



AGST Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2020



Contents:

- International Collaborative Courses at the GSE
“Organizational Behavior”
- New Joint Master’s Degree Programme (subject to ministerial approval)
- Report from GSL
- Report from GSA
- AGST Spotlight Interview

Prof. Xiaohua Yu, University of Göttingen, Germany



Published by The Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies (AGST)
Edited by AGST Head Office (Graduate School of Economics)
Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economics East Bldg., Kyoto University



An intensive course called “Organizational Behavior” was successfully carried out from May 18th to July 6th, 2020. The course was given by Dr. Debjani Ghosh who is from the Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi.

The course was an introduction to human behavior in organizations and the application of human behaviors’ theory of improving the organizations’ effectiveness. The course was divided into two parts: theory part and case part. The theory part was explained using seven aspects: perception, emotion, personality, motivation, attitude, organizational culture, and leadership. The case part contained five different cases from Harvard Business School, namely A Popular HR Chief Burned to Death, Bobs Meltdown, Kramer Pharmaceuticals, Just a Little Something from All of Us, and Taj hotel. The analysis of cases helped students form a deeper understanding of the theory.



Unlike the previous years, this year’s course was done entirely online. Every week, Dr. Ghosh uploaded a Power-Point presentation which was transferred into the video version on the Panda system. The lecture of each week was complemented by self-study and students were required to finish an assignment once a week accordingly. Students could check the content whenever they were available that week. Some participants said that the online learning allowed them to be more flexible in scheduling their time. Also, they could better ensure that they were in a good state when taking the class. However, the online lecture also led to an inconvenience in that students were not able to have timely interactions with Dr. Ghosh and some of their questions about the lecture could not be explained clearly. To solve this problem, Dr. Ghosh arranged a session through Zoom to answer students’ questions.

The online final exam was completed through the “assignment” function in the Panda system. Students were required to finish the exam content in two hours. Through the course, every student has formed a more comprehensive understanding of organizational behavior and their self-study ability has improved as well.

Anchen Zuo
Master’s student, Graduate School of Economics

New Joint Master’s Degree Programme (subject to ministerial approval)

Over the course of the last year faculty members and staff at the Graduate School of Economics have been working towards the establishment of a new international degree programme, a Master’s in “Global Markets, Local Creativities” (京都大学国際連携グローバル経済地域創造専攻) which is to be conferred jointly with the University of Glasgow and the University of Barcelona. Though its establishment is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, we hope to be able to accept applications for the joint Master’s degree for entry in Autumn 2021.



The joint Master’s degree is part of a much larger programme in “[Global Markets, Local Creativities](#)” (GLOCAL) in which currently seven universities participate. Students on the programme choose between several “study tracks” which involve study at three different universities over a 2-year period. Besides the lectures and seminars provided at the universities on their specific study track, the seven universities that make up the GLOCAL consortium—University of Glasgow, University of Barcelona, Georg-August University of Göttingen, Erasmus University Rotterdam, and now Kyoto University, Uppsala University and the University of Los Andes—collaborate on co-taught courses, summer schools and other initiatives. The programme also includes several opportunities for students to engage in internships, field work and placements in various industries. In addition, the programme has been recognised for its educational excellence by the European Commission, meaning that a number of students are able to benefit from Erasmus+ scholarships which cover tuition and subsistence costs.

The GLOCAL programme is offered entirely in English and is comprised of several modules that familiarize students with the history, theory, institutions and cultures of global capitalism. It enables students to critically understand the globalised economy, and provides particular focus on creative/cultural industries, urban ecosystems that foster entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, and business cultures. It examines how local places (industrial clusters, cities, rural areas and wider regions) and local actors (entrepreneurs, firms and policymakers) generate and seek to maintain local competitiveness under increasingly global market conditions. Particular emphasis is placed on the historical and social context in which the economic development, public policy and business strategies take place at the local, national and global levels. As such the academic programme offered on the two-year Master’s degree equips students with the essential critical and analytical skills to comprehend global and local intersections, as well as several opportunities to obtain practical experience with companies and various organisations.

