

## International Agribusiness Studies (2019 Spring/Summer)

Main Theme: Commodity Systems Analysis

### Outline and Purpose of the Course

The overarching theme of this course is how to investigate and understand the power of business as a political actor and how to address and improve the human rights accountability of transnational agri-food corporations. In the previous semesters, we focused on (1) the general framework of global governance of food from a human-rights perspective, (2) existing and probable economic, legal and political tools (including CSR initiatives, social and environmental standards and certification schemes, and NGO-business interactions) to hold TNCs accountable for their negative impacts on society and the environment, and (3) the market concentration and political power of corporate actors in the food system. In this semester, we are going to learn the conceptual framework of the commodity chain and critically examine how the social relationships (interactions between actors) that structure food commodity chains and the modes of governance that regulate these relationships/interactions can be analysed.

This course is designed for any and all students with an interest in the globally pressing issues of agriculture and food governance, as well as transnational corporations in developing countries, from a wide range of social scientific perspectives: including international political economy, international relations, international law, agricultural economics, rural sociology, development studies, civil society studies, and so on. The primary language of instruction and discussions is English.

### Course Goals

Students are expected to learn different theoretical perspectives and approaches of commodity chain analysis; how they can be used to understand complexities, contingencies and contradictions of the global agri-food system in general and within and across the system of actual agri-food commodities in specific. Students are also expected to obtain a critical insight into whatever contested issues over the whole process of production, distribution, marketing and consumption of agri-food commodities.

### Course Schedule and Contents

This course consists of 7 classes (on alternate Mondays), each of which is held from 13:30 till about 16:30.

In the first class, a sketch of the development of critical agri-food studies will be given as a background of commodity chain analyses.

- Buttel, F. H. (1996) 'Theoretical issues in global agri-food restructuring'. In: D. Burch, R. E. Rickson and G. Lawrence eds. *Globalization and Agri-Food Restructuring*, Avebury.
- Buttel, F. H. (2001) 'Some reflections on late twentieth century agrarian political economy', *Sociologia Ruralis* 41 (2): 165-181.

In the second class, we will learn one of the most influential approaches of commodity chain analyses, a Commodity Systems Analysis framework developed by William H. Friedland, and examine how this approach has challenged us to look into commodities and commodity chains from a social relations perspective, while also being challenged by other approaches.

- Friedland, W. H. (1984) 'Commodity systems analysis: an approach to the sociology of agriculture', *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 1: 221-235.
- Friedland, W. H. (2001) 'Reprise on Commodity Systems Methodology', *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 9 (1): 82-103.
- Friedland, W. H. (2004) 'Agrifood globalization and commodity systems', *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 12: 5-16.
- Friedland, W. H. (2005) 'Commodity systems: Forward to comparative analysis'. In N. Fold and B. Pritchard (eds), *Cross-continental Food Chains*, Routledge: 25-38.

In the third class, we will relativise and enrich our understanding of commodity chain analyses (including Friedland's commodity systems analysis) by broadening disciplinary perspectives and methodologies, especially taking into consideration the literature in geographical and cultural studies.

- Collins, J. L. (2005) 'New Directions in Commodity Chain Analysis of Global Development Processes', *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 11 (New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development): 3-17.
- Dixon, J. (1999) 'A cultural economy model for studying food systems', *Agriculture and Human Values* 16: 151-160.
- Goodman, D. and E. M. DuPuis (2002) 'Knowing Food and Growing Food: Beyond the Production-Consumption Debate in the Sociology of Agriculture', *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(1): 5-22.
- Hughes, A. and S. Reimer (2004) 'Introduction'. In A. Hughes and S. Reimer (eds), *Geographies of Commodity Chains*, Routledge: 1-16.
- Challies, E. R. T. (2008) 'Commodity Chains, Rural Development and the Global Agri-food System', *Geography Compass* 2(2): 375-394.

In the fourth to seventh classes, we will take some specific commodities as examples to dig deep into complexities and contradictions of globally expanding agri-food commodity chains. There are tentatively two options:

- A) Pritchard, B. and D. Burch (2003) *Agri-Food Globalization in Perspective: International Restructuring in the Processing Tomato Industry*, Ashgate.
- B) Hughes and S. Reimer eds. (2004) *Geographies of Commodity Chains*, Routledge.
- C) Weir, K. A. (2014) *From Jicama to Jackfruit: The Global Political Economy of Food*, Paradigm Publishers.

