

# Study Abroad Program Feature: General Advice & Tips

## UCEAP: Global & International Studies Meiji Gakuin University, Yokohama, Japan



By Rosie Soto, 2020





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This program guide is intended to provide students with general advice and tips related to study abroad from the perspective of a student who has studied abroad in Yokohama, Japan. It outlines the experiences of a study abroad returnee from the planning to go abroad to being abroad. This can be useful resource for students thinking about study abroad or are considering a similar UCEAP program in Japan or themed program.

**Disclaimer:** This program is no longer titled "Global & International Studies" and is now "Global Studies"



MEIJI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY  
明治学院大学





# A Little About Me

## Student Profile: Rosie Soto

- Majors: Political Science, International Studies
- Minor: History (which I decided to get after studying abroad)
- When I went abroad: Spring Semester 2019 (late March to late-July)
- When I started planning to study abroad: 1 year in advance, end of my freshman year and most of 2nd year
- Applied: Winter -Spring quarter the year before
- Courses taken: 3 electives of my choice in English, 1 required UC course, beginner Japanese
- Japanese language fluency: no knowledge before going abroad
- Other details: I had previously studied abroad in Paris, France the semester before (which was very helpful to reference) and was excited to experience an entirely different program, culture, and field of study
- I was also particularly interested in the multi-day excursion in Hiroshima





# Before Applying to Study Abroad

## What I did:

- I visited the Study Abroad Center at the beginning of 2nd year/sophomore and started looking into programs to go abroad my 3rd year or 4th year
- I got a degree check at the Academic Advising office to see what courses or requirements I could fulfill abroad and what I couldn't
- The courses I couldn't take abroad which I could only complete at UCI, I enrolled in during my 2nd year (e.g. Soc Sci 10A-B-C Math series, Soc Sci 3A computer tech requirement)
- I wasn't able to enroll in the Japanese 1A-B-C series to learn the language the year prior which would have helped lessen the language-barrier, but it was overall okay without
- I recommend learning basic greetings and phrases like numbers before going abroad

## What to Consider:

- Have an idea of when you'd like to go abroad – what school year? what quarter/semester?
- Ask yourself – what classes should I take before going abroad and what classes should I take while abroad?
- Start planning ahead – applications should be submitted the year prior to the term you want to go abroad (e.g. apply Winter/Spring quarter 2020 for Study Abroad during Spring 2021)

## Need Help Choosing a Program?

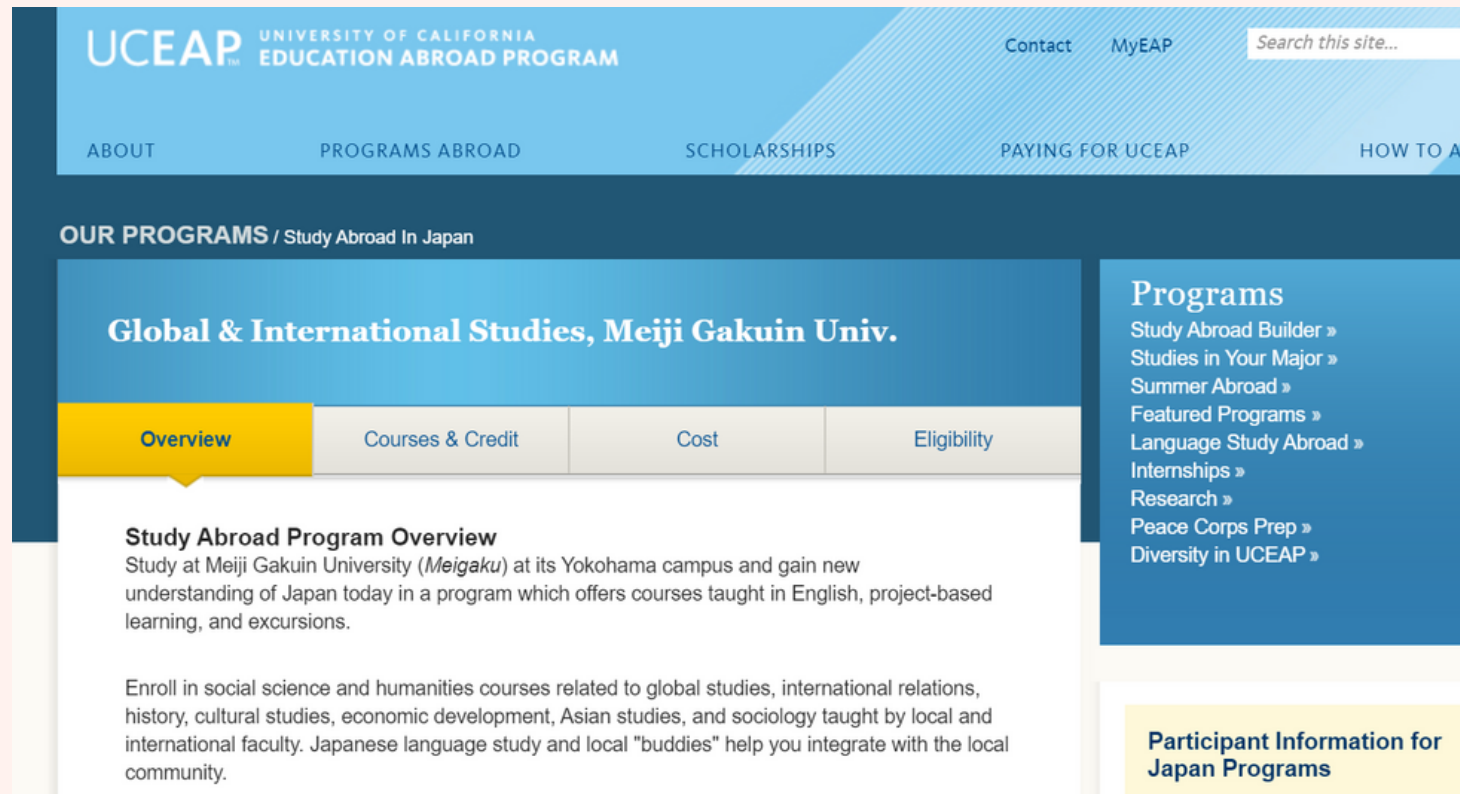
- "Study Abroad Tips: How to Choose a Program" Resource
- Visit the Study Abroad Center
- Talk to an academic advisor or study abroad peer mentor for further advice and possible pre-approval on courses

