

LETTER

GraSPP
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

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AY2021 GraSPP Autumn Diploma Presentation Ceremony



A scene of the ceremony

The GraSPP Autumn diploma presentation ceremony AY2021 took place on Friday, September 24 at SMBC Academia Hall in the International Academic Research Building.

49 students were conferred the diploma this September.

In order to prevent spreading the Coronavirus, the ceremony was conducted on a smaller scale and the diploma was presented by Professors of the Graduate School of Public Policy and congratulated for their completion of the program together with GraSPP staff.

The commendation ceremony for high-achieving graduates was also held. The Best Performance Award was presented to one student in PhD program and one in Master program respectively.



Dean, Hiroshi Ohashi

Graduate's Message



NADEAU Paul
Doctoral Program

The best advice I heard about getting a PhD is "it's a drivers license not a masterpiece." It's grounding because as much as I wanted to write a dissertation that changed the whole field, that's not the point. The challenge isn't answering a research question and burrowing into the studies (though that's obviously a challenge) but in getting the structure right and getting all the pieces to fit together in a way that answers our

question. If we can do that, we're more capable of writing all those big ambitious pieces we might be thinking of.

But whatever we eventually do after GraSPP, not only immediately after we graduate but beyond, we do so with GraSPP on our diploma - our future is intertwined with the future of GraSPP and vice versa and our reputations are connected. For alumni, this means we should invest ourselves with the PhD program's progress by supporting current students and recent alumni, helping recruit talented candidates to come to GraSPP, and by supporting each other throughout our careers and making the GraSPP network one of the school's strongest assets.



O'MALLEY Sara Marie
MPP/IP Class of 2021

Throughout these two years, I've been simply amazed by my peers. Many have experienced hardships and hurdles far greater than mine, and I am far more impressed by them than I am by someone like myself.

However, for anyone who wants to hear my advice for success at GraSPP, it is to remind yourself periodically why you're here. Our studies are motivated by a desire to make change, to help others, or maybe to understand this convoluted world we live in just a little bit better. Remember that success is not just what we can print out on paper. For me, my success at GraSPP has had less to do with my grades and more to do with the lasting friendships I've made, the personal growth I've seen, and my newfound passion and purpose in life I've discovered. Yes, grade are a temporary measure of success, but it's what you gain in knowledge and experiences that will lead you to further successes down the road.

To my fellow graduates of the autumn semester of 2021, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors! I look forward to hearing of your many achievements. Congratulations, we did it!

No. 16

Murmurs and Musings

Naomi AOKI Associate Professor



At GraSPP, I teach classes in the field of public management. This field applies an interdisciplinary fusion of approaches to investigate optimal methods of governance and the management of public organizations. My classes incorporate insights from a variety of fields, such as organizational behavior, political science, psychology, and economics. They focus on issues pertaining to managing people and designing governance in the delivery of public services. For example, they address questions such as how to increase the motivation of government employees and which forms of public governance and policy processes are the most appropriate for tackling various public policy challenges. The answers to these questions may differ from country to country. At the center of my teaching, I feature discussions among GraSPP students, who have a wide range of nationalities, while exposing them to a variety of theories and findings from empirical research, and we work with case studies from different countries and public sector fields.

In my research, I tackle various public management issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. Since around 2018, I have conducted experiments to study initial levels of public trust in public services that use artificial intelligence. Recently, the term “trustworthy AI” has also been the subject of much attention in the public sector. While I plan to continue my research in this field for the foreseeable future, I also intend to develop new research topics from a global perspective, in response to evolving challenges in public management.

Course Report

No. 17

Economic Policy/2nd year Manami Takai, Kurumi Takatsuka

Course: Public Economic Policy

Faculty Member in Charge: Prof. Hikaru Ogawa

Prof. Ogawa's Public Economic Policy course is an especially practically-oriented one, even for GraSPP, and involves writing a thesis based on public economics theory over the course of a year. Each week, those taking the course share updates about their progress. There are also lectures on subjects we need to understand to write our theses. Lectures are mainly given by Prof. Fukasawa and provide an introduction to theories and statistical methods needed for analysis.

For the subjects of their theses, students are able to freely choose from any policy challenge that Japan faces today based on their own interests and specializations. We chose to address the question of whether differences among local governments' subsidies for fertility treatments have had an impact on birthrates and are conducting quantitative analyses of the effects of policies related to fertility treatments. There is little systematically collected data or prior research in Japan on fertility treatments, and we are constantly trying to identify the appropriate research methods to use.

What I enjoy most about this course is receiving kind advice from the various professors. Because they offer us wide-ranging guidance, from all areas of analysis to the different theoretical backgrounds, we are able to take on challenging research that would normally be too difficult for students alone. Another positive is the chance to get inspiration from other students when we report on our research or exchange ideas. Furthermore, it's possible to co-author a thesis with someone else, and being able to do research together with a close friend at GraSPP is really fulfilling.

This is a very valuable course, both in terms of research and interacting with others, so I would recommend it to any GraSPP student looking to conduct research using econometric methods.



