

7 ROUNDTABLES COMING THIS SUMMER!

The 75th Japan-America Student Conference, August 2023

CULTURE & ARTS



What comes to mind when you hear or read the word “culture,” and what does it mean to you? Why might an action or behavior be considered polite in one culture, but extremely rude in another? How do people express themselves through culture, and how does that impact or reflect on society? This roundtable will mainly focus on the interrelationships between “culture and arts” and “people and society,” as well as the role of culture and arts in US-Japan relations. We will explore various facets and types of cultures and arts as well as how they influence societies, groups, and individuals (and vice versa). Through discussion of diverse topics and themes including soft power (e.g., cuisine, pop culture), Internet culture, modernity, subcultures, and cultural differences, we aim to increase our understanding of culture and arts, their impact on and reflection of people and society, as well as the role they play in our relationships.

ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY



The Environment & Technology Roundtable aims to explore the intersections between humanity and the natural world, without becoming pigeon-holed in any one topic or perspective. This RT will explore different facets of environmental and technology based subjects through the lens of dualities to encourage & challenge preexisting knowledge. This can include topics such as infrastructure, transportation, sustainable economics, or environmental policy.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS & U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP



World peace has become unstable and uncertain. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sent shockwaves throughout the world. In the Indo-Pacific region, the conflict between the U.S. and China is intensifying, and tensions are rising in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Threats are also diversifying as cyber security, economic security, and energy security are becoming increasingly important. In order to consider ways to solve the increasingly complex global problems that we face today, we must understand state behavior as being heavily influenced by factors including historical context, international norms, and domestic politics. Therefore, the goal of this Roundtable is to analyze international politics and global issues from these different perspectives, while also exploring where national interests of the United States and Japan converge and diverge.

LAW & MORALITY



The impact of Russia's invasion, the current state of the United Nations, military, abortion, gun regulations, environmental regulations, diversity, workplace atmosphere, and the death penalty are some of the many topics that have recently become debatable in Japan and the United States. All of these have to do with the law, and at the same time, how we think about things from the values and morals that we hold within ourselves or the identities we associate with. Our sense of values shape our society, and sometimes our sense of values are subconsciously created by the laws that are enacted. In this roundtable, we are going to discuss how the laws of both countries' societies influence the world we live in today, and how those actions shape our moral outlooks/values on situations. Laws and moralities of society can become both a help or a hindrance. So to those who don't know the law, and even those who do, please join us in examining the rules that have already been established, and our values regarding topics of interest to the RT.

LINGUISTICS & PHILOSOPHY



In this roundtable, we will use perspectives from linguistics and philosophy to consider the foundation of relationships such as love, friendship, and trust. From the U.S.-Japan relationship to individual connections, how are diverse relationships like these maintained? Is there really an ideal form of love and friendship? Why do people trust each other? Can artificial intelligence and humans build relationships? Why has trust in science wavered? Taking perspectives such as ontology and semantics as the starting point of our thinking, we will discuss the ambiguous and ever-changing “relationship” between Japanese and U.S. society, weaving in topics beyond the framework of the humanities, such as artificial intelligence and medicine to hone our skeptical eyes and our ability to grasp the essence of different subjects.

SOCIAL CLASS & DIVERSITY



People's identities are held up by certain understandings and assumptions that they may instinctively feel, yet struggle to explain. How do people come to feel belonging to “class” or a “nation”? What does it mean to live in a “diverse” society? What do these terms mean to us in the current day, and have they held multiple meanings across different geographies, cultural spaces, and historical contexts? The present is rife with a multiplicity of ideologies that are often taken for granted, yet greatly shape people's conceptions of themselves, others, and the lived environment they inhabit. Through looking at a wide range of topics, from パパ活 (*papa katsu*) and sugar daddy culture, educational inequality, or conceptions of technology and science, this roundtable aims to render visible various frameworks of social belonging, dissecting how they function as systems, understanding how certain social relations are experienced and reproduced, and identifying the forces that they have been molded by.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



In the last few decades, businesses have been confronted with a rapidly changing climate, progressive social movements, backlash to globalization, and turbulent economic conditions. To that end, we have to change the business environment, strategy, and sometimes management philosophy. But is a company's value really measured solely by maximizing profit? In the 21st century, should corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability be required of businesses? This RT will discuss the evolution of existing companies and industries, explore the role of business in societal progress, and pursue ideas that achieve a sustainable society while fostering innovation and investment.



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