



AGST Newsletter



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Dr. Mai Kobayashi , Assistant Professor and Dr. Wanxue Lu, Assistant Professor,
Center for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Education and Research, (Graduate School of Economics,) Kyoto University



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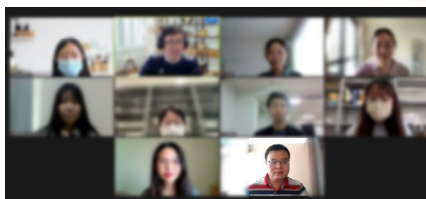


From May 12th to June 30th, 2022, Dr. Jie Li, an associate professor from Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, offered an intensive course entitled "International Human Resources Management(IHRM)" in the Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University, which is sponsored by the Asian Platform for Global Sustainability and Transcultural Studies. The purpose of this course was to help students develop an understanding of key concepts concerning human resource management in an international context, including how external and internal environments are affecting human resource management and its impact on organizational performance. He delivered eight lectures during those periods and taught students in an easy-to-understand way. During class, students learned a lot from the discussion and questions. Professor Jie Li took this class in international collaboration with Professor Sekiguchi of the Graduate School of Economics from Kyoto University.

International Human Resource Management

By Dr. Li Jie

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University



The class covers various international topics ranging from (1)national and organizational culture, (2)Cross-cultural HRM, (3)International talent acquisition and management, (4)Diversity and multiculturalism, (5) Language in MNCs & Expatriate, (6)Performance management and rewards, (7) Working with labor unions & Integrating global HRM practices to (8)new research trends in IHRM. Due to the seminar-based nature of the course, each student presented their pre-assigned journals during each class except the first. During each class, students read cases, many written by the professor, and discussed recent business events, such as Sony's collapsing down, a Chinese Factory operating in the United States, a cross-border M&A deal, and its HR integration. After

reading cases, we had a group discussion and answered the questions each case asked. Finally, the professor presented the main topics in summary. In the last class, each student presented their own research proposals and got feedback from the professor and other participants. According to the class profile of participants, there were ten people in total, including the professor and a teaching assistant. Two were Japanese, one was Korean, and the rest were Chinese. Additionally, there was a student from Osaka University in the class. We can therefore say that our class is located in a diverse and multinational environment.

Due to Covid 19 pandemic, all classes were held through zoom. Although many classes are now being taught face-to-face, online courses are still beneficial to people who cannot attend in person. During the class, the professor was in China. In this online courses, professors and students could teach and learn from a distance. There were some technical issues, such as access authorization to the Panda system, allowing only Kyoto University professors and students to access it. In this case, the admin staff managed all problems in a timely manner, and the teaching assistant worked on other technical issues such as how to use the Zoom recording function and others. All classes were conducted smoothly without any interruptions.

Throughout the course, students developed an understanding of both internal and external factors that affect human resource management and how to apply those factors to their own research.

Won Junsung
Doctoral student, Graduate School of Economics

Report from GSE

Global Course certificate

In March 2022, two undergraduate students received the Global Course certificate. The Global Course is an undergraduate certificate programme offered at the Faculty of Economics that aims to train the next generation of active global citizens.

To get the Global Course certificate, students must complete their bachelor's degree, study abroad for at least one semester and obtain credits from a university that has a student exchange agreement with Kyoto University, earn credits with high grades from courses taught in foreign languages at Kyoto University, and have an adequate level of English.

For more information about the Global Course, please visit this page <https://agst.jp.kyoto-u.ac.jp/global-course>

AGST Top Global Course

It is a pleasure to announce that eight students completed the AGST Top Global Course on September 26, 2022. They come from the Graduate School of Economics and Graduate School of Letters. This brings the total number of students that have completed the programme to 57 since it was launched in March 2017. More information about this programme can be found [here](#).