## CATALOGS AND RESOURCES

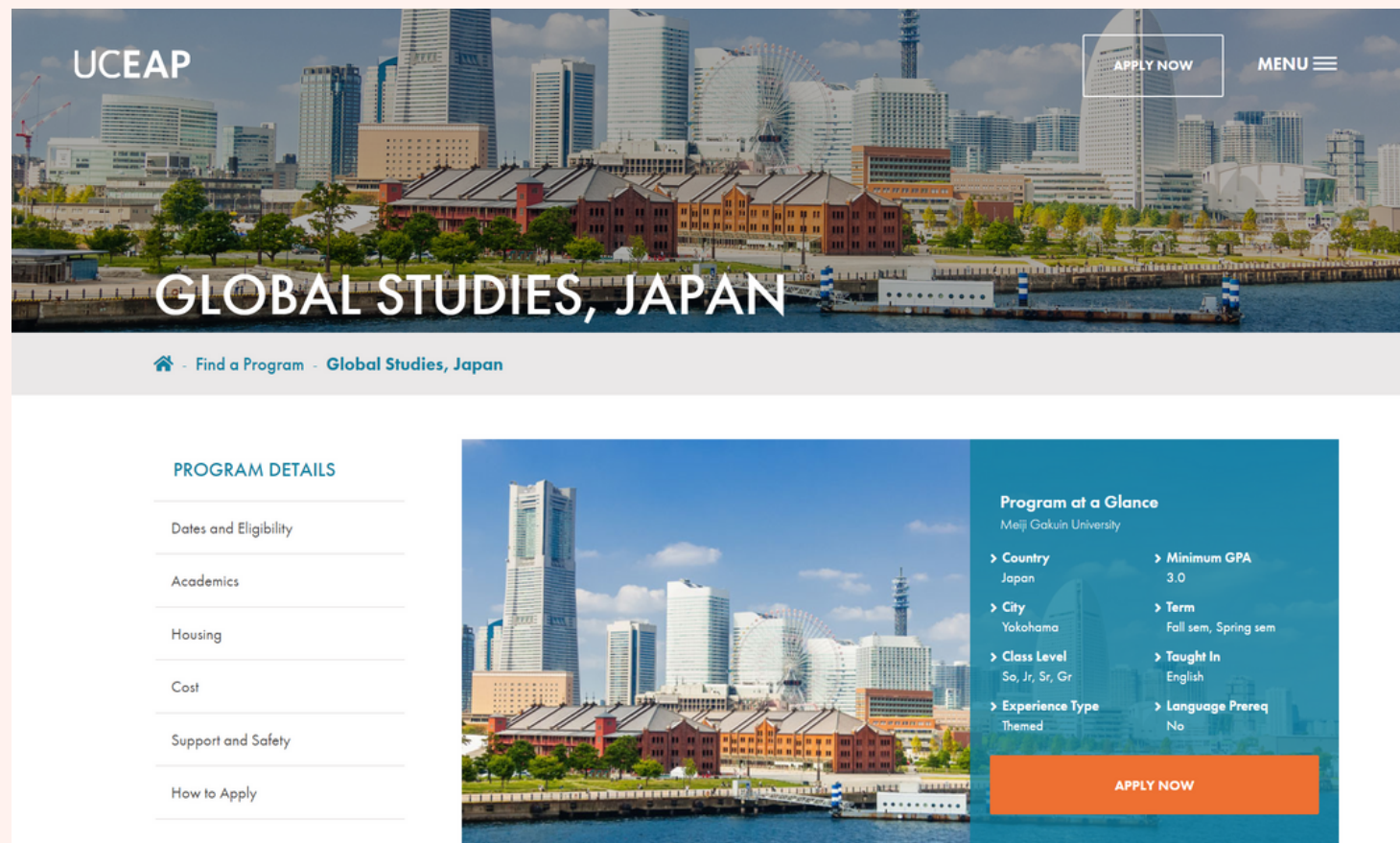
- [Meiji Gakuin University](#): This website is usually updated with new course information about a month before the program begins. See the previous terms to get an idea of what each semester offers.
- [UCEAP Course Catalog](#): See a list of courses UC students have taken on this program.
- [Campus Credit Abroad](#): Learn the types of credit (major, minor, general education, elective) students from your campus received at this location.



# Global & International Studies, Meiji Gakuin University



Former UCEAP website



## Overview

- Study at Meiji Gakuin University (Meigaku/MGU) at its Yokohama campus and gain new understanding of Japan today in a program which offers courses taught in English, project-based learning, and excursions.
- Enroll in social science and humanities courses related to global studies, international relations, history, cultural studies, economic development, Asian studies, and sociology taught by local and international faculty. Japanese language study and local "buddies" help you integrate with the local community.
- A UC Visiting Professor teaches two courses and facilitates your immersion into the Meigaku community.
- The program includes a multi-day excursion to Hiroshima and an integrative seminar that provides lectures by experts and professionals, and involves independent research.
- Students attend classes with UC and host country students.
- **Experience Type:** Themed courses
- **Language of Instruction:** English
- **Language Study:** Japanese language study is optional, but highly recommended. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes are offered depending on Japanese placement.
- **Duration**
  - Fall: early September to mid-December
  - Spring: early April to late July





## You Got Accepted! Now What...

### Check Your Inbox for Important Emails

- Once accepted to the program, I received email notices on important information regarding passport renewal, how to get a student visa at the Japanese Consulate, sample course schedules, packing list recommendations, a link for housing assignments, etc.

### Prepare Documents and Identification Forms

- Get required documents ready in order to prepare for a student visa application, a passport or passport renewal months in advance
- These may include, but are not limited to: more than one form of proof of address, acceptance letter to UC Center Paris/your program from UCEAP, passport photo, etc.
- I recommend bringing a few of these documents, especially the ones with your health records and IDs, in a secure folder or saved on your phone/email in case you need them while abroad

Example Pre-Departure Checklist

5	October 15, 2018	<b>Meiji Gakuin University Application for Admission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Instructions</a></li><li>• Official UC Transcript</li><li>• Passport Copy</li><li>• Financial Documents</li><li>• MGU Health Form</li><li>• Housing Information</li></ul>	UCEAP Systemwide Office
6	October 15, 2018	<b>Request for Disability Accommodation Abroad (if applicable)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Instructions</a></li></ul>	UCEAP Systemwide Office
7	October 15, 2018	<b>Requirements for Students Taking Dependents (if applicable)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Instructions and Form</a></li></ul>	UCEAP Systemwide Office and online payment to ACI
8	October 15, 2018	<b>UCEAP Health Clearance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Instructions</a></li></ul>	UCEAP Systemwide Office
9	Before Departure	<b>UCEAP Participation Letter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Instructions</a></li></ul>	Keep this letter for your records.
10	March 1, 2019	<b>Arrival Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Arrival Instructions</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Travel Itinerary Form</a></li></ul>	online
11	Before Departure	<b>Student Visa</b>	Japan Consulate





