

AGST Newsletter



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During the summer session, we had the privilege of hosting Dr. Jie Li from Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University to deliver a series of lectures on international human resource management. The course, which included eight in-person classes, was attended by a diverse cohort of six international students from China, Canada, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Throughout the workshop, Dr. Li emphasized the profound influence of globalization on organizational dynamics, particularly focusing on the ways in which cultural differences exacerbate the complexities faced by multinational companies in navigating global challenges.

International Human Resource Management

by Dr. Li Jie

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University



A group photo from the lecture

Through the exploration of key human resource management concepts in a global context, complemented by short presentations and student-led discussions, the workshop introduced students to a range of topics, including Hofstede's cultural dimensions, HRM practices across different countries, international talent recruitment and management, expatriate assignments, performance management, and the role of labor unions. The professor also incorporated case studies, such as Rakuten's "Englishnization," equity policies at Accenture, and labor unions at Tesla, to facilitate class discussions and assess the effectiveness of these organizations' policies.

The workshop was an eye-opening experience for me, as Dr. Li effectively applied theoretical concepts to real-life examples and emphasized the gap between theory and practice. Regular interactions in class provided opportunities to exchange ideas and perspectives with peers from different countries, offering valuable insights into HRM practices across various global contexts.

Lim Sing Yee

Master's Student, Graduate School of Management



Introduction to Machine Learning for Agricultural and Food Economics

by Prof. Xiaohua Yu
University of Göttingen

In July, I had the privilege of attending an insightful course on Machine Learning for Agricultural and Food Economics taught by Prof. Xiaohua Yu. As a Master's student in Crop Science, I found this experience particularly valuable because it connected my field with cutting-edge machine learning (ML) techniques, a skillset increasingly vital in modern agricultural research. The course consisted of eight in-person classes, with participants from various countries, including Japan, Nigeria, Taiwan, and the Philippines, creating a truly international learning environment.

The course provided a thorough introduction to machine learning and how its principles can be applied to tackle real-world problems in agriculture and food economics. This was especially relevant to my studies in crop science, where data analysis is becoming a critical tool for addressing challenges like crop yield prediction, disease detection, and resource management. Professor Yu not only taught us the theoretical aspects of machine learning but also provided real-world datasets for us to work with. This hands-on approach allowed me to understand how machine learning algorithms could help in solving practical issues, such as optimizing input usage and improving crop management systems.

We were introduced to essential tools for machine learning, including Python, Visual Studio Code, and Anaconda Navigator. Initially, I found these tools somewhat intimidating, but through Professor Yu's clear explanations and practical exercises, I gradually became more comfortable using them. The structure of the course—lectures in the mornings followed by practical coding sessions in the afternoons—allowed me to directly apply what I had learned and see tangible results. Professor Yu was incredibly supportive, guiding us through coding challenges and demonstrating various machine learning models relevant to our field.

For me, studying machine learning is more than just an academic exercise. In the context of crop science, it opens up possibilities for building systems that can analyze data, improve decision-making, and adapt to the complex challenges facing agriculture today, such as climate change and sustainability. I am now more confident that the integration of machine learning in agriculture will play a key role in advancing crop productivity and addressing global food security. This course has been a pivotal step in broadening my expertise and preparing me to contribute to innovative solutions in agricultural science through data-driven insights.

Reyniel Aquino

Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture

In May 2024, a Senior Researcher and Executive Manager of the Environmental Social Science Research Group (ESSRG), Budapest, Hungary taught an intensive five-day course on "Special Lecture on Global Issues in Agricultural Science 1: Food System Transformation - A View from Eastern Europe". The course took a deep look into the world of sustainable food systems, challenged conventional assumptions, and introduced new perspective for understanding the scholarship related to food system discourse.

Dr. Balint introduced us to the concept of agro-food systems, emphasizing their relevance for food security, rural livelihoods, and economic growth. He used different theoretical and conceptual approaches to food systems-value chains, regimes, actor-networks, transition pathways. One of the most engaging aspects of the course was its focus on equity in the agri-food system and the various framings from both the West and the East. It discussed the journey from farm to fork, focusing on the actors involved in sustainable food systems, and explicitly discussed local patterns of food production and consumption.

The course also covered the transformative capacities of food systems, underlining social innovation from the bottom up and seed sovereignty. Dr. Balint introduced us to sustainable food alternatives-for example, legume-based food systems-and insisted on the importance of participatory methods of research, such as co-creation and citizen science. Throughout the course, Dr. Balint posed critical questions that made us think critically about issues that have to do with agriculture and food studies. We engaged in stimulating breakout sessions, brainstorming ideas on topics such as the drivers of food transformation and the role of researchers in initiating change, among other topics.