Saki Kikuchi (International Public Policy Class of 2021)



▲ Graduation ceremony with only photos

▲ At Columbia University Station (116th Street)

Starting from September 2020, I studied at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University for around one year as a double degree exchange student. At SIPA, I majored in international security policy and enjoyed a broad range of learning opportunities, from the fundamentals of international relations theory to methods for analyzing and assessing defense policies. Students majoring in security policy included not only those from the private sector, such as myself, but also those dispatched from the military and also those from government intelligence departments, so we were able to discuss security issues from many different perspectives. I also took part in a Capstone Workshop, which is where students participate in consulting projects tackling challenges faced by businesses and government organizations. Specifically, I worked on a project for the U.S. Department of State, in which we developed policy proposals to protect elections and democracy from state-sponsored disinformation activities. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that almost all classes and projects were conducted online, which was highly unusual. Nevertheless, working together, the students and faculty were able to successfully complete the program, and I believe it ultimately turned into a unique experience. It made me so happy to be able to meet face to face with my classmates and fellow project members just before the program ended, thanks to the rollout of vaccination programs. Everyone telling each other "Finally... nice to meet you in person!" is a really fond memory I have. Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone at GraSPP for giving me this precious opportunity to study abroad, to everyone at the Student Exchange Section for all their support throughout, from when I applied to actually traveling to the U.S., to the NSK Scholarship Foundation for the significant financial support it provided me with, and to my family for embracing my decision to study abroad. Thank you very much.



With Capston team members

Moe Kyaw Thu (MPP/IP Class of 2021)



The second person from the left is Moe Kyaw Thu

It was December 6th 2020, my quarantine just ended, and after a quick train ride from Narita Airport, I found myself walking on the streets of Tokyo. And to say the least, it was a sudden change of environment. In the following months, I was a happy man not because I had only positive experiences, but because I encountered different challenges. All my entire education career, I spent in the 'West', where English is the norm. But in Tokyo, my daily life involved around a language that I have only heard and seen in anime: Japanese. But it was also this Tokyoite experience that pushed me to grow a little bit wiser and stronger.

Now, the question remains whether my one-year at GraSPP is worth it? The answer needs to be handled with much complexity. Surely, I was exposed to a plethora of classes, and it was due to the professors, who were instrumental in helping me set my path towards the future career goal as a researcher. On the other, I was surrounded by classmates, who continued to challenge me intellectually, and taught me that there is so much more in life, instead of only job hunting and studies. Even if we had differing views due to our respective cultural upbringing, it is no doubt the GraSPP community provided me with a space, where freedom of thoughts, emotions, and speech are granted and guaranteed without any restrictions.

Saying that, perhaps, my greatest highlight at GraSPP centered on meeting different people. As someone, who is never considered a 'normal fit', I am glad I became friends with people, who are willing to break the boundaries of the societal norms, who are passionate about debating politics, philosophy, climate change and gender inequality and feminism, who welcome me with open arms, and lastly, who are willing to go crazy to try 'new' things. At the end of the day, uncertain of our future meeting, all I could do is to cherish them with every single ounce of my memory....



September 2021 Completion Ceremony

PhD Student Lounge

Doctoral Program, 3rd year
Soyoung Kim



This month marks 3 years since I have started my Ph.D. journey with GraSPP. My research field is development economics, especially focusing on human capital accumulation and labor market consequences. I am mostly interested in how external shocks change people's socioeconomic behaviors, well-being, and country's development in developing countries. My current works include the long-term effect of the legacy of conflicts on education in Cambodia and the intergenerational impact of the large-scale infrastructure on schooling and occupational choice in the Philippines.

The two biggest factors that had motivated me to start a doctoral program at GraSPP were multidisciplinary and its curriculum to develop both analytical and practical skills. Having learned from outstanding faculty members and ambitious students in the inspiring environment, I have realized that the choice I made was right. Specifically, joining regular doctoral seminars with students whose backgrounds and disciplines were different helped me to expand my research interest and perspective. Furthermore, there is a wide range of courses for doctoral students, which enabled me to not only deepen my understanding in development but connect with real-world policy by interacting with practitioners. This made my passion to be an economic policy professional grow considerably stronger.

Throughout my doctoral studies, I have experienced two research works and one study abroad program. I had the privilege of working as a research associate at the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) that has a strong partnership with GraSPP. Through the collaborative research works and knowledge-sharing events, I was able to obtain real insight into what it meant to work in policymaking and enhance my research skills. Another research experience at Asian Development Bank (ADB) has taught me about how research should be done and what skills are required to work at international organizations. One of the projects that I worked on as an intern/consultant there inspired me to refine the analysis of my dissertation. Without resources provided and continuous support from GraSPP, I would have not had these invaluable experiences.

I am currently visiting Yale University conducting my research through the Fox International Fellowship. The takeaways from studying abroad are the exposure to up-to-date research trends and build influential networks. This research-oriented program allows me to utilize various research resources and obtain feedback on my research from exceptional scholars. I have been exploring as many benefits as I can absorb by attending the development-related courses and workshops and connecting with scholars from all around the world. I believe that this opportunity will lead me to grow as a better researcher with sophisticated analytic skills and a serious attitude in pursuing academic growth.



ADB Research Internship



← Giving a project presentation during the consultancy at ADB

↓ Fox International Fellowship at Yale University



TOPICS

- ◆ Under recruitment of students for the 2022 MPP / IP course. Please check the following for details.
<http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/mppip/>
- ◆ Tokyo Forum "Shaping the Future—Science and the Human Mind" hosted by UTokyo was held on December 2-3, 2021. Professor Kazuto Suzuki participated as a panelist from GraSPP.
<https://www.tokyoforum.tc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ja/index.html>

Editor's Postscript

The state of emergency was lifted on October 1, 2021. Even so, not everything is back to normal, and we must conduct social and economic activities in new ways, while taking thorough steps to prevent infection. Although we have lost a lot during the pandemic, we will keep working every day so that we can say that we also gained something from it. **(Editor)**

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NEWS
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