The 15th Next-Generation Global Workshop (NGGW) took place on 24-25 September. Held annually by the Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit (KUASU), the NGGW has been serving as a stage for early career scholars to share their research findings and receive professional comments from veteran experts, both from all over the world. The 15th NGGW, themed “Making Care Visible and Sustainable: Imaginations for the Future”, was held by Zoom meeting due to the influence of COVID-19 for the third year.

Even before the COVID pandemic, the care crisis resulted from the systematically undervaluing of care labor has long been among the list of social issues requiring critical reconsideration. Adopting “care” as its theme, the workshop this year attracted a large number of applicants, from which 17 presenters were selected from 10 universities in eight countries, including India, USA, France, Singapore, China, UK and Nigeria. The workshop started from the afternoon considering participants' time difference so that those from EU countries can participate as long as possible. Presentations were divided into five sessions based on the fields of focus, which included “Care as Gender Issue and Performance”, “Care in Discourse and Representation”, “Care and International Migration”, “Care under Social Policy and Regime” and “Care as Labour and Practice”.



Group Photo of Keynote Speech & Roundtable Addressers

The workshop this year also included a Keynote Speech & Round Table part on the first day, which is held via Webinar in order to involve a wider range of audience. The part started with the welcome address given by vice president of Kyoto University, Dr. Kono Yasuyuki. Next, Prof. Ochiai Emiko addressed a Keynote Speech with the title “Embracing Life and Care in the Society and Social Sciences”. The speech started with the empirical research regarding the influence of the pandemic on Japanese citizens, focusing on its unequal significance on family members. According to the result, female are more likely to be the caretaker and thus run a higher risk of been infected. By critical review of the 20th century social reproduction system and the social thoughts behind it, Prof. Ochiai suggested that social science nowadays should effort to increase the visibility of care, so as to aid the conceiving of a more sustainable social system. The keynote speech is followed by the roundtable by three renowned scholars in the field. Prof. Teppo Kröger, Prof. Rajni Palriwala and Prof. Barbara Hobson addressed inspiring and informative speech respectively regarding issues including care poverty, super-aged society, defamilialism, etc. After that, the four professors responded to the questions raised from the audience.

During the wrap up session at the end of the second day, many participants left positive feedbacks. One of them from a presenter major in philosophy expressed that “the workshop give me a chance to learn from other’s researches, from which I got more details about the care work in real practice. This widened my horizon and will help me to think more concretely in the future studies.”

The 15th NGGW will also be the last workshop before Prof. Ochiai’s retirement from Kyoto University. The organizing committee of the workshop shared with the participants a digital album named “Memories with Ochiai-sensei”, which collects photos within Prof. Ochiai at the workshops annually. During the wrap up session, Prof. Ochiai talked about the original intention of why she started the project 15 years before, which is to provide a platform for younger scholars in their early stage career, especially for those in Asian countries and regions, so that they could reach out for a wider intellectual community from all over the world. Among the participants, Prof. Pekka Korhonen and Prof. Michèle Forté, who attended as advisors in two of the sessions, recalled their memories with the workshop and Prof. Ochiai personally. Both of them expressed their admiration of the latter for all her contribution to this long-lasting annual project. Regarding her constant efforts on extending and maintaining relationship with scholars worldwide, not only by herself but also for the next-generations, Prof. Ochiai practiced the ethic of care in the meaning of Carol Gilligan’s classical work *In a Different Voice*(1982), which inspired all the following discussion on the topic and established the research field of care.



Group Photo of the 15th NGGW participants

After the workshop taken place, presenters will revise their papers based on the comments they received from the advisors. Submitted papers will be registered as proceedings in KURENAI, an open access platform to Kyoto University’s research and educational achievements.

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 will help participants learn to harness their full potential and build successful academic careers.

JI Chenjia
Researcher of Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit (KUASU)

Between July 26 and August 2, 2022, we are honored to join in the lecture themed “The Making and Implementing of European Union Policies in the Field of Sustainable Development (SD)”. The instructor was Dr. Eric Ponthieu, the Head of the Unit “Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment”, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). Fortunately, due to the ease of the pandemic restriction, the course was held offline, and we can directly communicate with Dr. Eric Ponthieu face to face.

