Emerging Market Impacts on Global Agriculture

Geog 930 / Envir St 900

MEETING TIME: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00
LOCATION: Rm 372 Science Hall

INSTRUCTOR: Holly Gibbs, Professor
Department of Geography
Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies

CONTACT: hkgibbs@wisc.edu
OFFICES: Rm 373 Science Hall (office hours location)
Rm 207B Enzyme Institute (SAGE)

OFFICE HOURS: T 3:00-5:00, after class, or by appointment

VISITING SCHOLAR: Dr. Elizabeth Johnson, international trade and agriculture scholar visiting from Brazil, will join us for several weeks of class.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Pressure to feed an ever-growing population, coupled with the surging demand for biofuels and meats, has prompted a sea change in global agriculture in recent years. Trade between countries has become increasingly important, adding new pressures on forests and other natural ecosystems as well as opening new doors for conservation. This graduate-level discussion seminar will investigate how the international market impacts land-use decisions, conservation, and food production around the world. We will consider the international trade patterns and barriers along with national-level policies and conditions that facilitate and distort trade and agricultural production options. In addition, we will study potential mechanisms to leverage globalization and trade to improve social and environmental conditions. We will investigate the potential of consumer-driven zero-deforestation agreements such as the cattle and soy moratoria in Brazil and emerging markets for carbon and certified goods. We aim to map the sphere of influence for multi-national companies such as Cargill, to help uncover their role in deforestation as well as potential power for industry transformation on the ground. Important case studies include highly traded commodities such as soy, meat, sugarcane, maize, and oil palm. Our approach is inherently global in nature, but we will emphasize Latin America and SE Asia due to the importance of these regions for booming agricultural production and responsiveness to global market as well as China, India and the US.
COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week 1, September 4 – Introduction to course, land-use science and Holly Gibbs

Week 2, September 11 – Introduction to the global market, changing supply and demand patterns, and Elizabeth Johnson

Week 3, September 18 – Trade dynamics, barriers, relationships and distortions

Week 4, September 25 – Role of credit, governance, infrastructure development (PAPER IDEAS & OUTLINE DUE)

Week 5, October 2 – Bioenergy, food prices, Brazil’s ethanol program and the role of the US in global marketplace

Week 6, October 9 – Indirect land use change, displacement and leakage

Week 7, October 16 – Large-scale economic concessions (direct and indirect)

Week 8, October 23 – Role of multinational companies (e.g., Cargill)

Week 9, October 30 – Consumer-driven zero-deforestation agreements (ROUGH DRAFT DUE TO PEERS)

Week 10, November 6 – Emerging markets for carbon and certified commodities

Week 11, November 13 – PEER-REVIEWS DUE NOV 12 / IN-CLASS CONFERENCES

Week 12, November 20 – Just Coffee guest lecture

Week 13, November 27 – Open / Synthesis

Week 14, December 4 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Week 15, December 11 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS / FINAL PAPER DUE

READINGS:
This course will use a broad range of sources, including company and NGO reports, data from industry associations as well as typical academic sources. Students with knowledge of Portuguese, Spanish or Bahasa will be encouraged to explore non-English language sources. We have a range of papers selected but will encourage discussion leaders to bring in other sources.
**GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS**
Your course grade will be based on (out of 100 point):

*Research paper: 60 points total*
- Paper idea and outline: 5 points
- Rough draft: 5 points
- Peer-review of two papers: 10 points
- Presentation: 10 points
- Final paper: 30 points

*Class participation: 40 points total*
- General Participation: 10 points
- Reflections on readings: 10 points
- Discussion facilitation: 20 points

* Late assignments: 5% deduction per day

**Details of Assignments: (All deadlines are firm)**

*Research paper* – Your term paper can be either a critical literature review that sheds new light on the topic or a research paper based on analysis of existing data to provide novel results. Topics should be identified in consultation with me, and will ideally be of deep interest and related in some way to your graduate research. I look forward to working closely with you on your project, and will provide feedback throughout the semester. Thus, expectations for the final products are very high!

*Paper idea and outline:* Due Sep 25. One page overview and introduction to your paper topic that should be concise and thoughtful and explain the relevance to the class. The detailed outline should cover the main points you plan to make in each section of the paper, data sources and general flow. I encourage you to meet with me before completing this assignment to discuss your plan. (5% of final grade)

*Rough draft:* Due Oct 30. A complete draft of your paper that has been edited and reads reasonably well. The idea is to ensure that your final product is excellent by providing the needed time for editing and peer-review. (10% of final grade)

*Peer-reviews:* Due Nov 12. In-class conferences on Nov 13. Provide a written peer-review of a student’s paper, and meet to discuss comments. Peer reviews will not impact paper grades. We will discuss tips for effective peer review in class. This is a skill you will come back to throughout your career regardless of where you go. (5% of final grade)

*Oral presentations:* Due Dec 4 & 11. Each student will give a 10-minute presentation concisely describing your paper’s goal and key findings. (10% of grade)
Final paper: Due Dec 11. The paper can be in the form a review, analysis or research proposal. There is no set length, but papers likely need to be roughly 15-20 double-spaced pages, but succinct and refined writing is much more important than length. If you conduct a research project (e.g., model development, GIS analysis etc) then the written portion of the paper can be shorter. We will discuss tips for writing academic papers in class. (30% of final grade)

General participation: Attendance and full participation is expected at every class. You should come prepared to discuss your thoughts on the readings, pose questions and respond to your classmate’s ideas. Our class should be a place where ideas and comments flow easily, including those that may seem naïve, simplistic or obvious. Just say it! We are here to learn together and your grade will be based on how you contribute to the learning environment of the class as a whole. (10% of final grade)

Reading reflections: Submit a short (< 1 page) review of your thoughts and questions from the readings. Reflections are due by 12pm each Tuesday. However, I would appreciate any reflections submitted by the night before so that I can best respond to any questions. Late reflections will be not accepted. Discussion leaders are exempt from reflections for that week. The idea is to encourage you to think deeply about the readings before coming to class so that we can maximize our meetings and you can contribute to the discussion. (10% of grade)

Discussion Facilitation: Each student will lead two weekly discussions in pairs. Discussion leaders will work with me to identify a diverse set of readings for the weekly discussion. Readings must be sent out to class no later than Thursday evening before the Tuesday that they will be discussed. Readings may consist of peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, and newspaper articles. Ideally discussion leaders will create slides or handouts to provide more context and background information. As discussion leader, you should read the papers in detail and come prepared to ask and answer questions, and lead the overall discussion. You will start by briefly summarizing the papers and topic to remind the class of the key points (1-2 minutes) and then facilitate the discussion. Note that your focus should be on facilitating discussion with the class not on presenting your ideas or reviewing the paper in too much detail. Ideally you will also bring information from media or other sources outside the readings to enrich the discussion. Lastly, please pick up and return a projector from the Geography library. (20% of grade)

Academic Integrity
Academic honesty requires that the course work (drafts, reports, papers) a student presents to an instructor honestly and accurately indicates the student’s own academic efforts. Please review the university’s guidelines on proper conduct: http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html