## Money Matters

- I saved my paychecks from my part-time campus job
- I applied for several scholarships such as these:
  - UCEAP scholarships – JASSO (for Japan); the recipients are instructed to open a Japanese bank account to access their scholarship upon arrival
  - FastWeb scholarships
  - Unigo scholarships
  - DoSomething.org scholarships
  - Course Hero April Scholarship (I won \$3,000!)
  - Many require long essays, projects, or proof of enrollment – such as a transcript – but some also don't; just keep looking!
- I asked my parents and relatives, who were supportive of my education experience abroad for financial assistance
- Financial Aid packages include tuition and room and board costs\*
  - \*each financial aid package is a student by student case, so contact a financial aid counselor for more information

## Housing at UCI

- I was able to end my Sept-Sept housing contract at VDC Norte before August since I found someone to takeover my lease for Summer Session II
- I recommend asking friends, friends of friends, publicizing your lease/spot on Facebook group pages, and checking your leasing policy

## Need More Advice?

- If you're learning Japanese, ask your Japanese professor for recommendations or advice
  - Also ask anyone else you may know who has been to Japan before like a Japanese international student
- I talked to a few study abroad Returnees from the same program, for their advice on specific classes or recommendations for activities to do while there and in the general region (<https://web.due.uci.edu/sac/returneelist>)
  - The Returnee List is accessible with UC ID, link can also be found on the Study Abroad Center's website)

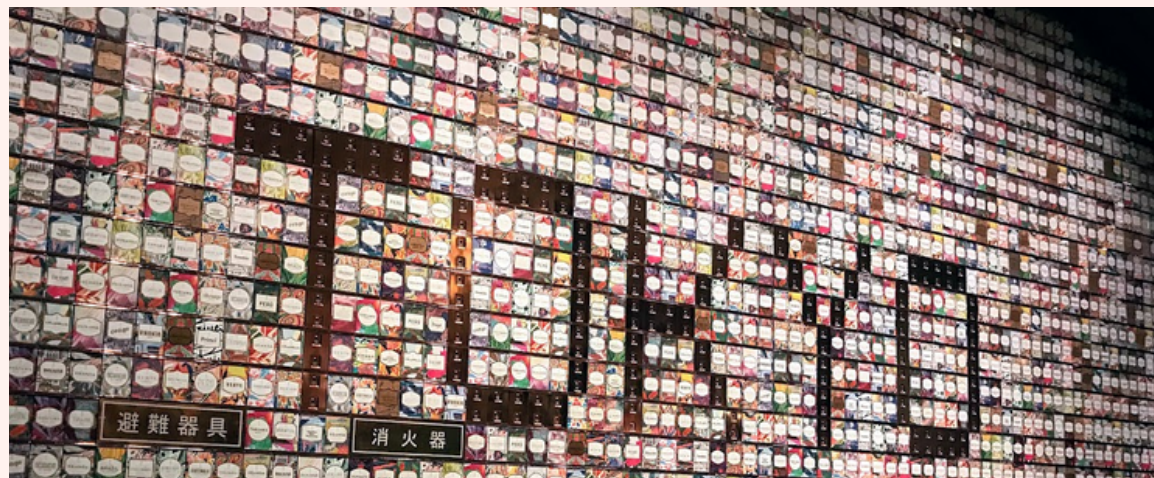


# Research

- Read articles, news content, blogs
- Watch vlogs, films set in Tokyo, documentaries (e.g. PaolofromTOYKO, Life Where I'm From, Simon & Martina)
- Know general information on politics, issues, current events, history
- Have a basic understanding of manners, customs, and culture so you're not too overwhelmed or embarrassed by culture-shock such as basic greetings to show respect (e.g "sumimasen" = excuse me/sorry)
- Research Japanese cuisine and create a list of foods to try

## Planning Trips & Activities

- Make lists of places to visit, food and restaurants to try, sightseeing attractions, weekend trips, bucket lists, etc.
- If you're not in the MGU program, consider visiting Hiroshima with friends or learning about its history



## Get Connected

- Expect to be advised to join a Facebook Group for your program with other UC students
- This allows you to get in contact with your program-mates from other UCs & ask former program participants questions
- People could share their flight information and could book flights together or have close arrival times to travel to the MISH dorms together
- This was helpful for many people I met in the program because it was their first time flying outside the U.S. or had never flown by themselves before – let alone internationally – and it was nice to find someone to "buddy-up" with on the same flight



## Student Visa\*

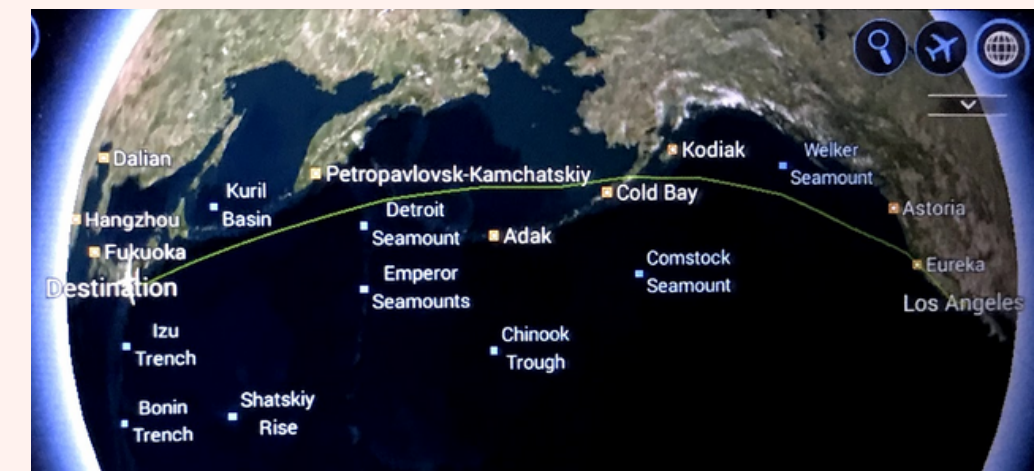
- Information on documents needed for your student visa can be found on the Japanese Consulate's website and on the Pre-departure Checklist, or emailed to you as well as how to make an appointment online
- Not every country's consulate might be located near you, but in California there are 2 Japan Consulates (SF and LA); go to whichever is nearest to you