The lecture assessed how the EU is applying the principles and is aiming at the targets of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda. It highlighted a certain number of key policy developments such as the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork strategy, the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, and the structural involvement of civil society and youth in decision-making processes. At the beginning and the end of every class, Dr. Eric Ponthieu gave us some minutes to express our thought about the class.

The first class introduced some detailed information about the EU approach to the 2030 SD Agenda. However, we are soon at the mid-term of the agenda, and a new narrative and vision based on resilience and well-being are needed to engage the whole society. The second class introduced the EU food system about the Farm to Fork Strategy. Dr. Eric Ponthieu thought this strategy paves the way for a more sustainable and comprehensive food policy. It is a much-needed move in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss, and material resource depletion.

In the third class, we learned the Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive market in the EU. It is an irreversible, global mega trend but much is still needed to scale up action at the EU and global levels. In the final class, Dr. Eric Ponthieu introduced how the EU integrates youth in SD policymaking. The EU has a long history of public consultation and there had been some good practices in the SD area at the UN level such as The UN Youth Strategy 2030 and the YOUNGO.

At the end of the whole course, Dr. Eric Ponthieu let every student talk about his thoughts about the SD agenda and youth participation. It not only enhanced our participation in this class but also encouraged us to consider more about the future of the world.

Li Jinze
Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture

The Making and Implementing of European Union Policies in the Field of Sustainable Development

By Dr. Eric Ponthieu
European Economic and Social
Committee



Food Economics and Nutrition Policy in Developing and Transition Countries

by Prof. Xiaohua Yu
University of Göttingen



The course started at the middle of July and the topic is “Food Economics and Nutrition Policy in Developing and Transition Countries”. Although it was unfortunate Professor Yu could not come to Kyoto to give a in person course due to Covid-19, the enthusiasm we felt was not affected. Also, this form gave us the opportunity to discuss and express our opinions in easiness, which made this class more vivid and “noisy”.

The main focus of the course was on nutrition in developing countries, but more than that, we were reminded of the changes in the world and how these events are linked to different regions and class of people, such as the 4C problems (conflict, covid, climate change and currency depression) are relevant to all of humanity which partially leads to the food crisis in 2022. Therefore, at the beginning of the course, Prof. Yu emphasized that the purpose of this intensive

class is to build common sense. We focus on from the world's large countries whose population is more than 1 hundred million, to nutrition indicators and hunger measurement, and finally about the UN's Development Goals and Plans (like SDGs). In the process, Prof. Yu led us to discuss many related issues, such as whether a carbon tax should be imposed on meat and rice, whether AI can help reduce poverty, how to think about genetically modified crops and technologies, and also the nature of human is inequity aversion or equity aversion, how to explore the thinking logic of people below the hunger line.

Karl Marx said, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it". It is natural that agricultural economics is never isolated from the real world. People construct identities, explore theories in order to guide practice and improve the terrible world. It can't be denied we've observed significant improvements in anti-poverty and hunger in some countries, but there is so much more that people need to do compared to this low-level situation now. The problem of food shortage in the world is no longer a shortage of production but a deficiency of distribution mechanism. Therefore, more people need to care about agricultural problems and participate in the discussion in order to promote the birth of more realistic theories and change the world, which I think is the meaning of this course. It introduces some common sense and encourages people to participate in discussion and thinking, so that one day the seeds of ideas and relevant practices can take root in the vast land.

Gan Yu
Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture

AGST Spotlight Interview

Dr. Mai Kobayashi , Assistant Professor and Dr. Wanxue Lu, Assistant Professor

Center for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Education and Research, (Graduate School of Economics,) Kyoto University

Dr. Kobayashi was appointed as the KUASU Project Assistant Professor in 2021, and Dr. Lu was appointed an AGST Project Assistant Professor in 2022. Since then, they have been playing an active role in building and developing a collaborative partnership between the Graduate School of Agriculture and Economics at Kyoto University.

