

HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences
Graduate School of Humanities and Human Sciences
School of Humanities and Human Sciences

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Lab. Letters

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**Centers related to
Faculty of Humanities
and Human Sciences**

Centers related to Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences

Some of members of the Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences also belong to other research centers on campus, by making connections between our faculty and these centers, researchers collaborate and share their knowledge and expertise with other institutions and with the world.

Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy

The center has two main purposes: one is to educate and train young philosophers and ethicists with a contemporary perspective of applied ethics, and the other is to promote a wide variety of research and education concerning applied ethics at the university.

Center for Experimental Research in Social Sciences (CERSS)

The Center for Experimental Research in Social Sciences (CERSS) is a specialized center dedicated to facilitating cutting-edge experimental research in the social sciences. It is currently the only specialized center of its kind in Japan. CERSS serves as a core hub for affiliated research institutions from all over the world to cooperate and collaborate together on innovative research projects.

Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies (CAIS)

The Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies (CAIS) promotes interdisciplinary research and education with indigenous peoples, building a worldwide network of academic institutions and indigenous organization. The Center’s collaborative work includes the preservation and revitalization of Ainu traditional crafts, skills, and language.

Center for Northern Humanities

The purpose of this research center is to promote education and research in the field of “Northern Humanities,” exploring this area from a multidisciplinary perspective through the many academic specialties of the Graduate School of Humanities and Human Sciences, such as history, culture, linguistics, art, and the environment.

Center for Human Nature, Artificial Intelligence, and Neuroscience (CHAIN)

What does it mean to be human? This is the question that the Center for Human Nature, Artificial Intelligence, and Neuroscience (CHAIN) is attempting to answer through interdisciplinary study of the humanities, social sciences, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence.

Slavic-Eurasian Research Center (SRC)

This is the only research center dedicated to the comprehensive study of the Slavic-Eurasian region in Japan. The Slavic-Eurasian Research Center primarily works to develop research concerning the diverse countries and areas that comprise the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and functions as one of the international hubs for various areas of Eurasian research.

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Questioning “Experience” Phenomenologically. Toward a Dialogue between Philosophy and Science

For many years I have investigated a form of philosophical thinking called “phenomenology.” It is a discipline that analyzes the structures of experience that are usually unnoticed because they are extremely “obvious,” and seeks to articulate them in words. In recent years, several fortunate encounters have led me to collaborate with mathematicians, neuroscientists, and AI/robot researchers. Such collaborations have gradually become a central part of my research. Having worked for a long time in areas that were not specifically related to science, I was initially skeptical about whether my work would be meaningful to scientists, but I have come to realize that what they are looking for is the types of knowledge that they do not have themselves, and that it is precisely the differences between us that give meaning to our collaboration. Due to the diversity of our knowledge and abilities, our collaboration has the potential to take our work to new heights that we could never reach alone. When conducting collaborative research, there are times when you feel as if you have an additional brain (or two or three brains...) outside of your own. Those moments can be very thrilling.



Professor
TAGUCHI Shigeru

Research Subject

E. Husserl’s phenomenology, the philosophies of K. Nishida and H. Tanabe, and the enactive approach in cognitive science. My main research topics are ego, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and consciousness, with a focus on the phenomenology of “mediation.” I am also engaged in interdisciplinary studies of consciousness and reality.

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory

Division of Humanities /
Research Group of Philosophy and Religious Studies /
Laboratory of Philosophy and Ethics

1 Phenomenology and interdisciplinary study of experience



At the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, U.S.A. This photo was taken in 2011, when I was staying there for joint research with Piet Hut, physics professor of the institute. The building with the clock tower is known as a symbol of the institute.

