



## About



My name is Ken Covey, a senior at the Shidler College of Business at University of Hawaii at Manoa, majoring in Finance and International Business. On this page, I will be blogging about my experiences studying abroad at Sophia University during the Spring 2015 semester.

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## Thank you Freeman Foundation

December 5, 2014

I would like to thank the Freeman Foundation deeply for providing opportunities for students to study in Asia. None of this would have been possible without the financial support by the Freemans. I would also like to thank Professor Misawa and the Honjo International Foundation who have granted me a scholarship as well. I promise to make the most of my time in Japan and I hope this blog can capture my journey!

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## Before Tokyo

January 20, 2015

It is difficult to put into words the level of excitement I feel for my semester abroad at Sophia University. Despite this excitement, most universities in Japan do not start their spring semesters until April and do not end until late July, contrary to UH Manoa which starts in January and ends in May. Therefore, studying in Japan is like having three months of summer vacation early, from January to March instead of May to August. Because of this gap, one needs to plan accordingly to have a productive break.

For my case, I decided to use this time to travel the East Coast. I am currently sitting in Boston public library as I write this post and am amazed by the city. I decided to visit Boston because I had a few friends here and because I wanted to explore somewhere alien to me. So far, everyday has been a meaningful learning experience as everything from the transportation system, demographics and temperature (it's so cold haha) are completely different from what I am accustomed to in Hawaii.

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>

In the midst of all this travelling, I am also taking two online courses at UH, to fill graduation requirements. Since WI credits are not transferrable while studying abroad, I have decided to enroll in two online writing intensive classes. They are “Survey of Policy and Analysis (PPC 330)” and “Survey of Social Inequality and Stratification (SOC 311)”. Meeting with my academic advisor well before registration, helped tremendously in figuring out which courses I needed to take to stay on course for graduation. For students who are considering studying abroad in Japan sometime in the future, make sure you plan ahead. To make the most of your time in Japan, it is important to consider the different semester schedule, as well as the transferability of credits.

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## Europe!

February 18, 2015covken1 Comment

Since I have quite some time remaining until my upcoming semester in Japan, I decided it wouldn't hurt to travel a few countries in Europe. So, I took the plunge: I started my journey yesterday, visiting my sister in France, who is currently teaching English at a school in Strasbourg, France.

Traveling Europe is probably something on everyone's bucket list—it certainly was for me. Initially, I had a difficult time deciding if I should go to Europe. But in the end, I knew that if I didn't go now, I was wasting an opportunity to travel and explore, while I had the luxury of time. I figured, “why not?” There is nothing more stimulating and exciting than throwing yourself into a foreign country! For the next three weeks, I am planning to travel to Heidelberg, Paris, London and Dublin. While here, I hope to gain some insight into European business practices and culture, and compare it with Japan's later on this year.



View from the top of Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg



Central Area of Strasbourg

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>

# Orientation and registration

April 3, 2015

I finally arrived in Tokyo a few days ago! Yesterday was our first day at Sophia University's campus, where orientation, Japanese placement test and the welcoming ceremony were held. The campus is beautiful, especially during cherry blossom (sakura) season. Check out some of the photos below.

We still have about 10 more days until the first day of class, so it gives us time to settle into life in Tokyo. I plan on using this time to work on my assignments for my online classes (at UH) and meet with some friends in Tokyo. Many other exchange students are planning to travel around Japan, since our only major responsibility at Sophia until then is class registration.

Below is our registration schedule:

- April 3 – Online Course Registration, First Lottery Registration
- April 6 – Result of Japanese Placement Test (available online)
- April 7 – Individual Academic Advising (optional)
- April 8 – Second Lottery Registration (online)
- April 10 – Third Lottery Registration (online)
- April 11 – Final Lottery Registration (online)
- April 13 – First Day of Classes

## Registration at Sophia

Most of Sophia University's classes are much larger than UH Manoa's. Therefore the chances of registering for desired courses are higher, due to the higher number of available seats. According to current Sophia students, the registration process is generally smooth and reliable. However, Sophia offers a few lottery courses each semester, which are high demand courses with limited seats. From my understanding, securing a spot in these courses are based entirely on luck. Also, every exchange student is required to take a Japanese language course while abroad. The results of the Japanese placement test (on 4/2) determine the student's placement in the course. Next week I'll blog about which classes I end up getting this semester.



My room at DK House Nerima, where I'll be staying at this semester.

