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Research interests

International political economy



In a seminar-style class, the students read texts on international political economy and discuss a broad range of current political and economic issues.

My recent research focuses on Japan's involvement in negotiating free trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Many of you might have heard at least these names in media reports, without knowing much about their contents or the intricacies of the negotiation process. However, these agreements impact our daily lives in many areas. For instance, if you go shopping at supermarkets today, you are likely to find many products imported from South America or Southeast Asia. This is a direct result of the free trade agreements that Japan has signed with its partners over the years. When I started my research, Japan had not yet been actively participating in these kinds of free trade agreements. At that time, my focus was on trade negotiations between Japan and its largest trading partner and frequent source of trade disputes, namely the United States. Today, the U.S.-Japan relationship is so stable both politically and economically that it may be hard to imagine that there was a time when tensions between the two countries escalated to the point where rumors of an impending war were taken seriously. Don't you think that this situation bears a striking resemblance to something today? Yes, the current U.S.-China relationship. While the political and security dynamics are different, both cases share a schema of the U.S. grappling with a large trade deficit, demanding improvements, and escalat-

From trade disputes to free trade agreements

ing trade disputes. Because of this, when I discuss the current U.S.-China trade conflict with Chinese students, I emphasize the importance of sustained and close diplomatic negotiations, drawing on how Japan and the U.S. resolved their trade disputes through persistent diplomacy.

My research on trade negotiations begins with analyzing previous studies, gathering information primarily from newspapers, magazines, and government publications, and conducting interviews with negotiation officials. When the United States was Japan's main negotiating partner, collecting information was relatively straightforward. However, with the marked expansion of Japan's trade partners in more recent years, including some countries with limited information sources, gathering data has become much more challenging. Moving forward, I believe it will be essential to establish a broader network of contacts and tap into more diverse information sources.

International political economy, the field I specialize in, covers a wide range of topics. While my research focuses mainly on Japan's trade negotiations, as I have just mentioned, the field also encompasses subjects like

finance, development, and the environment. In my courses at HU, I aim to equip students with a broad knowledge base and the tools to navigate and interpret the complexities of today's global society. I strive to help students form their own perspectives and opinions on the constantly evolving international landscape.



In Washington D.C., participating in a research project on Japan-U.S. relations, which allowed her to talk directly with American researchers and policy makers

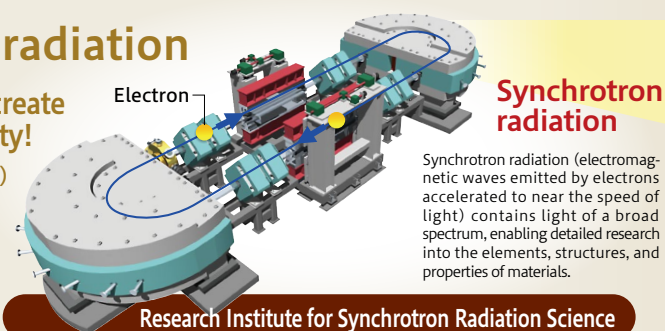
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