The study track that Kyoto University is seeking to establish entails a full semester of study in Glasgow and then Barcelona, before spending the final two semesters in Kyoto where students will also complete their Master’s thesis. This study track will emphasize the acquisition of knowledge about the Asia-Pacific region, global industrial competitiveness and critical consumption studies.

The GLOCAL programme has attracted highly talented students who have gone on to doctoral degrees or to pursue careers in urban or public policy organisations, multinational corporations, international consultancies, cultural and creative industries, or other non-profit organisations. The interdisciplinary perspectives on the process and experience of globalisation that the programme provides equip graduates with highly sought-after knowledge and skills which employers value.

If ministerial approval is obtained we plan to begin recruitment for entry in September 2021. Please check the Graduate School of Economics webpage (<https://www.econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>) for updates.

Steven Edward Ivings
Senior Lecturer, Graduate School of Economics

Report from Graduate School of Letters

The outbreak of the COVID-19 greatly limited the way the university could be. First semester classes were online, and new students admitted to Kyoto University celebrated without ever seeing the campus and without making friends. Practicum and fieldwork related classes had to change their plans. One of the good news was that the graduation ceremony went off without a hitch and in the Heidelberg-Kyoto University joint degree program, providing single education program in collaboration of both universities, four graduate students enrolled in the master's program at Heidelberg University successfully completed their studies on September 23.

Due to the current travel restriction, the biggest concern for the new semester among faculty members in both sides is students' mobility from one university to the other. While learning opportunity in two universities is the highlight of the university-wide program, it has exposed the university to a weakness for pandemics. Even without an end in sight, currently, it is possible to move from Heidelberg to Japan, but without university's financial and logistical support for travel between the arriving airport to a hotel or a university for 14 day isolation period. Travel bound for Germany from Japan seems to be more difficult due to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' epidemic risk information, that of Germany is a level of 3, which makes travel to Germany itself an advice of suspension. Kyoto University that use this standard as a reference point do not allow any travel to Germany. A student from Kyoto University side have no choice but to wait in Japan with great anxiety. It is not only the matter of online class availability but logistical problem also arouse such as payment of rent without living at the destination. Measures are required to minimize the damage to students since joint degree program is not a niche of the international mobility but a highlight of Japanese higher education.



JDTS student at the graduation ceremony

Wako Asato

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Letters

Report from Graduate School of Agriculture

The global outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has seriously affected almost all AGST programs scheduled for this academic year. The two international collaborative courses planned for the first semester—one by Dr. Bálint Balázs (Environmental Social Science Research Group in Budapest, Hungary), the other by Prof. Subal C. Kumbhakar (State University of New York at Binghamton) and Dr. Mohammad Abdul Malek (University of Tsukuba)—were both canceled. In the second semester, we will be holding two international collaborative courses—one by Dr. Witsanu Attavanich (Kasetsart University) titled “Linking Climate Change, Food Security and Policies in Agriculture” and the other by Prof. Claudia Neu (University of Göttingen) titled “Rural Sociology: Rural Areas in a Globalizing World”. Both will likely be held online. In addition, the 3rd joint graduate workshop with the University of Göttingen, which had been planned to take place in Göttingen in early December, was decided to be canceled.

One exceptional event, which is carrying on as originally planned, is the second-semester undergraduate course “Foreign Food and Environmental Economics III.” Thanks to the easing of public health conditions, this course started, as scheduled, on October 1 and will be held face-to-face every Thursday for 15 weeks with social distancing and other COVID-19 preventive measures in place. This course has been taught by international instructors since 2017 as part of our initiatives to improve the academic English skills of our undergraduate students. The instructors this year are Dr. Oliver Taherzadeh, Dr. Jemyung Lee and Dr. Hadi Farabi-Asl, all from the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Kyoto. Each instructor will teach one thematic module consisting of four to five classes: Part I: An introduction to food system actors, issues and responses (Oliver Taherzadeh); Part II: Local food, rural society, daily activity, and environment (Jemyung Lee); Part III: Energy for food and agriculture (Hadi Farabi-Asl).



