UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | Global Education Oregon

SYLLABUS

TITLE Food systems agri-environmental economics, policy and sustainability
Instructor Name: Riccardo Simoncini, PhD
Language of Instruction: English
UO Credits: 5
Contact Hours*: 45
Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 150
Level: (ex. 100, 200, 300, 400)

SITE CITY Siena, SITE COUNTRY Italy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Industrial food systems provide plentiful and relatively cheap food, but this comes with environmental, social, and economic costs. The causes of the unsustainability of industrial food systems are to be found in government and market failures not accounting for the full value of environmental, economic and social impacts of conventional agriculture and food supply chains, as well as in not adequately considering the benefits resulting from alternative food systems. By analyzing both conventional and alternative theories and decision-making systems underlying the governance of the primary sector, this course will investigate the EU Common Agriculture Policy to understand what innovative governance approaches could be capable of promoting more sustainable food systems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Food systems sustainability depends on complex interactions between multi-scalar drivers and pressures exerting impacts, in time and space, on the state of various ecological, economic, and sociocultural dimensions. Adding to this complexity, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, the so called triple environmental crisis, are both major impacts of and threat to food system. To address this complexity, this course will investigate food systems through a necessarily interdisciplinary lens. Students will explore how agriculture policies shape the sustainability of food systems, and consider various economic policies that differentially affect producers, distributors, and consumers of food. Throughout the course, students will discuss strategies for developing more sustainable food systems.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Achieve familiarity with the theoretical foundations of the economics of sustainable agriculture and rural development
- Examine the complexity of food production systems and of the main drivers and pressures causing unsustainability of conventional agriculture
- Study the impact of the EU's Common Agriculture Policy on agriculture and rural areas
- Analise the main governance instruments of agri-environmental policies
- Develop critical capacity on how policy instruments can enhance the sustainability of food systems and the delivery of economic, social and environmental goods and services

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will be interdisciplinary, integrating different disciplines such as economics, economic policy, ecology, and the history of environmental economic thought. A background in economics is not required. This course combines lectures and PowerPoint presentations, in-class discussions, readings (listed below), and field experiences. Lectures, readings, and in-class discussions will provide the knowledge base for field experiences such as visiting farms or excursions in rural areas. During field experiences students will use and test the critical capacity learned in class to observe the agricultural systems and interact with farmers, learning about the challenges and opportunities farmers face as they develop sustainable practices.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Assignments	Points (%)
Class participation	**10**
Food systems scenario development (creative project, group work)	**15**
Field Exercise 1: Valuing ecosystem services	**20**
Field Exercise 2: Designing agri-environmental measures (group work)	**25**
Final Exam (brief essay and quizzes)	**30**
TOTAL	**100**

Class Participation (10%) includes attendance, a student's level of engagement in classes, reading required for each lecture and interactive discussions. Active participation is critical. Students' careful and critical reading for teaching and learning sessions will be evaluated. Good participation in discussion involves students trying to build on lecture topics, proactive participation in discussions, synthesize comments from others and showing appreciation for others' contributions. It also involves inviting others to say more about what they are thinking. So, there are multiple ways quieter learners can participate.

Food systems scenario development (15%)
In this assignment students will work in groups to develop plausible future scenarios of food systems based on material covered in lectures, readings, and discussions. Each group will develop a narrative based on the Drivers, Pressures, Impacts, State, Responses (DPISR) approach to explain future food system scenarios such as business as usual, from fields to labs, incremental steps to sustainable agriculture, transformative change to live in harmony with nature, resulting from implementation of different policy hypothesis. Scenarios developed will be presented in class with a 15-minute presentation. Students' work will be assessed against the framing, narrative and plausibility of the scenario designed, the identification of policy factors and processes leading to the overall outcomes, and the assessment of environmental, economic, and social sustainability of resulting food systems.

