

## International Agribusiness Studies (Spring/Summer 2023)

**Instructor: Shuji Hisano**

**Schedule: 1330-1630 on alternate Mondays**

### Overview and purpose of the course:

Our consistent and overarching theme of this course is **how to investigate and understand the power of business as a political actor**, especially the role of multinational corporations vis-à-vis the role of states and civil society actors. In the years of 2019 and 2020, this course provided a comprehensive analysis of social, economic, political, cultural and environmental issues surrounding specific agricultural products along the agri-food value chains (a global flow of the food from upstream to downstream across borders). In the year of 2021, we turned our attention to one of the ongoing structural processes with profound influences on agri-food systems and rural economies around the world: financialisation. Through reading a relevant textbook, we critically examined the impacts of financialisation in the food industry and in farming and forestry, as well as the impacts on rural actors and communities. Then in the year of 2022, we read together articles on the political economy of healthy and sustainable food systems published in International Journal of Health Policy and Management as a special issue on Political Economy of Food Systems. They include several systemic review articles using various methods of literature search, review, and analysis, while some others use narrative review methods to analyse policy making and governance processes. Through reading these articles, we learned how to conduct qualitative literature reviews and narrative analyses. Tackling these topics in the past years, what we kept in mind in our review and discussion was **power relations within and behind the process of agri-food businesses development and transformation; how powerful business actors are able to exert a direct and indirect influence on the process of international and national policy making (agenda setting) and governance of agri-food systems**.

This semester, however, we will turn our eyes to a rather broader framework, or research agenda, to explore the pressing issues that confront food systems and the emerging responses to them: from the contribution of food production to climate breakdown to the emergence of regionalised and regenerative food systems; from the contribution of alternative proteins in dietary change to the potential of digital agriculture in sustainability transition; from the persistence of food poverty to the development of urban food systems; etc.

### Course objectives:

By the end of this course, having read the literature and actively participated in discussion, students should be able to acquire a deep understanding and critical insight into the state of global food systems, the process and mechanism of food systems governance, and the role of powerful political and business actors: how and in what way they are able to exert their influence on food systems governance; and if and how it is possible to challenge such a hegemonic regime and bring food systems governance more democratic and genuinely participatory.

### Course schedule and contents:

Textbook: Colin L. Sage, ed. (2022) A Research Agenda for Food Systems. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Week 1 – April 10) Guidance

Week 2-3 – April 17) 1. Introduction: A Research Agenda for Food Systems by Colin L. Sage

Week 4-5 – May 1) 2. The rise of big food and agriculture: corporate influence in the food system by Jennifer Clapp / 3. The food system, planetary boundaries and eating for 1.5°C: the case for mutualism and commensality within a safe

and just operating space for humankind by Colin L. Sage

Week 6-7 – May 22) 4. Agricultural labour in the global food system by Alicia Reigada and Carlos de Castro / 5. Food systems and food poverty by Martin Caraher

Week 8-9 – June 5) 6. Reconfiguring animals in food systems: an agenda for research by Lewis Holloway / 7. The fourth agricultural revolution: technological developments in primary food production by David Christian Rose, Mondira Bhattacharya, Auvikki de Boon, Ram Kiran Dhulipala, Catherine Price and Juliette Schillings

Week 10-11 – June 19) 8. Of fake meat and an anxious Anthropocene: towards a cultural political economy of alternative proteins and their implications for future food systems by Alexandra E. Sexton and Michael K. Goodman / 9. Urban food systems: the case for municipal action by Jess Halliday

Week 12-13 – July 3) 10. Circular food systems: a blueprint for regenerative innovations in a regional UK context by Steffen Böhm, Rebecca Sandover, Stefano Pascucci, Laura Colombo, Sophie Jackson and Matt Lobley / 11. Design at the end of the food system: hybrid foodscapes in the realm of consumption by Kata Fodor

Week 14-15 – July 17 \*national holiday) Wrap-up discussion

### **Basic rules in class**

- One or two students are assigned to prepare a summary presentation of book chapter(s) or journal papers, including questions, reflections and some points for discussion
- Summary part of the presentation should not be detailed too much
- Handout (a summary, questions and discussion points) needs to be circulated via email 2-3 days beforehand
- A student who will be assigned for the next class is appointed to be a facilitator, who introduces presentation(s), manage time, collects and organises questions and points for discussion, and facilitate discussion
- All the participants are required to actively join the discussion
- Anybody can present anything additional but closely relevant to the chapter(s) with or without a handout

### **Course requirements:**

No prerequisite knowledge or skill required other than English language ability sufficient to interact actively in class.

### **Evaluation methods and policy:**

Grading will be carried out on a basis of active class participation (70%) and assignment presentation/report (30%).

### **Study outside of class (preparation and review):**

Students are required to read the assigned articles and book chapters for each class as well as other relevant reading materials so that they will be able to actively participate in discussions.

