



# AGST Newsletter



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Dr. Kjell David Ericson, Program-Specific Assistant Professor (C-PiER), Kyoto University, Japan



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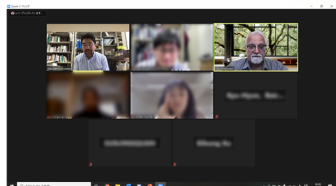




**P**rof. Dan Wadhvani (University of Southern California) and Prof. Takafumi Kurosawa (Kyoto University) jointly ran a course called “Historical Approaches to Business and Economics” in May 2021. Due to the ongoing pandemic situation, the classes were delivered on Zoom.

The course was divided into four classes. The first class was about the meaning and advantage of historical studies. The second and third classes were about microhistory and social science history, respectively.

The latter part of the third class detailed the worldwide historiographical development of business history. In the final class, students presented their research ideas using insights learned throughout the course.



I found it most interesting to understand the relationship between microhistory and social science history and the different scopes in historical studies. While social science history often looks at the bigger picture of economic and social developments, microhistory gains insights from smaller case studies, such as short narratives or biographies. The scholarly focus of microhistory is to provide new insights into broader historical narratives. Thus, scholars in microhistory and social science history can work together to advance the discipline of business and economic history.

The course provided students with rich perspectives. Although it was offered online, the instructors created an environment where students could freely discuss a wide range of issues. I would love to join the course again when I have the opportunity.

Shoya Fugetsu

Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Economics

## International Human Resource Management

by Dr. Li Jie

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

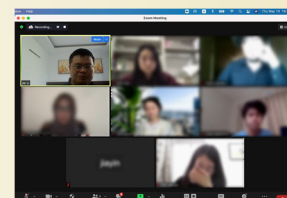
**B**etween mid-May and early June, Dr. Li Jie, associate professor from Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University, taught the intensive International Human Resource Management (IHRM) course offered through the Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University, and sponsored by the Asian Platform for Global Sustainability and Transcultural Studies. Dr. Li Jie was invited by Prof. Sekiguchi Tomoki, of the Graduate School of Economics, under the International Collaborative Courses for the 2021 Spring/Summer program. This course aimed to present key concepts concerning human resource management in an international context.

This year, we had five graduate students coming from various cultural and academic backgrounds, including three master students and two doctoral students. Because we had participating students from quite different research fields, Dr. Li Jie used simple language to explain IHRM concepts and theories. Using a seminar format, Dr. Li Jie covered a wide range of topics, including national and organizational culture, cross-cultural IHRM, international talent acquisition and management, diversity and multiculturalism, language in MNCs, expatriate assignments, performance management and rewards, learning and training, and global IHRM practices integration. In every seminar, Dr. Li Jie addressed each topic from both theoretical and practical approaches so that students could have a more comprehensive understanding of the selected topics. In addition, research articles, and case studies were provided for each topic, and students were encouraged to raise their questions and share their critics during the discussion.

Dr. Li Jie obtained his Ph.D. from Osaka University in 2015. So throughout the course, he also provided students with interesting observations and insights about job hunting and career development in Japan, which was very helpful to participating students who inspire to get jobs in Japan after graduation. Apart from lectures, as a young professor, Dr. Li Jie shared many stories, such as how he created ideas to conduct academic research or how his papers got into publications. Students who are in the early stage of their Ph.D. journey or those who plan for doctoral studies particularly found Dr. Li Jie's behind-the-scenes stories valuable.

In the final session, students were invited to give presentations on their research proposals. Students gained constructive feedback from Dr. Li Jie and their peers. It is noteworthy that each student indicated that how the IHRM course contents and Dr. Li Jie's sharing of his experience helped to narrow down their research topic or refine their research proposals. Even students who are not studying IHRM successfully incorporated certain perspectives obtained from this course to enrich their research contents further or strengthen the research methodology.

Overall, students learned how external and internal environments influence human resource management and its impact on organizational performance through this intensive IHRM course over seven weeks. The small-size class has provided each student with plenty of opportunities to interact with Dr. Li Jie and thus receive useful feedback on their proposed research.

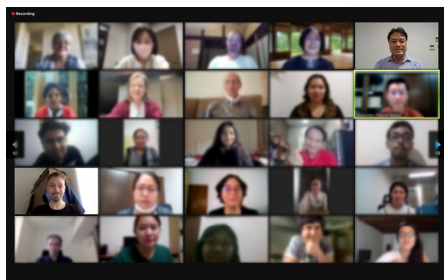


Jiayin Qin

Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Economics

**O**n 25-26 September 2021, the Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit (KUASU) held the 14th Next-Generation Global Workshop (NGGW), themed “New Normal Lifestyles during/post-COVID-19: from Crisis to Opportunity”. The workshop was held online due to COVID-19 consecutively for two years, followed by the previous one hosted by Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

The welcome speech was given by Prof. Ochiai Emiko, the director of KUASU and Dr. Kono Yasuyuki, Vice President of Kyoto University. The Vice-President encouraged that this is a valuable initiative under COVID-19 and that it would be an important opportunity for international exchange for the participating early scholars as they have limited face-to-face academic occasions.