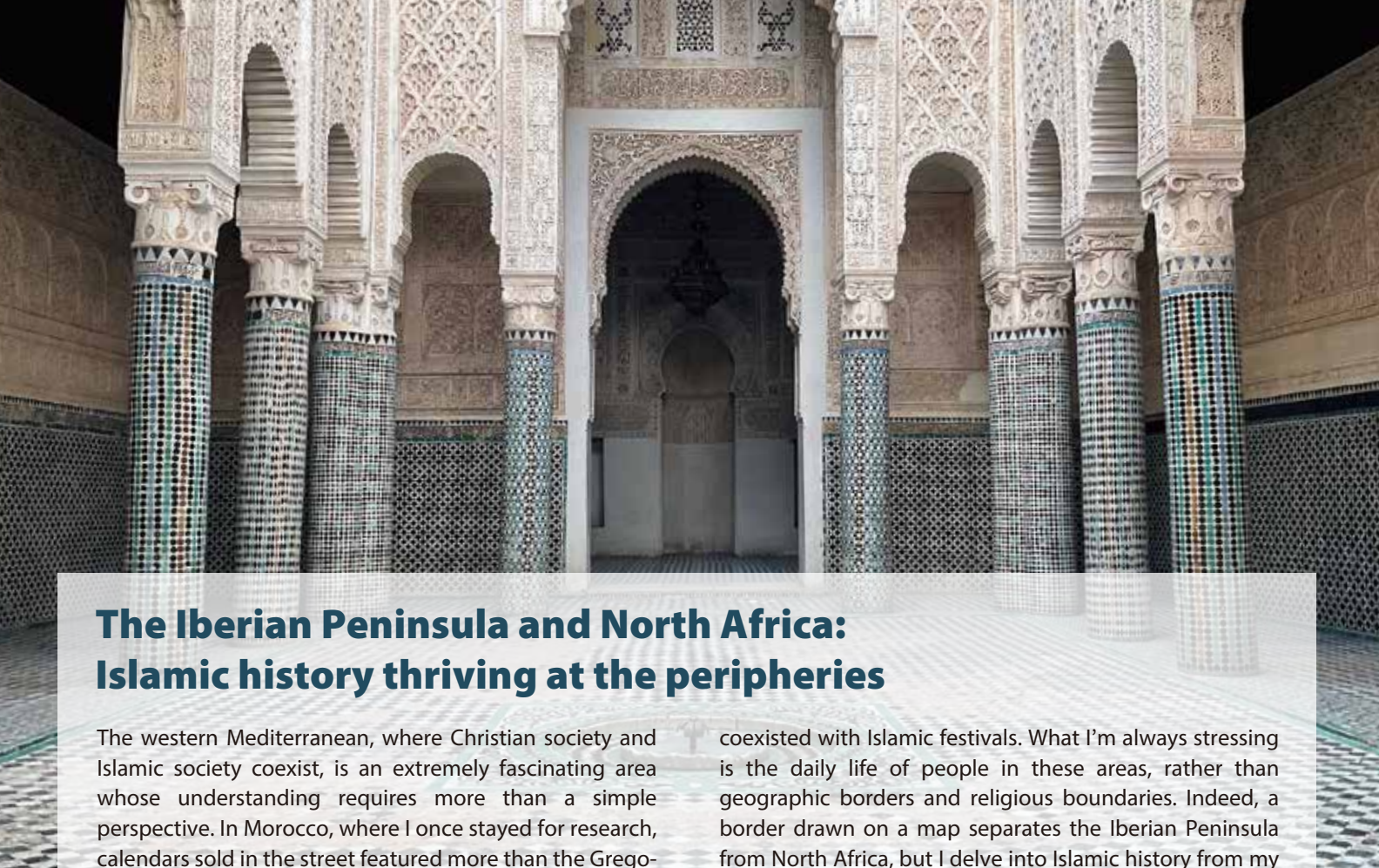
Professor Taguchi’s book *The Problem of ‘Primal I’ in Edmund Husserl: An Inquiry into the Obvious ‘Proximity’ of the Self* (Springer 2006) is highly regarded as an important study of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. It was first published in German (the left-hand book), and then in Japanese four years later.



Philosophy transforms experience and life, creating a new world.