## Health + Immunizations

- Make sure your immunizations are up-to-date
- You may be required to present a doctor-signed UCEAP Health Form to the UC Center Paris (or any host university prior to or upon arrival/during orientation)
- I recommend making an appointment with your doctor to inform them about going abroad – they may suggest other immunizations for your country and/or have to sign a health waiver/clearance form for UCEAP

## Inform Your Bank

- Tell your bank you'll be traveling abroad, so that your account activity won't look suspicious
- You may want to inquire about getting a traveler's credit card



## Phone Plan Abroad

- Research your phone plan's international policy and rates (e.g. T-Mobile users may have to pay additional international roaming fees)
- Unlock your phone in case you need to buy a SIM card abroad
- For the program I went on, specific information on SIM cards/Pocket Wifi was not presented to us
- I got a pocket wifi (Sakura wifi) that was conveniently portable and chargeable but I might've preferred a SIM Travelers card since the wifi would slow down once I maxed-out its 5 GB data for the month
- However, a pocket wifi is also convenient for being able to connect to multiple devices
- Overall easy to use and set up, it is mailed to you or you can order it to pick up at the airport on arrival, and it provides instructions on returning it through mail before departure
- There are a lot of other options for pocket-wifis and SIM cards online



# Packing

- For Spring/Summer: Pack more for summer since it will likely be warm most of the time, summer months are known to be hot and humid
- I packed half-half for the seasons(spring & summer), but wore summer clothes more
- I recommend 2 Check-in luggage at least in order to have more room for souvenirs
- The voltage and outlets are different so bring a travel adapter
- A portable charger(s) was super useful while traveling throughout the day and on weekend trips, so I highly recommend bringing at least one
- Think you'll get Homesick? Bring some snacks from home
- Medicine & First Aid: Band-Aid, Neosporin, Tylenol, Advil, DayQuil, etc. (also other medication for allergies and/or dietary needs)
- MGU gives the tip to bring a small gift from home for your Buddies and Host Family (if participating with these optional activities), or just for any new friends you make with local students or professors



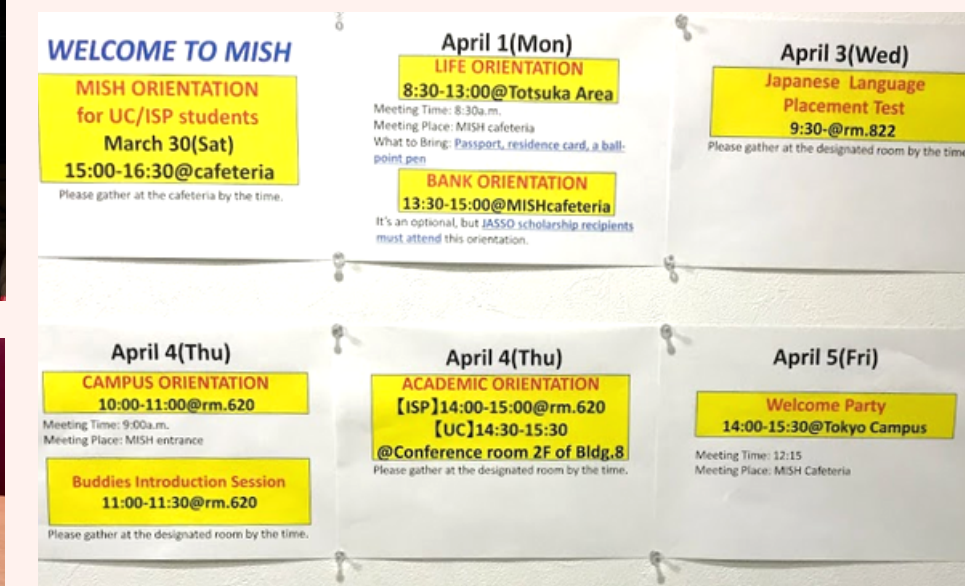
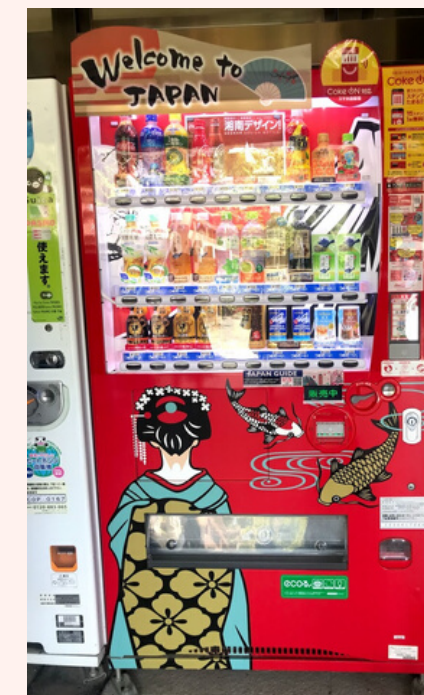
- I had a spare digital camera strap and looped it to my phone case, so in the case my phone was in my hand and I dropped it or if there was a possibility it would be snatched, I could still keep it attached to me
- I used this anti-theft Pacsafe "Bra Pouch" as a wallet while previously studying abroad in Paris. It's meant to be attached to a bra and hidden under a shirt but I read a review from a guy who instead attached it to a pants/belt loop, which I did and could fit in my pocket. Even if it fell out of my pocket, it would still be hooked on to my pants or a lanyard or my phone strap. It was still convenient to have store my Suica train pass, cash, and Resident Card
- I liked it because it was also less obvious than a travel neck pouch/lanyard or waist pouch
- Buy a small coin purse in Japan – coins accumulate fast





# Upon Arrival

- I met up with a group of girls at Haneda Airport who had similar flight arrival times and we navigated the travel directions to the MISH Dorm that our program director sent us
  - At the airport, I recommend exchanging some money since there is a cheaper exchange rate at airports in Japan compared to airports in U.S.
  - I highly recommend buying a "Suica" train card that yen can be loaded onto as well
  - The main train pass for the Tokyo metropolitan area is called "Suica" (watermelon) and will work as south as Osaka, but not Kyoto or cities with different JR/train lines
- This required taking the train with our luggage which was a struggle, especially when we encountered stairs, but luckily we only had to transfer once at Yokohama station before arriving at Totsuka
- The dorm manager checked us in, gave us our keys, and we briefly met some Japanese residents that guided us to our rooms
  - These residents also helped us pick out Wifi routers at the nearest electronics store and set them up since our rooms didn't come with them
  - Bedding was provided but we went to DAISO to get more items like clothes hangers, extra pillows, snacks, mirrors, trash bins, etc.
- Orientation included walking tours of the city of Totsuka, campus orientations, welcome parties at the dorm and MGU's Shirokane/Tokyo campus, as well as getting our Japanese Resident cards and school ID