Out of a total of 55 applications, 38 were selected from 17 universities in 11 countries and regions including India, Indonesia, Italy, China, UK, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Hungary. The workshop started from the afternoon considering participants' time difference so that those from the EU can participate as long as possible. Ten sessions were set up, which included “Governance and Public Policy”, “Inequality and Poverty”, “Gender”, “Education”, “Urban and Rural Development”, “Post-COVID 19 World”, “Social Media and Communication”, “Family and Intimacy”.

Many participants left positive feedback such as: “The workshop served as a good venue to re-motivate scholars to engaging in research despite the difficulties posed by the pandemic”, “I learned about the current political economy and areas of concern from listening to presentations from other scholars from around the world. Emerging controversies and debates in the Asian region were extremely interesting – e.g. experiences of mothers in China, and the impact

of COVID on communities in India”.

Submitted full papers will be registered in KURENAI, which is an open access platform to Kyoto University's research and educational achievements, as proceedings of the workshop.

In order to improve the quality of the workshop, participants pointed out a number of online challenges. These include: “I suggest to include regular break-out sessions for the participants to mingle and talk to one another. Networking and collaboration are some of the latent goals participants would want to achieve and I am hoping the online mode can facilitate such agenda”, “I would like to suggest considering a hybrid format in the future, also in light of accessibility. Beyond Zoom, spatial chat allow for a more “natural” interaction and very helpful with discussions and continued networking”.

Since its inauguration in 2008, NGGW has annually provided generations of young scholars with a series of skill development opportunities, from preparing presentations, participating in international conferences, to submitting papers to English-language journals. The organizers hope that these experiences help participants learn to harness their full potential and build successful academic careers.

In the future, the organizers plan to encourage participation from the German-Japanese University Network (HeKKSaGOn), established in 2010, which includes Heidelberg University, University of Göttingen, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Tohoku University, Osaka University and Kyoto University. This is to deepen academic and educational activities of Joint Degree program between Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University and Heidelberg University in Germany.

## The 14th Next-Generation Global Workshop (2021/9/25-26)

### The 14th Next-Generation Global Workshop

**New Normal Lifestyles during/post-COVID-19:  
from Crisis to Opportunity**

25-26 September, 2021, Kyoto



Wako Asato

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Letters

## AGST Top Global Course

It is a pleasure to announce that six students completed the AGST Top Global Course on September 24, 2021. They come from the Graduate School of Economics, Graduate School of Letters and the Graduate School of Agriculture. This brings the total number of students that have completed the programme to 46 since it was launched in March 2017. More information about this programme can be found [here](#).





From June 3rd to June 11th, 2021, the intensive lecture course 'Sustainable Food Systems: a view from Eastern Europe' was taught by Dr. Bálint Balázs, who is the Managing Director and a Senior Research Fellow of the Environmental Social Science Research Group (ESSRG) in Hungary. Due to Covid-19, the course was held online through Zoom, which might bring challenges to the teacher and students, but the result turned out that all of us enjoyed this course.

In this intensive course, Dr. Balázs introduced the concepts and research perspectives of sustainable food systems and varied concepts, research agendas, analytical tools for understanding the emergence and dynamics of sustainable local food. Some evidence of sustainable food systems from Eastern Europe was explored to challenge some normative assumptions and explanatory models underlying food system scholarship. In this course, Dr. Balázs provided conceptual frames and videos to explain new concepts and their relations, and organized discussions and assigned homework to students to record the food items that we consume every day and reveal how food advertisement influence us. What's more, at the beginning of each day's class, we had two breakout questions to discuss, which really warmed up the atmosphere and helped students get involved in the class quickly.

In the first and second classes, Dr. Balázs explained the components of food systems and taught us agri-food systems and equity. We learned three options, 'exchange', 'transfer' and 'production', which could be combined for obtaining food. In the third and fourth classes, we compared the difference of traditional, modern and mixed food systems and we focused on the seeds and plant varieties and learned about the agrobiodiversity governance. Some videos about Hungarian cattle were shown to teach the importance of local food production and consumption. In the fifth and sixth classes, through the case of seed exchange and seed sovereignty, we learned agri-food systems and transformative social innovation. Through the case of legumes in Europe, we discussed the transition towards sustainable food. In the final two classes, we learned about the food and participatory research, including co-creation, cooperative research and Citizen Science. And students also did presentations about how Maslow's hierarchical theory of needs was presented in the food advertisements and journals, and then gave our feedback to Dr. Balázs.

Through this intensive course, students learned to be able to explain the differences of theoretical and conceptual approaches to food systems and capture the key issues in the sociology of food. And students also could find and present our own cases to illustrate food system transitions. So, students really benefit from this intensive course.