Philosophy aims to uncover the preoccupied, seemingly obvious ideas that lurk in our daily lives. As with any field, epoch-making developments are sparked by new insights gained by shifting everyone’s frames of reference and rethinking existing assumptions. This implies that everyone is involved in philosophy in some way. Philosophical ideas definitely have the power to bring about changes in

reality. Through philosophy, we are drawn out of our original perspective and into a world we never imagined we would see. I firmly believe that this will be valuable not only in your research but in various aspects of your everyday life.



The Iberian Peninsula and North Africa: Islamic history thriving at the peripheries

The western Mediterranean, where Christian society and Islamic society coexist, is an extremely fascinating area whose understanding requires more than a simple perspective. In Morocco, where I once stayed for research, calendars sold in the street featured more than the Gregorian and Islamic dates, but also had the Julian dates derived from ancient Rome for agriculture. It's known that up to a century ago, the custom of celebrating festivals, such as al-'Ansara and Yannayr, which originated from midsummer and midwinter festivals that predated Islam,

coexisted with Islamic festivals. What I'm always stressing is the daily life of people in these areas, rather than geographic borders and religious boundaries. Indeed, a border drawn on a map separates the Iberian Peninsula from North Africa, but I delve into Islamic history from my own perspective by seeing both areas from the peripheries, where multifaceted senses of values can be observed.



A page-a-day calendar sold in Morocco. Upper left square: February 14 (Thur.), 2013, according to the Gregorian calendar. Upper right square: Rabi' al-thānī 3 (Thur.), 1434, according to the Islamic calendar. Lower right square: "Agricultural February" 1, according to the Julian calendar. Lower left square: Timetable of prayers. Lower margin: Remark for the day. It reads "Festival of love", that is St. Valentine's Day.



The Iberian Peninsula seen from Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in northern Africa. The peak in the center is the Rock of Gibraltar, which has the same name as the strait. It is not more than a 1-hour cruise to the opposite shore (photo credit: Prof. Sato).

2 History of the Muslim West



An unexpected chance becomes a great opportunity through the fortuitous meeting of a graduate student and his supervisor.

After taking a position at Hokkaido University in the spring of 2011, I was astonished to find that a graduate student had written an undergraduate thesis on Ibn Khaldun, a court politician of the 14th century whom I happen to specialize in. For students to lead a fruitful academic life at graduate school, it's extremely important to match graduate students with supervisors. I'm completely prepared to cooperate with students so that I can transform unexpect-

ed chances into favorable opportunities. Hokkaido University has a long tradition of historical studies on Muslim societies and is blessed with specialists in the field. Why not share an exciting moment with me at a time when the picture of Islamic history looming from Arabic primary documents is gradually coming into focus?

Professor **SATO Kentaro**



Research Subject

1. Social and political role of the Prophet Muhammad's Nativity (al-Mawlid al-Nabawi)
2. Calendars in the Muslim West
3. Identities of the Moriscos
4. Autobiography of Ibn Khaldun

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory

Division of Humanities /
Research Group of History /
Laboratory of Oriental History



Ankoku-butoh, pole dance... the world of dance as seen from the perspective of cultural anthropology



Ankoku-butoh (literally “dance of darkness”) was established in the 1960s by Tatsumi Hijikata. This is a story from when I joined an intensive workshop of active *butoh* performers. While watching a performer, a third-generation apprentice in the Tatsumi Hijikata genealogy, the performer moved while believing he was blind; at that moment, I felt as if I had lost my own eyesight and the space around me was filling with a light fog. I remember it was the most *ankoku-butoh*-like experience that I—as someone who conducts research on *ankoku-butoh* performance from the perspective of cultural anthropology—have ever had. I find the originality of my research in participant observation of this phenomenon called “affect” that is created when the dancers and the audience resonate with each other. As the late Yukio Waguri, an apprentice of Hijikata, said, “Dancing is a way in which to make audiences fall in love with you.”



Associate Professor
COKER Caitlin Christine

Research Subject

I do Anthropology. This is research in which one dives into the lives and worlds of a certain group of people in certain place(s) and thinks about what it is to be alive, weaving what they have gained from these practical experiences into a creative and philosophical work of nonfiction.