Credit: Amberlyn Choo







## On-site Support

- As a UCEAP student, you are supported by UC's network of study abroad offices at every UC campus and partnerships with UCEAP host universities throughout the world. UC faculty and local staff abroad will help you integrate into Japanese culture and provide assistance with academics, housing, safety, and other issues.
- Don't hesitate to approach other students - everyone is in the same boat as you!
- Connect with your professors in Japan - they're very understanding of your situation and they're excited to teach you
- As a meigaku student, I was given a new student email and ID card that I could scan to visit the library and use printers with

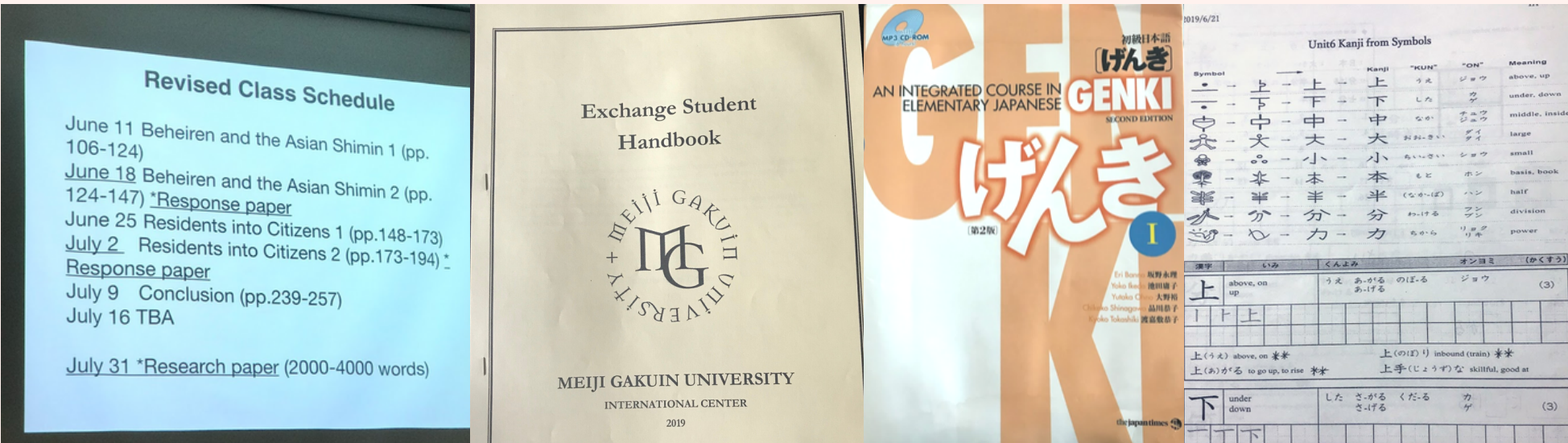
## Campus

- "You'll take classes at the Yokohama campus of Meiji Gakuin University, which emphasizes international education. The intimate, inviting Yokohama campus provides a range of support and cultural activities for international students. Reflecting the university's altruistic philosophy, the Volunteer Center offers programs where you can serve and connect with Japanese communities. On campus, spend time in computer training rooms for language study or relax in the International Lounge. Lecture halls, lounges, and cafés fill modern buildings on a hilltop overlooking greater Tokyo's metropolitan area."
- The International Center Lounge and Building is where UC students spent most of their time; it has one of the two cafeterias on campus
- On clear days, you can see Mt. Fuji!
- Other options to buy lunch are from various food trucks that visit campus weekly
- The unofficial mascot are a pair of goats(yagi) living in front of the Main Entrance gates



# Academics

- Fields of Study: Humanities, Social Sciences
- The Faculty of International Studies and Global and Transcultural Studies Program serve as the host departments of UCEAP at Meiji Gakuin University. This program features undergraduate courses in global studies, history, international relations, political science, Asian studies, cultural studies, and other social science and humanities topics, all taught in English.



	4/8 MONDAY	4/9 TUESDAY	4/10 WEDNESDAY	4/11 THURSDAY	4/12 FRIDAY
(Breakfast/Take out trash)	8:00 AM				
Bus or Walk to MGU	8:30 AM				
Period 1	9:15 AM - 10:45 AM	Internship A	Intensive Japanese 1A	Intensive Japanese 1A	Intensive Japanese 1A
Period 2	10:55 AM - 12:25 PM		Politics and Society in Japan	Intensive Japanese 1A	
Lunch	12:30 PM - 13:25 PM				
Period 3	13:25 PM - 14:55 PM	Japanese Minority Groups		Japanese Minority Groups	
Period 4	15:05 PM - 16:35 PM	Modern East Asian History	UC Seminar (compulsory subject)	Modern East Asian History	

# Courses I Took

1. UC Seminar
  - a. Once a week, required course taught by a UC visiting professor, a different one each semester
  - b. Featured guest lecturers
2. Modern East Asian History
3. Japanese Minority Groups
4. Japanese Politics and Society
5. Beginning/Elementary Japanese
  - a. Fast-paced learning of Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji, grammar, and conversational skills
  - b. By the end of the semester, students are able to hold basic conversations in Japanese and write an essay using all 3 character writing forms

# Course Fulfillment

- These electives all qualify as Asian Studies courses and can be petitioned as Intl Studies courses
1. Poli Sci 101
  2. Hist 129
  3. Poli Sci 128 – also Ethnic Studies, Sociology
  4. Poli Sci 131Q
  5. Japan 15 – Japanese
  6. Teaching Internship – Edu 187A





My UC program-mates in Hiroshima

Visiting UC professor  
Okamoto-sensei  
(UCSB) and  
Professor Vesey of  
Modern East Asian  
History