Huang Wenbo

Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture



## Food Economics and Nutrition Policy in Developing and Transition Countries

by Prof. Xiaohua Yu  
University of Göttingen

On July 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2021, Prof. Xiaohua Yu, the Chair of Agricultural Economics in Developing and Transition Countries at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, the University of Göttingen (Germany), provided an impressive and interesting lecture course entitled "Food Economics and Nutrition Policy in Developing and Transition Countries". The objective of this course was to understand the research frontier, including theories and empirical methods in the literature on food economics and nutrition policies mainly concerned with developing countries. Furthermore, this course aimed to help students to pro-

pose nutrition-relevant food policies that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The class was especially interactive, allowing us space to discuss and learn about other students' opinions. Therefore, it was not only educational but also engaging.

Firstly, Professor Yu introduced the main problems related to agriculture such as hunger, low farmer income, poverty and the challenge of "high quality development". Related to this, he explained the SDGs in detail, providing space to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various SDGs, such as the feasibility of Goal 1 (No Poverty), including how information technologies and Artificial Intelligence might play a role, and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), debating whether we should utilize GM crops to achieve the Goal.

Secondly, Prof. Yu taught us the relationships between nutrition and the SDGs. He showed each country's nutrition status such as stunting, wasting, overweight, obesity, diabetes, breastfeeding for children and anemia for women. After that, Prof. Yu elaborated on the background of hunger, malnutrition and poverty in developing countries.

Thirdly, Prof. Yu taught several methods that can be utilized to evaluate nutrition demands. For example, he taught us how to calculate calorie intake from food consumption data. In order to deepen our understanding on this topic, we were assigned to make a final presentation on the final day, in which we introduced previous research related to nutrition.

This intensive and interactive course was educational for us students. Through this course, we not only cultivated critical thinking skills about key issues but also improved their understanding of the research frontier and main methodologies utilized in the literature on food, nutrition and poverty.

Hiroto Suzuki

Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture

## AGST Spotlight Interview

### Dr. Kjell David Ericson

Program-Specific Assistant Professor (C-PiER),  
Kyoto University, Japan

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**Q1: Please let us know how you got involved with Kyoto University. What was your impression(s) about Kyoto and/or Kyoto University?**

**Dr. Ericson:** I came to Kyoto University in the summer of 2017 as a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science postdoctoral researcher and joined C-PiER from the 2018 academic year. Although I'd previously made shorter visits to see the

sights in Kyoto, what continues to impress me as a resident is the wide variety of neighborhoods and the ease of getting around the city on foot or by bicycle. Thinking back on it, I realize that I hadn't ever visited Kyoto University before I began working here. Since then, I've made it a small personal goal to visit as many of the university's more than 40 libraries as possible. There are still quite a few more to go.

**Q2: You have been teaching with us in the Joint Degree Master of Arts Program in Transcultural Studies (JDTS) since 2018. What do you like about the program? Is there any suggestion(s) for its improvement?**

**Dr. Ericson:** The JDTS Program offers a number of productive challenges and opportunities to students. In one sense, there are crucial challenges in the realm of everyday life: getting used to living, studying, and even doing original research in multiple environments. In another sense, precisely because the program is structured around physical and conceptual movements, students have the opportunity (and, in a certain sense, the obligation) to ask questions that one might not ask if one were based at a single institution. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we wait to see what the shape of those pedagogical movements will look like moving forward.

**Q3: Please let us know about your future professional projects and academic perspective/goals.**

**Dr. Ericson:** My future academic goals for teaching and researching at Kyoto University increasingly involve collaborations with scholars working outside Japan. With the support of joint project funding, I've recently developed a course in transnational Japanese history together with a colleague at the University of Zurich. The course will incorporate theoretical and methodological readings along with "hands-on" Zoom workshops in which Kyoto- and Zurich-based students will work together using multilingual primary sources. Since the start of the pandemic, I've also begun a transcultural re-

search project in environmental history with a professor in the United States. Our project, which we just previewed at the 2021 East Asian Environmental History Conference (hosted virtually here at Kyoto University), examines the twentieth-century transplantation of edible oysters between Northeastern Japan and the North American Pacific Northwest.

Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano  
Professor, Graduate School of Letters

### JOINT DEGREE MASTER IN TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES

Transcultural Studies constitute a new research field in the humanities and social sciences that seeks to address the challenges posed by global connectivity to existing disciplines and frames of knowledge. In Japan, Kyoto University has instituted the first and until now only major in the country for this area of study, which is also the first international joint degree in the humanities. The Joint Degree Master of Arts in Transcultural Studies (JDTS) is an English language, research-oriented master program that combines interdisciplinary education with a transregional focus predominantly on East, South, and South-East Asia as well as Europe.

Building on the strengths of both institutions, the Graduate School of Letters (GSL) of Kyoto University and the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS) of Heidelberg University, this jointly conducted graduate program offers students access to an interdisciplinary field in the humanities and social sciences to study and research transcultural dynamics between and within Asia and Europe in a global context.

After a basic introduction into the theories and concepts of a transcultural approach, students will choose one of three study foci "Knowledge, Belief and Religion" (KBR), "Society, Economy and Governance" (SEG), or "Visual, Media and Material Culture" (VMC). Students enrolled in this program will spend one year at their home institution, the university where they enrolled in first, and one year at the partner university, while being supervised by academic staff from both institutions. The program completes with the successful submission of a master thesis in English in accordance with international academic standards.