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory

Division of Humanities /
Research Group of Cultural Diversity Studies /
Laboratory of Cultural Anthropology

3 Anthropology, Embodiment,
Performance Studies, Affect Theory



The appeal of physical expression I would like you to know; Joint research on becoming

One of the ideas I have for Hokkaido University, where I began working in April 2020, is to provide a class that incorporates physical movement and experience toward students. Together with these students, I would like to delve into how their stances on the world and their approaches to various issues change through physical activities. My research theme is focused on what I call “dance,” but I am including physical expressions other than dancing, and movement on a daily level, as well.

A joint research project—Anthropology of Depicted Animals—headed by associate professor Mikako Yamaguchi in the laboratory of cultural anthropology, to which I am also affiliated as a researcher, started in October 2020. I am looking forward to gaining inspiration derived from this new project.



I participated in a performance of *Kiraza* presided over by Tenko Ima (I am on the far right).

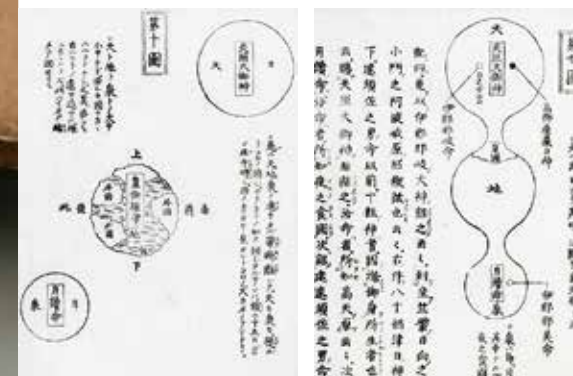


As an interpreter, I supported the workshop planned by Mr. Hijikata's apprentices while participating in the workshop as a performer. The man in black sitting on the chair in the back is Mr. Yukio Waguri.





4 Ancient Japanese literature



The worldview inspired by the *Kojiki* depends on the age in which this classic was interpreted. Photo: Supplementary illustration of the beginning of the universe for the *Kojikiden* published in the late Edo period (*Sandaiko* by Nakatsune Hattori): The mythical universe consisting of the heavens, the Earth and Yomi (the world of the dead) was reinterpreted according to natural sciences imported from the West, and those three elements were transformed into Sun, Earth and Moon.

Outline the Japanese who embraced the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) as a Japanese classic



The *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), major works of ancient Japanese literature, are written in Chinese characters. The two classics differ significantly: The former was written with some attempts to delineate Japanese words in Sino-Japanese *kanji* characters in a time before *hiragana* (a set of Japanese phonetic characters) or *katakana* (a different set of Japanese phonetic characters), while the latter was written in *kanbun* (Classical Chinese), a lingua franca of the time. Norinaga Motoori, a scholar of Japanese literature, greatly valued the *Kojiki* based on his belief that our ancestors' experiences and minds could only be depicted by the language of ourselves—Japanese, and he wrote the *Kojikiden* (Commentaries on the *Kojiki*), which greatly affected subsequent study of Japanese literature. What's the nature of the Japanese, whose identity has been forged by embracing the *Kojiki* as a Japanese classic since then? To carry out research on Japanese classics is an attempt to answer such a question.

Cherish objectivity and a scientific perspective: My lectures provide an introduction to the world of research.

I specialized in ecology before I started researching the *Kojiki*. While expanding my perspective from creatures and nature, then to humans and nature and on to humans and cultures, I finally came to specialize in my current research: the *Kojiki*. I believe that in whatever discipline you might choose, research requires objectivity and a scientific perspective. Hokkaido University, whose students are

highly motivated, is an ideal environment for researchers and educators. In my lectures, I'm pleased to introduce the latest issues in my research discipline, as well as to share opportunities for you to experience the profound world of research.



Professor
KANAZAWA Hideyuki

Research Subject

Study of ancient Japanese literature including *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.

Professor Kanazawa has moved to a post at a different university from April 2025.