Field Exercise 1 (20%): Identifying and valuing ecosystem services at farm and agroecosystem levels
This FEX will allow students to build on what they have learned about socio-economic valuations of agroecosystem goods and services. A guided field visit will offer the opportunity to practice the

identification of what are the goods and services actually or potentially to be delivered at the agroecosystem and farm levels and what could be the most suitable monetary and non-monetary valuation techniques to highlight their socio-economic values in land use decision making processes. Student's work will be assessed based on the identification of agroecosystem goods and services delivered, development of sound hypothesis on agroecosystem and farm potentiality to deliver other goods and services, identification of data requirements for valuation and feasibility of their collection, appropriateness of the valuation techniques for selected ecosystem services and presentation of results in their written report which is due one week after the field exercise.

Field Exercise 2 (25%): Identification of data and information requirements for developing agri-environmental measures to deliver non-commodity environmental outputs by a farm
This FEX will allow students to experience in the field the development of agri-environmental measures. A guided visit to a farm will give students the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned through class lectures, discussions, readings, and field trips. Students will work in small groups. The work of students will be assessed based on their understanding of EU CAP agri-environmental measures, observational skills and critical capacity on evaluating the farm environmental and socioeconomic context, relevant data gathering by interviewing the farmer, and in proposing the appropriate agri-environmental measures for the delivering of non-commodity environmental goods and services by the farm.

Final Exam (30%)
The final exam will be based on material covered in lectures, readings, and field experiences. It will contain three essay questions, and students can choose to answer one of them. Ten multiple answers quizzes will be also part of the final exam. Students' work will be assessed based on their understanding of the questions, appropriateness of the answers, knowledge of relevant information, critical analytical capacities and logic in discussion, clear and up to the point narrative of their essay. There will be an exam review session before the exam.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class No	*Class Title and outline*	*Students' engagement*	*Time (hrs)*	*Required Readings in bold character*
1	**Introduction to the course** Objectives of the course, contents and structure, methods, participation and expectations	Open discussion	1	(In-text citations)
2	**The rise and fall of the share-cropping system in Tuscany**: grounding in local natural endowment, history, culture, farming and food to develop policy towards sustainability	Lecture (and field excursion?)	2	**Fisher et al. (2012).** Simoncini (2011).
3	**Critical historical review of how different theories, schools of thought and disciplines relate to the concept of sustainable agriculture. Part 1: The conventional views.** Classical economists, Neo-classical economics theory, the	Lecture and discussion	2	**Hubacek and van den Bergh (2006).** Hodgson Geoffrey (1997). Venkatachalam L. (2007).

Class No	*Class Title and outline*	*Students' engagement*	*Time (hrs)*	*Required Readings in bold character*
	interventionist school and the economic theory of development.			
4	**Critical historical review of how different theories, schools of thought and disciplines relate to the concept of sustainable agriculture. Part 2: The alternative views.** The American Conservation Movement, Aldo Leopold, the Club of Rome, Boulding's Spaceship Earth, the materials balance approach, Lovelock's Gaia Hypothesis, Neo-Malthusians, thermodynamics and the steady-state economics, Deep Ecologists, Degrowth theory	Lecture and discussion	2	**Rockström et al. (2009).** **Asara et al. (2015).** Boulding (1966). Hodgson (1997). Leopold (1948). Steffen et al. (2015).
5	**Definition of the sustainability concept:** From Rio '92 Conference on Environment and Development to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals	Lecture and discussion	2	**Purvis et al. (2019).** Willet, W. et al. (2019).
6	**The ecosystem goods and services concept:** the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, the IPBES framework	Lecture and discussion	2	**Kumar et al. (2013).** Diaz et al. (2015) Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005). TEEB (2015). Primmer et al. (2015)
7	**Food system scenarios development:** see exercise description in the Assessment section above	Group work Exercise	4	**Patterson et al. (2017).** Rega et al. (2019).
8	**The economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services:** a critical review of the Total Economic Value concept and monetary valuation techniques	Lecture and discussion	2	**Jacobs, S. et al. (2016)**
9	**Key Concepts and approaches in sustainability analysis:** Weak and strong sustainability, the precautionary principle, the Maximum Sustainable Yield and Carrying Capacity concepts, the Ecological Footprints, Ecological thresholds and tipping points.	Lecture and discussion	2	**Meyfroidt et al. (2022)**
10	**The multifunctional character of agriculture:** agri-environmental goods and services, joint production	Lecture and discussion	2	**Renting et al. (2009).** Morgan e al. (2010). OECD (2001).