In each class one or two students are assigned to prepare an analytical summary (see below) of required reading materials. Any participating students can present anything additional but closely relevant to the reading materials in order to deepen and/or critically review the arguments.

#### Class requirement

This course is designed as a graduate seminar, in which not only fresh master students but also second-year master students as well as doctoral students who have regularly participated in the course in the previous years are expected to join. Therefore, the following books among others, which have been used in the previous years, are recommended to read in advance so that new participants can catch up with other "old" members.

-- Nora McKeon (2015) *Food Security Governance: Empowering communities, regulating corporations*. Routledge.

-- Philip H. Howard (2016) *Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat?* Bloomsbury.

There will be an intensive course given by Philip. H. Howard in the second and third weeks, tentatively in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> periods on 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of July (coordinated by the Natural Resource Economics Division of the Graduate School of Agriculture). The participants of our course are highly encouraged to join this intensive course as well.

#### Method, Point of view, and Attainment levels of Evaluation

Class participation and discussion (70%) / Assignment report (30%)

#### Textbook / Reference books, etc.

Introduced during class

#### Regarding studies out 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.

#### Others (office hour, etc.)

Please note that this course is designed for research masters and PhD students of the Graduate School of Economics, including those of East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies Course. Therefore, the style and structure of the classes could be different from those offered at the Business School.

Basically the classes are offered on alternate Mondays, from 13:30 to 16:30.

**International Political Economy of Agriculture**  
(Autumn/Winter 2019)

<b>[Outline and Purpose of the Course]</b>
The overarching theme of this course is how to understand evolving food governance at the global, national and local levels by referring to various IPE and sociological frameworks and concepts; how to investigate (dialectical) power relations behind and within it, especially by explaining how actors link up in corporate global food chains as well as in local food networks; and how to address food security, justice and sustainability issues by being informed of the concept, discourse and movement of "food sovereignty" and "sustainable development". In this semester, the course will be for students to review a book on the relationship between food, society and the environment through a lens of the critical sociology of food and agriculture.
<b>[Course Goals]</b>
This course aims to help students familiar with basic theoretical frameworks and concepts for understanding the food and agriculture system, the relationship between social structure, agency and issues of power, and a transformative perspective towards just and sustainable food and agriculture.
<b>[Course Schedule and Contents]</b>
<p><b><u>Jason Konefal and Maki Hatanaka eds. <i>Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture</i>, Oxford UP, 2019</u></b></p> <p>This book is designed as a textbook for undergraduate students in the sociology of food and agriculture, or postgraduate students without a background in sociology or agri-food studies. Therefore, participating students with some background in these subjects are highly recommended to check and read key reading materials listed in the references of each chapter before and/or after classes.</p> <p>Week 1. Introduction  Week 2-4. Consuming Food  --- examining the ways that eating is socially mediated  Week 5-7. Producing Food  --- examining agriculture, the processing, and the retailing of food  Week 8-10. Food, Equity and Environment  --- investigating the social and environmental issues associated with food and agriculture  Week 11-13. Food, Justice and Sustainability  --- examining efforts to make the food and agriculture system more just and sustainable  Week 14-15. Discussion and Conclusion</p>
<b>[Class requirement]</b>
Students who are willing to take this course are recommended to take another course in this semester: either or both of "Political Economy of Governance" given by Dr. Haja Rajaonarison (with Prof Shuji Hisano), and "Comparative Development Studies" given by Prof Raymond Jussaume Jr. and Prof Maria Fonte (with Prof Shuji Hisano). The former is focused more on food governance and power relations at the global level, while the latter is more about local-level governance and alternative food initiatives.
<b>[Method, Point of view, and Attainment levels of Evaluation]</b>
Grading will be carried out on the basis of active class participation and chapter summary presentation.
<b>[Textbook]</b>
Jason Konefal and Maki Hatanaka eds. <i>Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture</i> , Oxford UP, 2019
<b>[Reference books, etc.]</b>
Recommended reading materials will be made available through the course mailing list and/or a cloud system.

<b>[Regarding studies out of class (preparation and review)]</b>
Students are required to read the assigned book chapters for each class as well as other relevant reading materials so that they will be able to actively participate in discussions.
<b>(Others (office hour, etc.) )</b>
Office hours are by appointment. Please e-mail at <a href="mailto:hisano@econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp">hisano@econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp</a> for an appointment.