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>



At Sophia University with Sophia students after the welcome reception

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## Classes

April 19, 2015

I completed the first week of school and my schedule is finalized. This semester I will be taking the following courses:

- Public Economics (4 credits)
- Management in Japan (4 credits)
- Japanese Reading & Writing (2 credits)
- Human Resource Management in Japan (4 credits)

I was able to get two of these courses pre-approved to transfer back to Shidler as business courses. They were:

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>

- Public Economics as a Finance elective
- Management in Japan as International Management (MGT 343)

The other courses I will be taking are likely to transfer back as electives. At Sophia, every exchange student is required to take at least 12 credits. This semester I will be taking 14 credits. Below is a screenshot of my schedule.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a course registration page for Sophia University. The page title is "2015年 自己決定カンパニー" and the URL is "https://scs.cl.sophia.ac.jp/campusweb/campusportal.do?page=main&tabid=rs". The page indicates that registration is completed for the 2015 SPRING term, with a deadline of 2015/04/17 21:00. The user is currently registered for 14 credits, with the last update on 2015/04/15 16:40.

The main content is a registration schedule table for Intensive Courses, Theses, and others. The table is organized by semester (SPRING and AUTUMN) and by day of the week (Monday through Saturday). The rows represent different periods (1st to 6th) and the columns represent the days of the week. The table shows the following course registrations:

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1st Period	None	None	None	None	None	None
2nd Period	AIBE3160 PUBLIC ECONOMICS* KONISHI YOSHIFUMI 4	None	AIBE4550 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN JAPAN* DEBROUX PHILIPPE STEPHAN 4	AIBE3160 PUBLIC ECONOMICS* KONISHI YOSHIFUMI 4	None	None
3rd Period	AIBE4450 MANAGEMENT IN JAPAN* HAGHIRIAN PARISSA 4	None	AIBE4550 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN JAPAN* DEBROUX PHILIPPE STEPHAN 4	AIBE4450 MANAGEMENT IN JAPAN* HAGHIRIAN PARISSA 4	None	None
4th Period	AJPN340A READING & WRITING (BASICS)* YANA AKIKO 2	None	None	AJPN340A READING & WRITING (BASICS)* YANA AKIKO 2	None	None
5th Period	None	None	None	None	None	None
6th Period	None	None	None	None	None	None

## My School Schedule

The campus is surprisingly diverse and so far I met many students from the states and many other countries like Germany and China. This diversity is also reflected in my classes. Although some Japanese students do take English taught courses, most students in my classes are foreign exchange students. This is a double edged sword as surrounding oneself with other foreigners may feel comfortable, but can also prevent full immersion into the Japanese culture. My hope is to off-set this by joining a circle (or student organization) consisting mostly of Japanese students sometime soon.



Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>



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## Managing my time

June 1, 2015

So far, my time abroad has been exciting, but challenging and rewarding at the same time. Not only am I living away from home, I am living independently, in a completely different environment. Back home, I had a solid support system of friends and family, reminding me of my goals and responsibilities; but here, I am basically on my own. Therefore, living abroad has forced me to become more self-driven and conscious of how I manage my time.



### New Friends

Back home, I frequently spent hours surfing the web (procrastinating), before actually starting on tasks; but, because there is so much I want to accomplish here, in such a limited period of time, the importance of time-management is magnified. If I don't complete tasks in a timely manner, I am foregoing the opportunity to do all the other things I came here to do. I remind myself of this everyday and my hope is to sustain this mindset, since I only have about 2 months left!

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>



My Train Station



With classmates during golden week

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## **DK House Nerima**

June 14, 2015

This semester I am living in what is called an international share house, or guest house, called DK House Nerima. It is similar to a dorm, in that the kitchen, shower and laundry are shared; but private rooms are provided for each resident. The rent (including electricity & other costs) is relatively cheap compared to rent for a studio. People from all parts of the world live here -exchange students, Japanese salary men, and expats. At any time of the day, people hang out in the common area to do homework, eat, drink and socialize. It's nice to be able to come home to such a lively atmosphere, but at the same time, have my own space. Although I am able to meet many students through my classes, living in such a diverse community poses a opportunity to form deeper connections. As a result, I have made friends from the Middle East, South America and Japan. Sometimes field trips and cultural activities are planned by residents for residents. For example, a few weeks ago, we went on a trip to a traditional Japanese festival, wearing yukata – a casual summer kimono. The only downside to living at DK House Nerima is the location. Every morning, it takes me about 40 to 45 minutes to get to Yotsuya Station, where my university is located. But according to my Japanese friends, this isn't too bad – some students take the shinkansen (rapid-train) every morning, and spend more than 2 hours just to get to school.

Taken from: <https://hijapanuhm.wordpress.com/>



Common area at DK House



With people from DK House