Dr. Oliver Taherzadeh delivering the first lecture of the undergraduate course 'Foreign Food and Environmental Economics III' (October 1, 2020)

Makoto Kuroda

Assistant Teaching Staff, Graduate School of Agriculture

AGST Top Global Course

It is a pleasure to announce that twelve students completed the AGST Top Global Course on September 23, 2020. They come from the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Letters and the Graduate School of Agriculture. This brings the total number of students that have completed the programme to 34 since it was launched in March 2017. More information about this programme can be found [here](#).



AGST Spotlight Interview

Prof. Xiaohua Yu

Chair Professor of Agricultural Economics in
Developing and Transition Countries
University of Göttingen, Germany

Prof. Xiaohua Yu was appointed an AGST Project Professor in 2016, and since then he has been playing a leading role in building and developing a collaborative partnership between the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development at the University of Göttingen and the Division of Natural Resource Economics (GSA) at Kyoto University. Until now, Prof. Yu has guest-lectured at Kyoto University three times (January 2017, December 2018 and July 2019).

Q1: From 2003 to 2005, you studied at Kyoto University for your Master's degree, and then, about 15 years later, you were invited to teach at Kyoto University. What impressions did you have of Kyoto University students of today? Did you find any differences between Kyoto University students of today and those of 15 years ago?

Prof. Yu: As an alumnus, I am always maintaining the connections with my former teachers in Kyoto University, caring the development of the university and the program of agricultural economics there. Particularly, I am deeply impressed or rather proud by the six Nobel prizes awarded to the alumni or the faculty members after my graduation.

After 15 years, I found that the buildings still remain as they were 15 years ago from appearance, though the inside have been largely renovated and modernized. The working environment inside becomes more comfortable. More importantly, I am still smelling the academic freedom and creativity which are immensely prevailing in the university campus and have never been changed.

Q2: Over the past five years, the two universities have been trying to strengthen their collaborative relationship through various opportunities of academic and educational exchange, including two joint workshops, the first held at Göttingen in 2017 and the second at Kyoto in 2020. How would you evaluate these efforts so far made?

Prof. Yu: The two universities and related faculty members have been closely working together, held two workshops, and exchanged research ideas and a couple of students. The students and researchers from different backgrounds came together in the workshops, to know each other in terms of research and culture. It is important for the future career of these students, beyond their research agenda, in an era of globalization. Agriculture is a small universe. Both our two programs contain different research agendas in different so-

cial science fields. So far, we have built up good collaborations in rural sociology, agricultural development, and agribusiness. Both sides have advanced joint research in a few projects. Our Japanese partners know better about German agricultural system with relatively large farms, while our German colleagues better understand Japanese agricultural system with relatively small farms. Ageing is a common challenge faced by both systems. Many research questions have been identified so far and are waiting for our answers through joint research.



Q3: What are your perspectives on the future of the collaboration between the two universities? In particular, what do you think about the impact of COVID-19 on it?

Prof. Yu: We have achieved much progress in different dimensions of collaborations in the past few years. The first step is to know each other, and we have laid out a great cornerstone for our future collaboration. As I was an alumnus of Kyoto University, I would be always happy and feel an honor to serve as a bridge between the two universities. In the coming second term of collaboration, we will upgrade to more concrete joint research programs, e.g. more joint publications and joint funding applications.

The impact of COVID-19 is huge in university education. University of Göttingen mainly conducts teaching by online courses in the last summer semester and the coming winter semester as well. All travelling and conferences have been largely restricted. We do not know how long this situation will last. This obviously has affected and will affect our collaborations. However, this new virus has significant impact on agricultural production and food supply chain, both locally and globally. Hence, it also provides a good research chance for our collaborations from a comparative perspective.

Q3: What are your messages to Kyoto University students?

Prof. Yu: Freedom and creativity permeate Kyoto University with a glorious history, so do University of Göttingen. If you are a student in Kyoto University, it implies you are already very excellent. Life is short, enjoy it. As a Senpai, I can share 3 tips for you: Common sense, strong mentality, and hard working.

Finally, welcome to University of Göttingen for your (exchange) study.

Makoto Kuroda
Assistant Teaching Staff,
Graduate School of Agriculture