Division of Humanities /
Research Group of Cultural Representations /
Laboratory of Pre-modern Japanese Literature and Culture



The illustration on the left page: the poster for the 30th Hokudai Jinbungaku Café, “Women being killed by sword: Image of Women, Ghosts, and Modern China in the Beijing Opera”

Performing art history of *nan dan* (female-role actors) and actresses reflecting China in the tumultuous 20th century

Beijing operas—Chinese traditional performing arts—were affected by a wave of modernization in the 20th century. As a result, female roles once played by *nan dan* (female-role actors) also began to be played by actresses. In response to the rise of actresses, Mei Lanfang, one of the most outstanding *nan dan* in the history of Beijing operas, sought to improve his own acting skills to enhance the value of *nan dan*, while in Shanghai, where the influx of overseas culture happened quickly, some *nan dan* attempted to impersonate new modern women with special costumes and performances as elegant as those of actresses. Their way of life was directly reflected in the history of Chinese culture. These rough and tough actors pursuing their artistic cravings in line with the trend of the times shined as brightly as stage settings.



Receptive laboratory of sinology; Visual documents as a common language

The Laboratory of Sinology at Hokkaido University is so receptive that you can pursue virtually any research related to China. The Iconography and Memory of Breasts, a joint research project headed by professor Masaya Takeda, dealt with the history of breasts in Chinese culture. Beginning with matters in China and then transcending the boundaries of regions and disciplines, it went as far as to delve into imagination associated with breasts. I would like you to remain inquisitive rather than spending your time as a student opting for the shortest route to your goal.



Research on Lian Huan Hua, a coterie magazine annually published by volunteers at the Laboratory of Sinology; the tenth edition was issued in 2020. Lian Huan Hua refers to a Chinese illustrated story book.

Bai Mei Tu, magazines with *nan dan* on the cover (editions from 1938 and 1939); both figures turn up as heroines in new dramas: the person on the right (Yang Guifei) wears classic attire while the person on the left (Napoleon’s wife Josephine) wears a Western-style dress.



It can be safely said that visual culture such as dramas and paintings has played a central role as a common language in a country like China with numerous dialects and a history of low literacy rates. I truly feel inclined to share with you the pleasure of interpreting visual images without merely depending on the knowledge derived from books and documents.

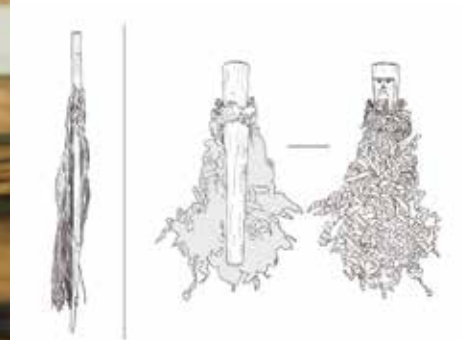
Associate Professor
TAMURA Yoko

Research Subject

Twentieth-century Chinese fiction and drama, theatre, cultural criticism

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory

Division of Humanities /
Research Group of Cultural Representations /
Laboratory of Sinology



The Hokkaido University Botanical Garden holds valuable ethnographic materials including Ainu materials. On the left is *Inau*, the god of fire made in Ishikari city. On the right (both front and rear sides shown) is the Sakhalin wirta ritual. Eurasia is dotted with wood products similar to *Inau*.



Associate Professor **KITAHARA Mokottunas**

Research Subject

I am conducting comparative research on indigenous beliefs with other Asian cultures by analyzing the ethnography (survey records of culture, society, etc.) and discourses of the Ainu people. By learning about cultural commonalities, it will also lead to a review of the disconnect lines that have been drawn between the various ethnic groups since the modern era.

Graduate School - Division / Department / Laboratory

Division of Humanities /
Department of Ainu and Indigenous Studies /
Laboratory of Ainu and Indigenous Studies

These are my own ritual implements. *Inau*, sitting atop the lacquerware on the right, is a prayer stick that also plays a role as a messenger to convey prayers to deities. The implements on the left are spatula-like *Ikupasui* and a sake glass. The tip of *Ikupasui* is dipped into sake, and prayers are offered while the glass faced toward deities is wobbled.