## Courses in General

- I found a few of my courses were slightly easier than UC courses given how most of my classmates were Japanese students for whom English was their 2nd language
  - For example, there were fewer reading assignments
- Course lists were on the MGU website for all students but the course options for UC students were only presented at the orientation upon arrival
- Like at UCI, there's a 2 week trial period where you can sit in classes before course enrollment is finalized with the International Center staff
  - This was right after orientation and before Golden Week (week long holiday)
- Save any work such as graded essays or quizzes from classes that may count towards major requirements in case the documents are needed for petitioning
- Japanese class was 3x a week including Fridays so students who opted out of taking Japanese could've configured their schedule of classes to create 3-day weekends
- Japanese professors were the most strict with tardiness and attendance

		4/8 MONDAY	4/9 TUESDAY	4/10 WEDNESDAY	4/11 THURSDAY	4/12 FRIDAY
(Breakfast/Take out trash)	8:00 AM					
Bus or Walk to MGU	8:30 AM					
Period 1	9:15 AM - 10:45 AM	Internship A	Intensive Japanese 1A	Intensive Japanese 1A	Introductory Practical Japanese A	Intensive Japanese 1A
		Intermediate Practical Japanese 5A	Intensive Japanese 3A	Intensive Japanese 2A		Intensive Japanese 3A
		Advanced Practical Japanese 5A	Intensive Japanese 5A	Intensive Japanese 3A		Intensive Japanese 5A
				Intensive Japanese 4A		
				Intensive Japanese 5A		
Period 2	10:55 AM - 12:25 PM	Intermediate Practical Japanese WA	Politics and Society in Japan	Intensive Japanese 1A	Introductory Practical Japanese A	Intensive Japanese 2A
		Advanced Practical Japanese WA	Intensive Japanese 2A	Intensive Japanese 2A	Japanese Literature	Intensive Japanese 4A
		Japanese Literature	Intensive Japanese 4A	Intensive Japanese 3A		
		Labor Economics and Public Policy		Intensive Japanese 4A		
				Intensive Japanese 5A		
Lunch	12:30 PM - 13:25 PM					
Period 3	13:25 PM - 14:55 PM	Japanese Minority Groups	Contemporary Global Issues A		Japanese Minority Groups	Contemporary Global Issues B
		Peace Studies	Cognitive Development in Cross-Cultural Contexts			Cognitive Development in Cross-Cultural Contexts
			Japanese Economy			Contemporary Global Issues A - Body and Gender
Period 4	15:05 PM - 16:35 PM	Modern East Asian History	UC Seminar (compulsory subject)		Modern East Asian History	
		Regional Economic Integration			Regional Economic Integration	
Period 5	16:45 PM - 18:15 PM		Japanese Popular Culture		Contemporary Global Issues A - Debating Global Issues	
			Contemporary Global Issues B			
End of classes	18:15 = 6:15 PM					





Me and one of my students

## Unique Study Opportunities

- "Attend a weekly seminar that includes guest lectures moderated by a visiting UC faculty member and a research project.
- Explore the destruction and rebirth of Hiroshima during a study trip to the modern Japanese industrial city.
- Take an internship for credit that focuses on how you can teach English to speakers of other languages. You'll get hands-on experience under the supervision of a faculty internship advisor.
- Propose a university independent study project that focuses on study and research beyond standard coursework. You'll set up the study project after you arrive.
- Create a UCEAP special study course with the visiting UC faculty member and a Meiji Gakuin professor. You'll set up the special study course after you arrive."

## Internships I Did:

- English Teaching Assistant
  - Flexible options depending on sign-up spot availability
  - Class subject and level as well as teaching styles vary
  - I taught "Sengai 1", a freshman English course. I graded and gave feedback on oral presentations, partnered with students during conversation practice activities, and held office hours outside of class for students who wanted additional English practice
- Administrative Internship – planning and coordinating MGU's Study Abroad Week-long Fair in July
  - Requires coordination with International Center staff for materials and resources as well as Japanese student volunteers from translations
  - I designed flyers and volunteer sign-up forms, helped brainstorm activities and icebreakers and facilitate the events

## Other Internships Offered:

- Corporate Internships – varies by semester
  - Previous opportunities included: Japanese Tech companies, Goldman Sachs, Apple, etc.
  - They were very competitive given the few number of internships positions at each company
- Local Totsuka YMCA English Teaching internship
  - After school program for young children aged 5–8 once or twice a week



# Housing at MISH Dorm

## Living Situation

- "You will live in a dormitory complex with other students and local workers within bus or walking distance of campus."
  - MISH Dorm had a convenient location: a 5-minute walk to Totsuka station, a number of shopping malls around the station, and at least 3 conbinnis within walking distance (FamilyMart, Lawsons, 7Eleven)

## Accommodations

- Private bedroom (single)
- Private bathroom
- Off campus
- Meal plan (breakfast and dinner except Sundays and holidays)
  - Residents check off their room number on a sign-in booklet before receiving a plate
  - Only one main dish per person
  - Say "hello" and "thank you" to the kitchen staff for preparing meals and cleaning dishes
  - Wipe down the table once finished
- I used the clothesline on my balcony to dry clothes rather than the MISH's drying machines since it is a more common practice in Japan to dry clothes by hanging them
- Features in bathrooms: seat warmers, fake flushing/chirping sounds



## Commute

- Commute is a 25 - 30-minute walk to campus, or you can hop on a bus at the station that is a short walk from the dorm
- Walking is uphill and a great way to get daily exercise, but can get uncomfortably hot beginning in May
- The Bus Pass can be bought monthly or one 3-month pass (keep receipts to get reimbursed at the end of your program! MGU staff should give more information on the refunds)





## Dorm Life

- Residents include:
  - International students
  - Local Japanese students
  - UC students
- Be respectful to your neighbors/dorm-mates and mindful of housing guidelines such as noise levels and cleanliness
- Some floors have female-only dorms
- Overnight visitations are possible but only if they are "family members" of the same sex, otherwise day-time visitors sign in with the dorm manager
- It is polite to greet the dorm manager when leaving and returning, if he's present at the front desk entrance



