THE COURSE: SELECTED TOPICS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES (STSS) (AY2015–)

- Target Students
  - Approximately 120, 3rd year students in Dept. of Economics on Sustainability, Faculty of Economics (TOEIC® 700s–800s)

- Course Objectives
  - To develop academic literacy in English and basic research and professional skills
  - To explore and understand pressing social issues of interest at the national and global levels from social science perspectives

- Target Skills
  - Reading and reviewing literature on global issues
  - Describing and interpreting data in graphs
  - Summarising opposing views on social issues
  - Developing basic primary research skills: designing a survey study, giving presentations, and writing a short research paper

- Course Size & Length
  - 6 classes (+1 class for re-takers); 3 teachers
  - 20-25 students/class
  - 15 90-minute class meetings/semester

FOUR GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS: GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC LITERACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects*</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Sample Student Selected Topics</th>
<th>Language Foci</th>
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</table>
| 1         | Presentation on a global issue using graphics | • Child labour  
Current state of global poverty  
Child obesity | • Definition of key terms  
Describing graphs  
Move analysis of research paper and presentation  
Phrases & grammar for each section of research paper and presentation (e.g., Lit review, research purpose, abstract)  
Handling Q&A session  
Hedging  
Citing sources  
Making a questionnaire (e.g., introductory message, questions) |
| 2         | Survey research & presentation on a controversial issue | • Basic income system  
Death penalty  
Gun control | |
| 3         | Poster presentation of a research proposal | • Animal suffering  
Aliteracy in Japan  
Climate change  
Girls’ education in developing countries  
Students’ awareness of food safety  
Legalization of medical marijuana | |
| 4         | Survey research & research paper writing (800-1000 words, APA) | |

*Offered and taught by faculty members in Dept. of Economics on Sustainability

FROM EGAP TO ESAP IN THREE-YEAR CURRICULUM

- Year 1 EGAP
  - Academic Reading Strategies I
  - Speaking in Academic Contexts I
  - Academic Listening Strategies I
  - Academic Writing I: Paragraph

- Year 2 EGAP
  - Academic Reading Strategies II
  - Academic Listening Strategies II
  - Academic Writing II: Essay

- Year 3 EGAP & ESAP
  - Selected Topics in Social Sciences (STSS)
    - Introductory Lectures on economic development, assistance, growth and policies
    - ESAP courses (e.g., Development economics, sustainable development)

STUDENTS’ VIEWS ON LEARNING IN STSS: RESULTS OF COURSE EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My academic presentation skills have improved.</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My understanding of purposes and basic research methods of social science research has grown.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My basic skills of writing a research paper have improved.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My collaboration skills have improved.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group learning helped improve my individual English and research skills.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have learned in STSS can be applied to discipline-specific study and other courses.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content was appropriate for an English course for 3rd year students.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to try citing English sources and writing an English abstract in my graduation thesis.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great sense of accomplishment about reading research articles, doing our own research, and writing a research paper, all in English for the first time in my life!

Lots of group collaboration  
Many chances to use English  
Learning how to use new technology (e.g., Google Drive)  
Very useful development of technical skills

Presentations & research paper writing  
Studying social issues in English. Now I often think about how to explain current affairs in English as I read a newspaper.

Learning specialist vocabulary and expressions through research on a topic of our own choice.  
Doing online surveys

FURTHER COURSE IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON STUDENT AND TEACHER FEEDBACK

- Collaboration with Economics professors on (1) topic and material selection; (2) English use in term papers and graduation thesis
- More explicit practice of academic phrases, vocabulary and sentence structures to meet individual students’ needs
- Teacher support on research topic selection

2016 JACET Summer Seminar, Kyoto University, 18-23 August