6 Religion of the Ainu people, Ainu language, Oral literature



Tracing religious rituals of the Ainu from their perspective

I initiated my research preoccupied with a desire to perform religious rituals in line with the way the local Ainu community to which my mother (a Sakhalin Ainu) belongs does. Ainu religious rituals vary depending on the region, and their remaining historical documents also differ in terms of content completion status. Research on religious rites encompasses diverse elements ranging from identifying what deities they enshrine to clarifying when they offer prayers as well as what kind of words, music and ritual implements they use when performing rituals. I recognize

that these are extremely important factors when it comes to understanding the Ainu culture.

At the same time, I am able to provide my own observations since I am also a member of the Ainu community. I feel it is necessary to correct misunderstandings or prejudgments so that the Ainu can avoid playing an extreme role as a people with traits such as being mystical or living in harmony with nature, which may also be applicable to other peoples.

Comics are helping bring the Ainu closer to the university where mutual understanding is deepening

Under the influence of a popular comic *Golden Kamuy*, students of Hokkaido University these days are showing a highly favorable interest in the Ainu, which I feel is due to the current atmosphere. I myself had the pleasure of helping to edit the comic book, which encouraged me to complete a paper on shamanism called *tusu* in the Ainu language. I cannot help but realize the significant impact that comic books have on people.

The message I wish to convey to both students who are interested in the Ainu and those who are of Ainu descent is

that the final goal of your research is not to become conversant with Ainu culture but to develop enough insight to compare it with other cultures. Comparing Ainu culture to other cultures to identify similarities and differences between them is conducive to re-evaluating Ainu culture. The comparison helps create deeper mutual understanding between us. I hope that Hokkaido University will continue to be a comfortable place for Ainu people. Although personal in nature, these are my true feelings.

Revealing the brain mechanisms that engender the mind by using the techniques of information science

Cognitive neuroscience is an academic discipline that explains how the human mind works in terms of the neural activations of the brain. In our lab, we perform research to elucidate the mechanisms of the brain and information representation by taking advantage of psychophysical experiments and functional brain imaging, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), as well as techniques of information science, including machine learning and multivariate analysis. Currently, my area of particular interest is motor learning and social cognition. I'd like to reveal the relationship between cognition and the brain based on embodiment with a "mirror system" that makes one feel as if one is looking at another's action, as well as "neuro-feedback" that allows one to know the status of brain activity in real time.



Associate Professor
OGAWA Kenji

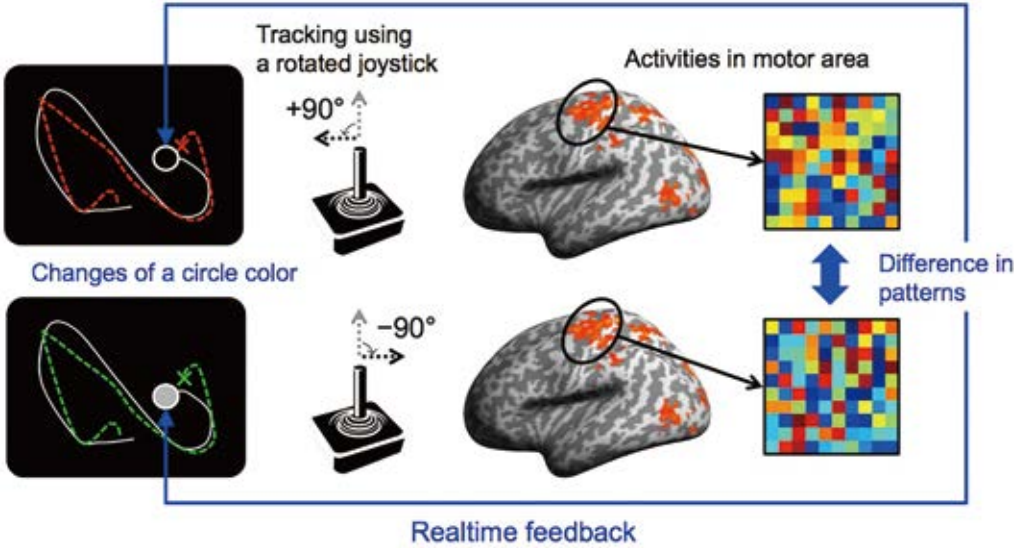
Research Subject
We are using behavioral and functional neuroimaging (fMRI/MEG) experiments to elucidate the neural mechanisms of human motor control & learning, body schema & image, and social cognition based on mirror neuron system.