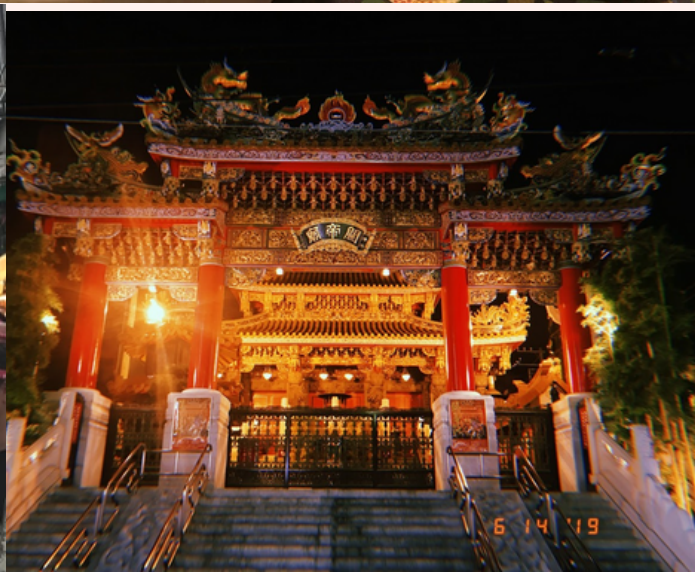
## Communication

- Remember to stay in touch with friends and family through video call (FaceTime, Skype) or messaging apps (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp)
- Talking with family and friends daily or weekly lessens homesickness over time
  - They can mail you things to the MISH Dorm address where everyone has individual mailboxes
- Sending postcards home can be done at any post office
- FaceTime family members and friends to help ease homesickness, but make sure you're making enough connections and visiting places often to help distract
- Don't be afraid to acknowledge homesickness with friends



# Optional Homestay

- "You can also request a short-term homestay with a Japanese family."
  - My homestay was 2 days-1 night, others only had 1 day to spend with their host family
  - All host families are different and will offer different activities
  - My host mother took me to Yokohama's Cup of Noodle Museum and Chinatown on the first day
  - The second day was spent at Tokyo's Asakusa Shrine Parade, Ueno Park which was hosting a Niigata Prefecture festival, and Tokyo National Museum, and river cruise back to Yokohama



I was able to spend some time with my friend from Hiroshima who studied at UCI the year before!



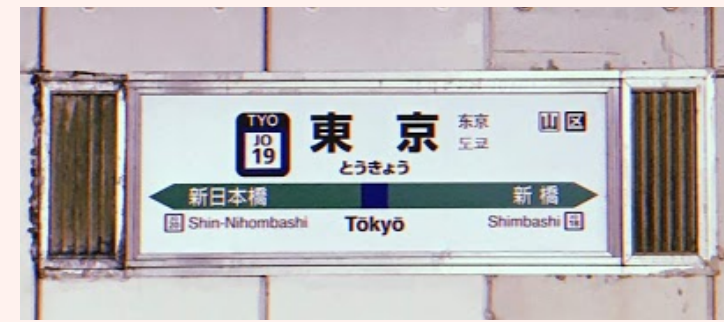
## Hiroshima Multi-Day Excursion

- For 5 days, it is an organized trip that includes riding by bullet train (*shinkansen*) to and from the beautiful and peaceful city to learn about its history, survival during World War II, rebuilding, and anti-nuclear armament/peace activism
- As part of the program's curriculum, visits include the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum, Hiroshima Castle, Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima island, and Okunoshima island
- It also includes the opportunity to hear a testimonial from an atomic bomb survivor (*hibakusha*) and other guest lecturers



# Traveling

- The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate; UCEAP has a similar Travel Signout as well as MISH's Dorm Manager
- When buying flight/train/overnight bus tickets online, take screenshots or pictures of your ticket codes and details – the digital copy can be used in place of a printed ticket
- Common travel booking sites also have apps such as Hostelworld, Flights by StudentUniverse, NAVER (maps app in South Korea)
- Once you get comfortable and experienced traveling with friends or roommates, I encourage solo-traveling. I never would've thought I'd feel so safe and sure I could travel by myself and it was one of the best experiences I had.
  - For example, I flew to Seoul to meet up with a friend who was studying abroad at Yonsei University and later we met again in Taipei, Taiwan
- For a different living experience, try booking your stay at a Ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn with tatami mats and sometimes an onsen, or a capsule hotel



**GAIHAKU TODOKE  
OVERNIGHT STAY NOTICE**  
Submit this form before staying out overnight.

DATE: year / 20 19 month / 04 day / 24

Name	Roseanne Sato	Room#	412
School / Company	Keiji Gakuin University	Cell Phone	(+66) 498-9224

Period	out		return		6 night(s)
	month / 04	day / 24	month / 04	day / 30	
Breakfast	[ necessary / unnecessary ]		[ necessary / unnecessary ]		
Dinner	[ necessary / unnecessary ]		[ necessary / unnecessary ]		



10 > JS Shona... JT Tokal... TY Tokyu... 56 min

Station	Line	Departed	Platform	Stop	Time
Totsuka Station	JT Tokaido Line	4:30 PM	Platform 2	各停	19 min ago
Also at 4:39 PM >					
Ride 1 stop (10 min)					
Yokohama Station					4:40 PM
Walk 2 min					
Yokohama Station	TY Tokyu-Toyoko Line	4:49 PM	Platform 2	急行	Now
Also in 8 min >					
Ride 9 stops (27 min)					
Kikuna Station					
Tsunashima Station					
Hiyoshi Station					



# Money Spending & Saving

- ATMs can be found at almost any convenience store
- There are restaurants, grocery stores, and shopping malls that take credit cards, but it is better to be over-prepared than under-prepared
  - For example, some small businesses prefer Yen in cash instead of using their electronic card scanners
- Coins are actually used if paying by cash – courtesy if rounding up to the nearest coin if possible; having a coin purse is a must!
- I was encouraged by my mother to always have spare cash in case of an emergency, and I took this mindset abroad
  - I had stashed a few bills around in different locations – my school backpack, purses, desk drawer, wallet, "fake" wallet
- To help save money, create a monthly budget or try to keep track of monthly spending
- Save money by cooking in your dorm mini-kitchen or eating out only weekends
- Consider traveling mostly within Japan, it is a large and diverse archipelago with islands and mountains, with different Prefectures or cities being known for something (e.g. Hokkaido in the north for it's snow and Sapporo beer, Okinawa in the south for their beaches and Okinawan cuisine)

# Safety Precautions

- There is a small chance of getting pick-pocketed, so some tips include: travel without valuables, be observant and aware of your surroundings, try not to look like a foreign tourist or someone who is easily distracted
  - My friend lost her wallet and had to ask friends to borrow cash for the rest of the semester, and had to pay them back through an app similar to Venmo or Paypal



