Dear GLA Students,

The past few weeks have been a challenge for all of us. The Ritsumeikan University made the difficult decision to start the AY2020 academic year as planned while moving all classes online effective April 5th until May 2nd in the interest of your health and safety. The University is closely monitoring the situation, and further announcements on how classes will be taught after May 7th will be announced after April 20th.

Please keep checking your Ritsumeikan University email, and all the latest updates about the semester can be located on manaba+R: http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/ct/. Please also check the University website regularly: http://en.ritsumei.ac.jp/.

Meanwhile, the GLA Office and Faculty are working hard to sustain academic continuity for both incoming and returning students. We understand that given the fluidity of the circumstance it is difficult to think ahead and plan for the semester, and that most of us are far from home, concerned about friends and families.

In the absence of in-class interaction, sustaining communication has become ever more crucial. Below is the 4-step guide to ensure that you have a little less stress in preparing for the new semester.

Should you have any questions, we are always here to respond at glapost@ritsumei.ac.jp (Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday except for national holidays).
The Four Steps Towards a Little Less Disruptive Beginning of AY2020

**Step ONE**

Check out the Spring 2020 syllabi online, think about what courses to take and how to plan your study. Classes begin on Monday, April 6.

**If you started your study at GLA in . . .**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2019</strong></td>
<td>Check the “Spring 2020 Academic Planning Information for 2nd Year Students” on Manaba+R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>You have three (3) compulsory courses administratively registered for you, and you can choose 1 or 2 more courses on top of the three compulsory courses (max. 18 credit) for Spring 2020 and Summer Intensive Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2020</strong></td>
<td>You will have three (3) compulsory courses administratively registered for you, and you will choose 1 or 2 more courses (max. 18 credit) for Spring 2020 and Summer Intensive Session—details will be provided to you during the orientation on April 1st, so stay tuned!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step TWO**

Get your hands on the textbooks and flip through it! The required textbooks are indicated in the online syllabi. At OIC, textbooks will be available for purchase at the OIC Co-Op between **Wednesday April 1 and Friday April 24 (the modified store hours are 10:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday and 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday)**. The OIC Library already stocks the hard copy for some of the courses, so you can also look through the book. Alternatively, most of the texts can be purchased online.

It is always a good idea to get a hold of the compulsory course textbooks first. Looking through the hard copy at the bookstore should give you a good idea of whether you want to take the optional course or not. Also, this is the time to share intel on how your senpai (senior) thought of the course and nudge them for their wisdom. Otherwise you would be purchasing textbooks based on a few pages of preview on Amazon.com or Google Scholar. The more informed you are about the course, the better prepared you will be.

There will be lots of readings for the semester, so it is always better to have your own copy of textbooks lined up from the beginning of the semester so you can get a head start.
Step THREE

Want access to course content, materials, and syllabus ASAP?
Three magic words. **“EARLY-USE REQUEST”**

If you want to gain access to each instructor's course materials prior to official registration, **go for the “Early-Use Request” on Manaba+R on SUNDAY, APRIL 5 (6:30 a.m. and onwards, yeah, we are early birds).**

What's the benefit of the “Early-Use Request”??

1. This has to do with the quirky registration system at RU (um, don’t ask)—official registration begins at 6:30 a.m. on Monday April 6 and it takes one whole day for the registration data to crawl from Campus Web to Manaba+R, which means that if you want to know about the course taught on Monday April 6, you get it, you cannot see the critical information (like Zoom URL) until the next day, the 7th.

2. And yes, that is not timely.

3. So the way around this quirk is the “Early-Use Request”. You can get the Zoom lecture URL for the course you want to take before the first day of class and **not miss a beat.**

4. Having said that, **doing the “Early-Use Request” does NOT automatically register you for the course. You are responsible to register for the courses officially between April 6 (6:30 a.m.) and April 8 (11:00 a.m.) by yourself for the non-compulsory courses** (the GLA Office will register you for the compulsory ones, so no worries about those!).

And here is the link to the Manaba+R manual (check out page 21 on the General manual).

Step FOUR

Set the alarm, check out your internet connection, show up virtually to the classes on April 6th

Once again, the two ways for you to get info about the online Zoom URL meetings are (1.) **the ultimate combination of “Early-Use Registration” and official registration** or (2.) official registration plus one day lag in getting a hold of Zoom URL and other info for your Spring courses.

All of us here strongly recommend that you to choose option (1.) so that you are starting off the semester
with all the information and resources you need.

If you have concerns about online learning environment, or if you want to rent a laptop or access computer room, the staffs at the IT department are here to help (and please be aware that the services here are subject to change depending on the trajectory of COVID-19):

http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/rainbow/servicedesk/

Taking courses online is not the same as taking courses in class, but all of us want the students, staffs, faculties, and the Ibaraki community to be safe and well. The current University decision to hold classes online between April 5th and May 2nd is premised on the hope that courses would resume as in-class by then. This once again will be decided on stringent monitoring of the situation.

As each country is taking steps to restrict movements across borders, and policies are changing by the day, we understand that this poses numerous dilemmas for you to plan on where to be, how to study, and how to retain a sense of academic continuity. Should you have any concerns, please reach out to us at GLA glapost@ritsumei.ac.jp (Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday except for national holidays).

We are here for you, and we look forward to virtually seeing you in April 6th, if not sooner!

Sincerely,

The GLA Team