Class No	*Class Title and outline*	*Students' engagement*	*Time (hrs)*	*Required Readings in bold character*
	of private and public goods			Pinto-Correia et al. (2019).
11	**Alternative Food Markets and local agrobiodiversity conservation**: the case of the cow breed "Calvana" in Tuscany	Field lecture	1	**Simoncini (2015).**
12	**Identifying and valuing ecosystem services at farm and agroecosystem levels:** see FEX 1 description in the assessment section above	Field exercise 1	3	**Soy-Massoni et al. (2018).**
13	**The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Part I:** from the Treaty of Rome (1957) to the crisis of the 1970s and 1980s.	Lecture and discussion	2	**Jepsen et al. (2015).**
14	**The influence of conventional and alternative theories on shaping the EU CAP, Part II**: the CAP reforms of the 1990s, 2003, 2007 and 2013.	Lecture and discussion	2	**Simoncini et al. (2019).** Pe'er et al. (2014). European Commission (2020).
15	**The last CAP 2023 Reform:** Does this reform improve agri-environmental policy in EU?	Lecture and discussion	2	**Cuadros-Casanova et al. (2023).** Guyomard et al. (2023).
16	**Introduction to policy instruments:** Regulatory and Informational instruments	Lecture and discussion	2	**Blackstock, K.L., et al. (2021).** Chapron et al. (2019).
17	**Introduction to policy instruments:** Economic instruments and EU's agri-environmental measures	Lecture and discussion	2	**Hahn (2015).** **Burton et al (2013).** Batary et al. (2015). Simoncini (2009).
18	**Identification of data and information requirements and development of agri-environmental measures to deliver non-commodity outputs by a farm:** see FEX 2 description in the assessment section above	Field Exercise 2	4	**Simoncini et al. (2004)**
19	**The EU Natura 2000 network and the High Nature Value Farming concept:** policy instruments for biodiversity	Lecture and discussion	2	**Hodge et al. (2015).** European Commission (2011).

Class No	*Class Title and outline*	*Students' engagement*	*Time (hrs)*	*Required Readings in bold character*
	conservation			IEEP (2002).
20	**Course review and Final Exam**	Exam	2	
21	**Course wrap up discussion**	D	2	
	Total contact hours		**45**	

COURSE READINGS

Asara et al., (2015), Socially Sustainable Degrowth as a Social-Ecological Transformation: repoliticising sustainability, Sustain Sci (2015) 10:375–384, Springer, DOI 10.1007/s11625-015-0321-9

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Burton, R., J., F., and Schwarz, G., (2013) Result-oriented agri-environmental schemes in Europe and their potential for promoting behavioural change, Land Use Policy 30 (2013) 628– 641

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Hahn, T., McDermott, C., Ituarte-Lima, C., Schultz, M., Green, T., & Tuvendal, M. (December 01, 2015). Purposes and degrees of commodification: Economic instruments for biodiversity and ecosystem services need not rely on markets or monetary valuation. Ecosystem Services, 16, 74-82. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2015.10.012

Hodge et al., (2015), The alignment of agricultural and nature conservation policies in the European Union, Conservation Biology, Volume 29, No. 4, 996–1005, DOI: 10.1111/cobi.12531

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Jepsen, M. R. et al. (2015). Transitions in European land-management regimes between 1800 and 2010. Land Use Policy.

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Kumar P., Brondizio E., Gatzweiler F., Gowdy J., de Groot D., Pascual U., Reyers B. and Sukhdev P., (2013), The economics of ecosystem services: from local analysis to national policies, Current

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Purvis Ben, Miao Yong, Robinson Darren, (2019), Three pillars of sustainability: in search of conceptual origins, Sustainability Science (2019) 14:681–695, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5

Renting, H., Rossing, W.A.H., Groot, J.C.J., Van der Ploeg, J.D., Laurent, C., Perraud, D., Stobbelaar, D.J., Van Ittersum, M.K. (2009), Exploring multifunctional agriculture. A review of conceptual approaches and prospects for an integrative transitional framework. Journal of Environmental Management, Elsevier (2009)

Rockström Johan et al., (2009), A safe operating space for humanity, Nature, Vol 461|24 September 2009, 472-475.

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