

NEWSLETTER

 [Interviews with Introducing new faculty members for Spring 2025 Part 1](#)

【June Edition】 It's Almost Grants-in-Aid (KAKENHI) Season!

Now that it's the rainy season, the summer Grants-in-Aid season is approaching. The Research Office is planning on hosting various events for professors who are curious or interested in Grants-in-Aid. In the June edition of the newsletter, we'll introduce three professors from APS who are researching International Relations.

Self-introduction

I am from Gunma Prefecture, which is as famous for hot springs as Oita. I received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of North Texas and became an assistant professor at the College of Asia Pacific Studies in April 2025. I usually spend my holidays listening to rock music, playing the guitar, and watching soccer games.

Research Topic(s):

My research area is International Relations, particularly the data analysis on the causes of interstate militarized disputes. My dissertation explores the origins of territorial claims and their effects on dispute escalation. My current research focuses on the impact of regime types on dispute onsets and the causes of the initiation of arbitration by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).



Assistant Professor
WATANABE Tsukasa
College of Asia Pacific Studies

Messages to Students:

Undergrad:

It is important to challenge anything to cultivate yourself. Put into practice even when you are not sure what will come up. You should have more potential than you think.

Graduate:

In graduate school, you are expected to tackle important questions from multiple perspectives. In this respect, you can learn a lot of things at APU, where both faculty and students have diverse backgrounds.

Prospective Students:

To prove your value in today's globalized society, it is necessary to respect and cooperate with people who have different cultures and ways of thinking. I hope you will acquire these skills and enjoy cultural exchange at APU's campus, where you might feel as if you are studying abroad.

Self-introduction

Hello, everyone, my name is IKKATAI Katsuya. From this April, I'm teaching at College of Asia Pacific Studies. Before that, I have worked at public services of the Japanese Government (mainly at Foreign Office), and I have overseas experience of working in Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. I would be very happy if such practical experience proves to be useful for students' learning. Privately, my hobby is travelling and sightseeing. I love touching upon local culture and history. I am very looking forward to knowing much more about Oita and Kyushu where I have the privilege to work.



Professor
IKKATAI Katsuya
College of Asia Pacific Studies

Research Topic(s):

Among various issues relating to international relations, my research focus is on international cooperation and international organizations. As for the former, I'm interested in updated studies concerning how development cooperation should be more effective. For the second point, I focus on efforts of regional integrations which are on-going, in particular, in Europe and East Asia.

Messages to Students:

Undergrad:

When I came to APU campus this April, I discovered the students enjoy wonderful facilities and environment for campus life. To be able to lead daily life together with students of different nationalities is with no doubt an inestimable privilege for you here at APU. Please make full use of it for your future career design.

Graduate:

I have the impression that at APU Graduate School, there are so many international students who have rich professional experience in various parts of the world. I believe that through exchanges with them, you can have mutual learning effects much greater than you would imagine. Please take fully such an opportunity.

Prospective Students:

Above all, please come to APU campus and feel the wonder of it with your whole body and soul. "Feeling" is Believing!

Self-introduction

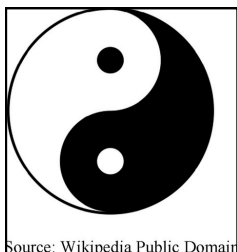
I am a political scientist by training, having studied in Taiwan, France and the UK. While most of my fellow academics pursued postgraduate degrees out of interest in their subject, I was mostly driven by a sense of guilt. After graduating from university, I felt very ignorant and wanted to study International Relations (IR) further. In this sense, working as a professor is wonderful self-therapy, helping me to accept my past self as a confused undergraduate. Male citizens of my generation were required to serve in Taiwan's military, so I had a brief non-academic career as an army officer stationed on an offshore island close to China's Fujian Province. This experience shaped my academic pursuits, and critical security studies became my primary research field. As IR is an academic discipline with logocentric, modernist and anthropocentric foundations, my past and current research has involved a continuous process of unlearning and relearning these assumptions. I am not new to APU, having started my academic career in Beppu before joining a traditional university in Kyoto. Although I regret not being successful in promoting internationalisation at my previous institution, I am glad that I have learnt how to work better with Japanese-speaking students over the past ten years. Apart from research, which is a hobby of mine, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. Despite being an introvert, I cherish every opportunity to spend time with my colleagues and students.