Credit: Amberlyn Choo





## Living Like a Local

- Observe Japanese people and try to imitate their mannerisms as best you can – it's one way to blend in, learn to adapt to the new environment and culture, and feel like you actually live in Japan
  - It's through my observations that I learned the unspoken rule of no talking on the metro and to not have an "American" or loud talking volume
- Be a respectful representative of the UC system and as Americans abroad
- Also, it's better to bag your own groceries and bring your own reusable totes
- Set your clock to 24hr time (e.g. 17:00 = 5PM)
- Support small businesses or buy local
- Make note of city events, holidays and festivals ("matsuris"), or special occasions (e.g. Golden Week holidays, firework festivals in the summer, MGU club fair, Tokyo Olympics, etc.)
- Take advantage of the sunny days and good weather – it was nice to just walk around a new part of the city or enjoy parks and gardens (especially if it's cherry blossom season!)
- Navigating the cities like Tokyo should be easy using Google Maps
- Don't feel pressured to go outside and do something new everyday, take time to adjust to the new environment and overtime, going on outings and trips will be great distractions from homesickness





## Travel Etiquette

- Refrain from talking on buses and trains as well as eating (unspoken rule)
- Don't eat or drink in "conbinnis" (convenience stores) or while walking because it's socially rude and means you're not considerate of open public and clean spaces
- Use Google Maps for all navigation! Trains are always on time and conductors will apologize over the loud speaker even if they are 2 minutes late

## Train Stations

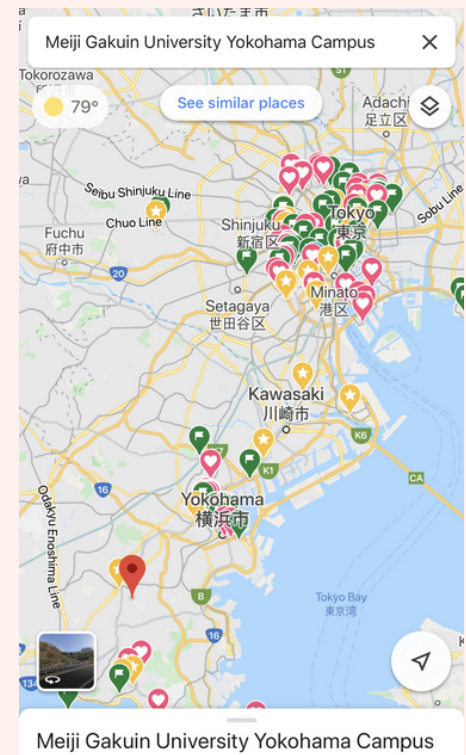
- Many large stations which several train lines connect through are sometimes built into a mall or within a shopping plaza, meant for travelers to grab a quick meal or buy something on their way home
- However, expect them to be crowded and congested, Tokyo has the world's most busiest stations
- Avoid rush hour when you can! (8/9am, after 5pm)  
Train platform monitors will literally push people on to fit everyone
- Etiquette: Line up in two rows in front of a color bar, but behind the yellow line and wait for passengers to get off before getting on





# Making Memories

- I went on most of the optional excursions/day-trips, activities and workshops and made sure not to schedule travel during those weekends
  - Embrace the funny moments, mistakes, times of uncertainty, and the unknown – they make for great stories and will be looked back on fondly
  - Record! Take photos, shoot videos or vlog, make social media posts, blog and journal, or write in a diary
    - I bookmarked places on Google Maps for places I wanted to go to, places I'd already been, and stars for favorite places
    - I also made a Spotify Playlist to associate my memories in Japan with music. It's still great to listen to when I'm feeling nostalgic and want a reminder of that spring/summer semester abroad
  - If you can only go to one Disneyland Tokyo park, I recommend DisneySea since it has more different attractions
- Try new foods! even if its something you normally wouldn't eat
  - Do your part in taking extra steps to learn Japanese culture
  - Walk or see more of Totsuka/Yokohama/Tokyo by train
  - Explore the nightlife or city night lights, even if it's just a quick midnight run to the nearest conbini for a snack (e.g. Tokyo clubs in Roppongi, concerts at Tokyo Dome, or Skytree at night, 7Eleven for daifuku and icecream, etc.)
  - Hangout with your "buddies" and other Japanese students or try to chat with them over Instagram or LINE
  - Keep mementos to remind you of a certain feeling, place, season, time, or person (e.g. ticket stubs, collecting postcards, omamori charms from shrines, etc.)
  - Fall in love: with the cities in the Greater Tokyo Metropolitan area, with independence, with confidently navigating train stations like a local, and sometimes with another person you meet at MGU or in the program





# Extracurricular Activities

- Meigaku did not offer service learning and volunteer trips to a Tohoku community affected by the Fukushima earthquake during my semester.
- Cultural activities are offered throughout the term. In addition, Meigaku offers a rich variety of student club activities such as martial arts, sports, and clubs for tea ceremony, drama, music, dance, flower arranging, and much more. Clubs are an excellent way to meet local students and practice Japanese." – former website
- Fees are paid prior to arrival as a part of the program fees
- Signup is optional for few events and the MGU International Center staff help plan and facilitate them such as providing tickets for travel by train and bus;
  - Bring backpacks for day trips and snacks
- If we had enough time after class, my friends and I would go to Yokohama or Tokyo to visit Koreatown, museums, and themed-cafes as well as just see different parts of the cities



Credit: Amberlyn Choo



Goat (yagi) Caretaking Club

- Excursions and Day-Trips offered by MGU:
  - Walking tour of Kamakura
  - Rice paddy field work
  - Baseball game (Yokohama DeNA BayStars vs. Nishinomiya Hashin Tigers)
  - Nikko bus tour
  - International Bus Tour: outdoor activities in the countryside like peach picking and picnics with MGU "buddies"
- Optional Activities and Workshops
  - Tea Ceremony
  - Wearing Kimono
  - Flower Arranging
  - Japanese Arts & Crafts
  - Shakuhachi concert





Credit: Amberlyn Choo



# Saying Goodbye and Going Home

- Buy your flight going home if you haven't already or plan your last trip before going back
- Start checking off places/activities on your travel list, and check off more bucket list activities
- Start downsizing = packing away clothes you don't plan to wear anymore
- Souvenir shopping
- Cancel your phone plan or SIM card
- Finishing all assignments and final exams
- Give thank you cards or gifts to your favorite professors
- Note sunrises and sunsets
- Try not to count down the days, but still make them count; have fun and enjoy the time you have left
- Have one more round of sushi at Sushiro or Mr. Donuts, or your favorite Japanese meals
- Revisit your favorite places again
- Say not "sayonara" (goodbye) to Japan, but "ja mata ne"(see you later)