The course was extensive in global and local food systems, logically taking into account their complexities and comparing various modern, traditional, and mixed approaches. These included topics such as sovereignty in food, degrowth, and underused crops about their potential in sustainable food production.

Dr. Balint's overview on policy development had indeed opened my mind to show paradoxes and balancing acts involved within effective food policy development. The course concluded with the students presenting on food ecology and media representation, allowing us to apply the knowledge gained to our respective country contexts.

The intensive course certainly developed my knowledge of the food system transformation and further gave important insights for my future research.

Overall, Dr. Balint's class gave me insight into both the complexities and opportunities that surround sustainable food systems. Additionally, it creates greater nuance toward food system dynamics and the importance of research and citizen involvement in dynamic change. I am optimistic about how this applies to my future studies and professional work.

Farouk Uthman G.
Master's Student, Graduate School of Agriculture

Food System Transformations: A View from Eastern Europe

by Dr. Bálint Balázs
Senior Researcher and Executive Manager of Environmental Social Science Research Group, Budapest, Hungary



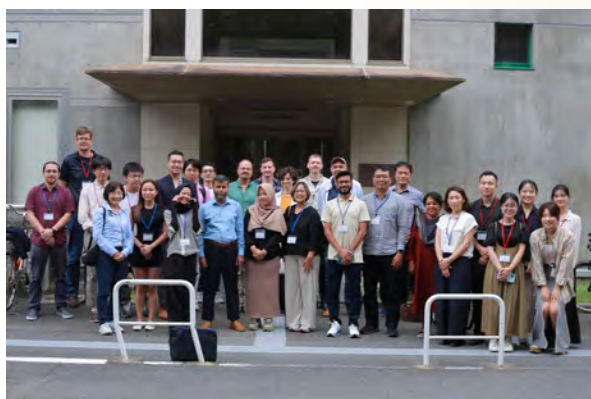
AGST Top Global Course

It is a pleasure to announce that five students from the Graduate School of Economics, the Graduate School of Letters completed the AGST Top Global Course on 24 September 2024. This brings the total number of students that have completed the programme to 79 since it was launched in March 2017. More information about this programme can be found [here](#).



The 17th Next-Generation Global Workshop (NGGW) took place on 27-29 September. The NGGW has been serving as a stage for early career scholars to share their research findings and receive professional comments from experts, both from all over the world. Under the theme of “Transcultural Horizons, Sustainable Futures”, the workshop is held by the Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit (KUASU), co-sponsored by the Heidelberg University Office, Kyoto (HUOK) and German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo).

The 17th Next-Generation Global Workshop (2024/9/27-29)



Workshop Participants

On the first day of the workshop, Professor Monica Juneja from Heidelberg University addressed a keynote speech titled “When, Where, What was Art? A Transcultural Approach to the Study of Migrant Concepts”, which clarified the basic concepts and viewpoint of transcultural studies. The speech is followed by a welcome party held at the Heidelberg University Office, Kyoto. On the morning of the second day, Professor Theodor Richard from National Chung Hsing University gave the speech “Transcultural Societies and Sustainability”, demonstrates the inseparable relationship of the two issues.

As the current social and environmental issues becoming increasingly globally intertwined, there is a growing relevance of the transcultural perspective in the humanity and social science researches seeking for a sustainable future. Focusing on these issues, the workshop this year received numerous applications from all over the world. During the three days of workshop, eighteen of them presented their research in five sessions, the theme of which includes ‘mobility and transculturality’, ‘vision for future in art and fiction’, ‘social economy and welfare’, ‘food, energy in searching for sustainability’. The presenters are from countries including Indonesia, Taiwan, U.S., Germany, Japan, etc.

Seventeen scholars participated the workshop as commentators. During the workshop, they make comments and ask questions based on the presentation. They are mostly faculty members of Kyoto University and Heidelberg University, while also includes scholars from Taiwan, Indonesia and Bangladesh.

During the round table session in the afternoon on the third day, five scholars from different disciplines interchanged their understanding on the methodology of transcultural study, along with its validity on dealing with issues related to sustainability. One of the feedbacks from participants states that “I gained new perspectives through dialogue with researchers from different fields”, highlighting the significance of the workshop.



Roundtable

After the workshop, presenters will finalize their research based on the comments and discussions and submit their papers to the KUASU office. Submitted papers will be registered as proceedings in KU-RENAI, 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)