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory
Division of Human Sciences /
Research Group of Psychology /
Laboratory of Psychology



With advances in science and technology, such as the development of fMRI, research on cognitive neuroscience is rapidly growing.

7 Cognitive Neuroscience (Motor Control, Social Cognition)



Our latest research aims to reveal how "neuro-feedback" will contribute to effective motor learning (for example, by promoting simultaneous adaptation to multiple rotational transformations).

Absorb the know-how of psychology and brain science. Top athletes can be our research theme.

The Hokkaido University Department of Psychology has many professors who have a variety of research know-hows on psychology and brain science, as well as rich environments where students can carry out cross-departmental research in collaboration with the School of Medicine and other faculties. This is one of the greatest benefits of our university.

With having an interest in the mind and brain, our students can set research themes of their own. For example, one of our students wanted to study how a world-class soccer player can achieve a bird's-eye view of the playing field from the perspective of brain science. As this field is still full of mysteries, it depends on you to decide a research theme. As I've never come up with such an interesting research theme of top soccer players, I'm looking forward to seeing what themes you'll find in the future.



Minds aren't left as fossils: Exploring the evolution of the mind through cross-species comparisons



Humans interact with others and occasionally help each other in daily life. Nonhuman animals also live in the same way. How have such social minds that developed through mutual interactions evolved? Minds aren't left as fossils. Comparative cognitive science aims at elucidating the processes of evolution of the mind by identifying similarities and differences among various animals' minds, including those of humans.

To explore the evolution of mutual cooperation, I've investigated tufted capuchin monkeys' prosociality and inequity aversion in experimental food sharing situations. However, animals forge social bonds not only with others of their species, but also with members of other species. In the future, by addressing companion animals, especially horses, which are common in Hokkaido, I'd also like to clarify the psychological bases of social bonds forged between horses and humans, as well as their evolutionary processes. Additionally, I carry out multilateral research by measuring not only behavioral indicators but also physiological indicators in order to identify animals' behavioral motivations.



A food-sharing experiment with tufted capuchins that Associate Professor Takimoto has long been conducting: These animals are intelligent, flexibly share food with partners and behave reciprocally.



Associate Professor Takimoto belonged to an equestrian club when she was an undergraduate student. Her wish to build a better relationship with her favorite animal—the horse—has inspired her to take an interest in research on animals' minds.



Keep in mind your findings and excitement when you observe wild or feral animals: Aspire to be a researcher who can address your theme from a wide-perspective

Research methods in comparative cognitive science fall roughly into two categories. One is observational methods, which are helpful for understanding animals as they are; the other is experimental methods, whereby researchers can precisely investigate the factors that influence animal behavior by controlling the experimental situations. We focus on experimental studies, but I recommend that you observe wild or feral animals as early in your studies as possible. The findings and excitement that you gain directly in the field are sure to make your research deeper and more valid.

In my lab, you can acquire basic knowledge of comparative cognitive science and a stance toward that science by perusing textbooks and engaging in practical experiments. Based on such basic learning, I'd like you to foster the insight that's necessary for you to address your research theme from multiple perspectives, while gradually obtaining knowledge in proximate disciplines. By doing so, you'll be able to add interdisciplinary appeal to your research, which will help to spread that appeal to various scientific disciplines. With the help of the teaching staff of this course and of its graduate students, I'm pleased to provide cordial support to you for your growth as an international and interdisciplinary researcher.

Associate Professor
TAKIMOTO Ayaka

Research Subject

Comparative Cognitive Science, Evolution of cooperation, Psychological mechanism of prosocial behavior, Psychological basis for intra-species social bond

Faculty - Division / Research Group / Laboratory

Division of Human Sciences /
Research Group of Behavioral Science /
Laboratory of Behavioral Science

