, preparing them for a global future.

One point of focus in this course is the connection between physical and social environments. This provides students with a chance to consider the MIC environment in comparison to high school and to other university settings, and beyond that, the effects of geography and climate on human cultural behavior around the globe. By applying concepts and examining case studies, students develop a framework that encourages them to see aspects of cultural variation that show human adaptation to the environment, as well as ways in which humans adapt to their environment. Since these students would spend only one more semester on campus before departing on their Study Abroad semester, we also used this opportunity to acquaint them with diverse physical and social environments at the various study abroad sites in which they will study. Each student investigated a site and presented their research using PowerPoint, describing relevant aspects of the campus environment and the broader area that would be useful in considering whether to study abroad there. Each presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session, and finally, students were asked to decide which sites they may or may not like to attend.

The course concluded with a brief investigation of how folklore of Northern California

native people included facts about their environment, their adaptation to it, and their family structure, which in turn reflected their worldview. From these activities, students were able to expand their awareness of specific differences between cultures while strengthening their appreciation for our global humanity. They also acquired basic skills for research that will help them in any environment they may enter in the future, and of course, they improved their ability to apply critical thinking skills and express themselves in English.

A Japanese summary of this with photos and video is on our homepage at:

<https://www.mic.ac.jp/news/archives/812>

### THE SILA ACADEMIC PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL

In first year courses, students will have assistance from a content specialist and an English language specialist. Both instructors are responsible for preparing course materials and to ensure that students understand the content being taught.

In the first semester of the second year, students take courses that will deepen their knowledge of Japanese culture and courses that help them understand the different cultures of English-speaking countries.

In the second semester, students participate in our Study Abroad program, putting into practice all the things they have been studying. There are different options in our program, which I

hope to explain in future newsletters, but regardless of the program students choose, they all complete a portfolio that showcases evidence of their learning and achievements.

During their third and fourth years, students choose a major and deepen their understanding in an area of their interest. Also, this is the time when all students start writing their Senior Thesis, a research project that starts in the second semester of their third year and culminates with a symposium-like poster presentation where students share the results of their research with the community at large. Of course, everything is done in English.

### TOEIC 500 FOR PROMOTION TO 3<sup>rd</sup> YEAR

In the School of International Liberal Arts, a TOEIC score of 500 points is required to become a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student. Is this a difficult objective to achieve?

Not really. Students have access to English language specialists in their first 3 semesters and are able to further develop their language skills in the Study Abroad Program. Some students return from Study Abroad without a TOEIC score of 500, not because of their skills, but because of a lack of opportunities to take the TOEIC test at some study abroad sites.

Upon returning to Japan, and before enrolling in 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses, students are given opportunities to take the TOEIC test on-campus.

We also run remedial classes for students who, for various reasons, might still need some assistance.



**CENTENNIAL**  
COLLEGE

明 | 德 | 學 | 院

**MY EXCHANGE  
EXPERIENCE:**

**Nagisa Tokunaga**

The main reason I decided to study at Centennial College was because I liked the culture of Hong Kong and the people there. I was also interested in the languages being used, that is, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, and English, so for me it was a very good opportunity to experience them by living and studying there.

At Centennial College, I mainly studied English Linguistics and Politics of China. I already had some interest in both subjects and the idea of expanding what I could learn at MIC made it more exciting for me. In class, students had many reading assignments and presentations, which were very helpful for improving my verbal skills and deepening my knowledge in the subject areas. The classes were challenging, but at the same time a lot of fun because I was studying in a different country and with different people.

Also, through my interaction with the students there, I could explore Hong Kong more and came to be more open-minded towards different cultures. Not to mention that it was easy to find great food at reasonable prices and the people in Hong Kong are very friendly.

In short, studying at Centennial College was a great opportunity for me to widen my knowledge and to develop skills that I can apply to my future career as a Japanese language instructor in Hong Kong.

### MEET THE FACULTY:

#### Ellen Head



Ellen Head  
English

I joined the School of International Liberal Arts in September 2017 to teach English and co-teach content classes such as Area Studies. As a newcomer to Miyazaki I was lucky to be able to learn about the region while assisting in the Area Studies class. In this short article I'd like to share some of my first impressions of Kiyotake and my first semester at MIC.

When you come out of Kiyotake station and walk towards Kiyotake River, you can see a hill covered in forest, which hides MIC. My very first thought was "It's just like Hogwarts!" At least MIC has the forest location. When it comes to magic, it's an interesting question whether the things you can learn at MIC are a kind of magic. In the 18th century, the word "glamour" was actually the same word as "grammar" - secret knowledge! The spelling

of words was special and important in the same way as magic spells. (In modern English "glamour" is the quality of being beautiful and fashionable.) MIC students certainly learn spelling and grammar but I think the magic of the college is in the relationships and creative things students and professors do.

In my academic writing class I tried to create some challenging activities which would inspire students to do things in a different way from usual, connected to MIC's Active Learning policy. For example, I asked them to teach a grammar point to their classmates and write test questions for each other. At first only a few students understood what to do but they asked me more questions and over two weeks they were able to work together until everyone understood. I also set some very difficult topics for them, for example to discuss immigration or nuclear power. I think that as a teacher it is OK to give some challenges to students because the group can figure out a lot of things through collaboration. A group definitely knows more than any single member, including the teacher.

There is another thing that makes Kiyotake special. It was the birthplace of the Edo/Meiji Era philosopher and teacher, Yasui Sokken. There are many interesting stories about this peace-loving man. His kimono is on display at the museum near the College. The pockets of his kimono were sewn shut because he did not want to carry a sword. One scholar commented that Sokken's introduction to the

Chinese classics was as good as going to China. This is a real international connection.

Maybe my best memory of the autumn semester is Halloween and the College Festival when students and staff dressed up in costume and released balloons into the sky at sunset. As Halloween was a traditional festival in Scotland where I grew up, it was fun to see it in Japan and the balloons allowed us to express many hopes and wishes without words. I am wishing for the success and happy studies of all the students I work with at MIC.

### 2017 Active Learning Symposium at Seagaia

On Saturday, November 25, "The Miyazaki International University 2017 Active Learning Symposium" was held at Seagaia Convention Center (Miyazaki).

This symposium is held every year to report on our efforts in the Acceleration Program for University Education Rebuilding: AP. This time we had around 60 participants.

The symposium began with greetings from President Keiko Yamashita, and an introduction of the AP project by our then Vice President, Benjamin Peters. Simultaneous translation was provided

Our AP project is based on the educational philosophy of "developing critical thinking through active learning", and in this year's symposium we presented some effective active learning models, the process for creating our Critical Thinking test and how we are planning on using rubrics to promote our e-portfolio platform as a tool for visualization of learning outcomes.



President Yamashita greeting the audience during the opening ceremony

## 2018 Open Campus Information

See you at MIC!



SNS で、最新情報随時配信してます!

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