Professor
CHEN Ching-Chang
College of Asia Pacific Studies

Research Topic(s):

My research fields include critical security studies, the sociology of knowledge and East Asian international relations. My primary research project examines the potential of East Asian medicine (EAM) as a cosmological approach to rethinking the metatheoretical foundations of IR and the harmony or disharmony in the practice of global politics. It primarily draws on EAM's ontological and clinical imaginaries. As shown in Table 1 of [Krickel-Choi, Chen, and Bukh \(2024\)](#), IR has been shaped by the modern international state system that emerged from the Treaties of Westphalia (1648). The underlying worldview of conventional IR assumes that things are autonomous, stable beings with essential qualities. Consequently, academics and practitioners tend to view the world in binary, confrontational terms. People and groups are typically sorted into either 'insiders' (e.g. humans, citizens, elites, white people, men, heterosexuals) or 'outsiders' (e.g. non-humans, aliens, masses, people of colour, women, homosexuals). At the metatheoretical level, these binary oppositions are informed by Newtonian classical mechanics, which is based on fundamental dichotomies such as matter–force. Since matter is considered static, an external force is required to bring about change. In the context of international politics, this view justifies external intervention as a natural solution to existing disputes or 'hot spots'. However, EAM is informed by a relational ontology that views things as transient and interdependent, and as always being part of a larger whole. This can be seen in the yin–yang diagram, in which yin can only exist when yang is present, and vice versa. Furthermore, yin exists within and outside of yang simultaneously (and vice versa). They contain each other mutually and transform into each other, together making dao (the way) possible. In turn, the yin–yang dialectic is animated by the constant aggregation and dispersion of qi in the cosmos. Neither matter nor force, qi permeates and connects things, meaning transformation is inherent and internal. In short, this research uses East Asian medicine creatively as a source of analysis, metaphor and normativity to examine and treat political conflicts as disharmonies of a body politic.



Source: Wikipedia Public Domain

EAM terms	EAM	Westphalia
Yin-yang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational ontology • Non-binary; inclusive • 'Both-and'; 'I am in you and you in me' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentialised and fixed ontology • Binary; exclusive • 'Either-or'; 'you are with us or against us'
Qi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither matter nor force • Transformation is inner and immanent • All be(com)ings are interconnected through qi • Monist cosmology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The matter-force dichotomy • Matter is static; external force is needed to propel change • Already formed, independent beings • Newtonian classical mechanics
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collection of relationships, resonance, and interpermeation • Image in IR: interbeings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A physical container that encloses the autonomous state; exclusionary territories • Image in IR: Leviathan
Organs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Intersecting matrixes of resonating human activity' that produce functions • Embedded in their relationships with other parts of the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed, measurable physical structures that perform particular activities • Anatomic objects, possess-able or trade-able by the state body
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yin-yang is of relative balance • A body becomes a body only if organs are interdependent and function in unison with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'If the problem is about power, the solution is to have more power' • A given organ-territory must be under the state body's exclusive control
Resonance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evoke change in other things through facilitating the flow of qi; border-crossing • Functional cooperation as a method of resonance in IR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for exclusive control over disputed organ-territory; border-closing • Cooperation as a way to preserve state sovereignty

Table 1

Messages to Students:

Undergrad:

Studying at APU at the age when you are most receptive to learning is a precious and once-in-a-lifetime experience. While this process does not need to be stoic, my favourite motto is: "Better to burn out than rust out" (MacKay Memorial Hospital). This is because we cannot take existence for granted, and life is lived through each present moment and encounter with others. I am grateful that APU is an important part of these encounters, and I hope to be a good companion on your academic journey.

Graduate:

Regardless of whether your research is theory- or policy-driven, it is essential that it has real-world implications, and completing your proposed project should have a theoretical and/or practical impact on your chosen subject. In other words, you need to demonstrate why your research is worthwhile. Simply stating that little research has been published on the subject is not enough. If you are studying IR, remember that world politics is not reducible to interstate relations; rather, it is very much about how we relate to other human beings and the rest of nature. You will achieve more if you unlearn some Westphalian theories and concepts of IR that have contributed to many ongoing crises in the modern world.

Prospective Students:

Whether you are from Japan or abroad, APU offers a unique learning environment with a level of diversity that is hard to find elsewhere. However, to make the most of this environment, you will need to actively contribute to your peers' learning experience. I greatly enjoy working with APU students, and I am sure you will too!