

Kawabata Seminar

Speciality: Economic Geography, Urban Policy, and GIS Application/Education

"State-of-the-art technology, GIS"

Please tell us what you specialize in.

I specialize in GIS (Geographic Information System) applications, education, economic geography, and urban policy. Right now, I am particularly interested in how GIS and spatial data can be used in economic and policy analysis, as well as economic geography research that contributes to overcoming declining birthrates and aging populations and women in the workforce.

"Respecting independence, I will support what you want to do!"

Please tell us about your educational philosophy.

My educational philosophy is to develop and respect the independence of students. While it is important to listen to others' opinions, I want to support their ability to find what they want to do, make their own decisions, and carry them out. I also want to teach them the benefits of group work.

"GIS decided my career"

Please tell us about your student days.

As a student in the Faculty of Economics, I joined the golf team and Professor Naoyuki Yoshino's seminar, which were valuable experiences. After I graduated, I entered the Graduate School of Media and Governance at the Fujisawa campus. I initially went there to study architecture and urban planning, but there happened to be a large GIS lab, and I joined the project team and started using GIS. I enjoyed using GIS and got hooked on it (Laugh). I was blessed to have GIS experts and students close by. Later, I entered the Doctoral program at MIT and joined the GIS group in the Department of Urban Planning. As I had GIS skills, I was hired as an RA (Research Assistant) from the first year and received scholarship (tuition waiver and salary). GIS helped me a lot after that, and it is not too much to say that GIS decided my career (Laugh).

"GIS is a tool, what I look for is motivation and diversity"

What are you looking for in a sophomore who is interested in joining Kawabata Seminar?

First, I would like to invite people who are interested in real-life spatial socioeconomic issues in urban and regional areas and would like to research them. GIS is a tool, and it is not necessary to use it. However, GIS can be used to perform analyses that are difficult to perform using existing methods. I hope that you can conduct research that will lead to the discovery of new analytical methods and knowledge on social issues through the use of GIS. I would like to respect all seminar students, whether they devote themselves to the seminar or something else. There is no problem if they are involved in activities other than the seminar, but I would be happy to have students who are willing to devote themselves to the seminar as well. I hope that there will be a variety of students, and that 1+1 will become 3 as a whole.

"To a path that you like, that suits you, and that you can contribute to"

Final comments

I think that when you are a student, you should do what you like and can do as much as you can. Even if you like it, it will be very difficult in the future if you are not suited or not capable. I hope that you can find a path that you like, that suits you, and that you can contribute to while trying out various things. If you have the chance, I recommend that you study abroad. Studying abroad is a valuable experience. I highly encourage you to do so.