## International Political Economy of Agriculture (Autumn/Winter 2023)

**Instructor: Shuji Hisano**

**Schedule: 1330-1630 on alternate Mondays**

### Overview and purpose of the course:

This course provides a comprehensive and critical view on the development and current state-of-affairs of agriculture and food governance at the global, national, and local levels, by referring to various theoretical frameworks and concepts of international political economy and agri-food sociology and geography, especially with a focus on the unequal power relations between various actors. We will discuss issues and prospects of agriculture and food governance from the perspectives of “sustainable development” and “food sovereignty”.

In the course in 2021, our focus was on the concept of “food as a commons” that has re-emerged as a transformative narrative and framing to challenge the mainstream paradigm of food as a commodity, to broaden our imagination to explore and practice alternative paradigm of food and food systems.

In the course in 2022, we read the Handbook of Critical Agrarian Studies together to learn origins, concepts and methodologies of critical agrarian studies, a field of research that unites scholars from various disciplines concerned with understanding the process of agrarian change: the processes, implications, and limitations of pervasive capitalist penetration into the agricultural sector and rural livelihoods and landscapes. In each 2-period class, we picked up three to four chapters of the Handbook that consists of 72 chapters in total.

In this semester, we will turn our eyes to urban food governance as a space and means of transforming food systems globally as well as locally/regionally. Although it is in rural areas where our food is mainly produced, scholarly and policy attention is gradually drawn to urban and city regions as an important arena for making and implementing food policy. Behind this shifting attention, there is a growing recognition of the multifunctional and multidimensional nature of food and its potential to tackle diverse policy issues faced by contemporary urban society, including health and social welfare, environment and urban planning, local economy and employment, poverty and social inclusion, education and community building, and so on. We will learn histories, concepts, and practices of urban food governance through case studies of plans, policies, and programmes implemented in different contexts.

### Course objectives:

Through this course, students will acquire critical and interdisciplinary approaches to social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental issues surrounding agriculture and food, and gain insight into fundamental social science issues such as “structure and agency”, “commodification and alienation”, and “power of discourse”.

### Course schedule and contents:

Every year, textbooks used in this course are different, but we use either introductory books with high international recognition for textbooks so that even beginners of agri-food studies or international political economy and sociology can learn effectively, or handbook-style books with theoretically and conceptually elaborated introduction chapter and well-structured chapters that cover most of important issues and problems and include rich case studies. In the past years, we read the following books together:

- [2019] Jason Konefal & Maki Hatanaka, eds., *Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture*, Oxford UP, 2019.
- [2020] Jessica Duncan, Michael Carolan & Johannes S.C. Wiskerke, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Sustainable and Regenerative Food Systems*, Routledge, 2020.

- [2021] Jose Louis Vivero-Pol, Tomaso Ferrando, Olivier De Schutter & Ugo Mattei, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Food as a Commons*, Routledge, 2018.
- [2022] H. Akram-Lodhi, Kristina Dietz, Bettina Engels and Ben M. McKay, eds., *Handbook of Critical Agrarian Studies*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021.

In this semester, we will read a book or two on the above-mentioned topic. Apart from that, we will use the following handbook as a reference:

- Ana Moragues-Faus, Jill K. Clark, Jane Battersby, Anna Davies (2023) *Routledge Handbook of Urban Food Governance*, Routledge. \*E-book will be available on the Kyoto University library system (KULINE).

**Week 1 (2 Oct):** Guidance and Introduction | 1. Towards Urban Food Governance for More Sustainable and Just Futures

**Week 2-3 (16 Oct):** 5. Social Practice Theories and Urban Food Governance: From Problem Framing to Designing Collaborative Change Initiatives / 6. Feminist Ethics of care in Urban Food Governance /

**Week 4-5 (30 Oct):** 7. Urban Food Democracy / 8. Governing and Commoning Activities around Urban Food Commons

**Week 6-7 (13 Nov):** 9. Justice, Race and Urban Food Governance / 10. Conceptualisations of Urban Food Governance

**Week 8-9 (27 Nov):** 11. Exploring Urban Foodscapes via Feminist Political Ecology / 12. Innovation Theory and Urban Food Governance: Transition Thinking, Social Innovation and Transformative Change

**Week 10-11 (11 Dec):** 13. Relationships between Food Policy Councils and Government in the United States / 19. The Formal and Informal Governance of Urban Food Waste in Cities: Case Studies in the United States and Indonesia

**Week 12-13 (25 Dec):** 22. The Role of the Private Sector in Urban Food Governance / 25. The City Region Food System: Broadening Space for Urban Governance

**Week 14-15 (15 Jan):** 26. International Agendas and Urban Food Systems Governance: Informing, Integrating and Operationalizing the SDGs / 27. The Role of Transnational City Food Networks in Supporting Urban Food Transformation

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