Q1. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, since 2019, has triggered a series of social, economic and environmental transformations across the world. What are your perspectives on those transformations and how do you look at the impacts they bring about?

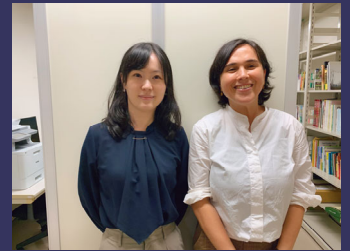
Dr. Lu: In recent years, the East Asian region has witnessed revolutionary innovations in various fields, the digital transformation in particular. Under the pandemic, measures such as lockdowns and social distancing have accelerated the trend towards digitization of public services, for instance, the digital financial services. The market share of digital financial services has increased rapidly along with the implementation of infection prevention measures. A general tendency toward the digitalization of financial services is observed.

The mobile money, online banking, and fintech services are being developed to meet the urgent financial needs of low-income households in remote and rural areas with underdeveloped financial infrastructure. These digital lending services have contributed to fund raising for micro and small enterprises and informal sectors and promoted women's economic participation. In addition, along with the accumulation of user data and the development of a novel method of credit analysis by Fintech enterprises, the possible economic effects of digital finance are of massive interest in terms of the evolution from digital payment to digital lending. These new transformations in East Asian markets have important implications for the Sustainable Development Goals, regional economic growth, and poverty reduction in particular.

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of digital public services also reveals new challenges, such as equity disparity in the use of digital infrastructure and the monitoring and regulation of digital technology-related risks. Therefore, the fairness in digital infrastructure usage and improving digital literacy of low-income groups are urgent issues.

Dr. Kobayashi: For me, the COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to expose and aggravate social and economic inequalities around the world. We witnessed the importance as well as the fragility of our access to essential goods and services, such as healthcare and food. We also witnessed how

these services are increasingly reliant on under-valued work done by people with less job security. Take the food system, for example. Travel restrictions prevented many seasonal laborers from crossing borders to work on farms, leaving unharvested food to rot in the fields, while those migrant laborers were left without a means of earning much needed income. As a result, people who lack the economic and physical means to procure food increased. We also witnessed multinational corporations use the pandemic as a means to make enormous profits, or governments increasing austerity measures, increasing the burden in already struggling populations. Such challenges made us question what kind of society we want to have in the future, to question the status quo, and not assume that going back to “normal” is neither sustainable or desirable.



Q2. The issues triggered by the pandemic has exposed many weaknesses of the current socio-economic system and challenged the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goals. What are your perspectives on those challenges? What are your messages to our students in this regard?

Dr. Lu: As the international community tackles the SDGs, there is a growing recognition that social problems such as poverty, education, and environment are intricately intertwined. Therefore, an integrated and multifaceted approach for students to incorporate aspects such as economy, politics and culture is required to solve these increasingly complex problems. By acquiring the basics of those disciplines and field research skills, students are expected to explore various issues related to the development of emerging countries on their own and deepen their knowledge of sustainable economic development.

Dr. Kobayashi: As I mentioned above, the pandemic exposed a lot of weaknesses in our society. While many were hoping to go back to “normal” as quickly as possible, the pandemic was an extremely valuable opportunity to re-evaluate what was wrong with the “normal” we had, and try to imagine, re-value and re-structure our societies to one that is more resilient and just. In that sense, we need to question what we are trying to sustain, when we talk about sustainability. Who are we trying to sustain it for? For who's benefit? The urgent need to image and build a different social, economic, and ecological balance is becoming ever more urgent as we feel the climate already changing around us. Challenging the status quo may be scary and daunting, but this is an unprecedented opportunity as well.