125B: The Politics of Food in a Global Economy

Winter 2018, CENTR 216, Tues/Thurs, 12:30 pm -1:50 pm

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<th>Prof. Megumi Naoi</th>
<th>TA: Kathryn Baragwanath-vogel</th>
<th>TA: Shane Xuan</th>
<th>TA: Rachel Skillman</th>
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<td>Office Office hrs E-mail</td>
<td>SSB 373 Fri: 1:00-3:00 pm <a href="mailto:mnaoi@ucsd.edu">mnaoi@ucsd.edu</a></td>
<td>SSB 324 Wed: 10-11 am <a href="mailto:kbaragwa@ucsd.edu">kbaragwa@ucsd.edu</a></td>
<td>SSB 332 Fri:11 am -noon <a href="mailto:shane.xuan.94@gmail.com">shane.xuan.94@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>SSB 343 Mon: 9 - 10 am <a href="mailto:rskillma@ucsd.edu">rskillma@ucsd.edu</a></td>
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Course Website: [https://ted.ucsd.edu/](https://ted.ucsd.edu/) (Search for Instructor “Naoi”). All the readings and lecture slides will be uploaded on TED. All lectures are podcasted.

**Important Due Dates and Requirements:**

**January 30 (Tues): Assignment I due in class** (30% of your grade): Your own research memo on the politics of agricultural protectionism in two countries of your choice from the dataset below (5-page, single-spaced text with figures you made from World Bank’s Estimates of Distortions to Agricultural Incentives, 1955-2011). See the Template for this assignment uploaded on TED. Open-book and open sources. You can also discuss your research with anyone. When you incorporate their insights and suggestions, make sure to **acknowledge them in the memo as scholarly etiquette.**

**(February 6 (Tues): Late Assignment I submission date.** Two-third of grade penalty for lateness (e.g., A paper becomes B+, B+ paper becomes B-). We cannot accept Assignment I submitted after this date.)

**March 6 (Tues):** In-class quiz on readings and lecture through TOPIC 7 (20% of your grade): This will be multiple choice questions on the required readings and lectures. Closed book.

**March 20 (Tues):** Assignment II due between 2 pm -2:30 pm. in the class (50% of your grade). Your own research memo on the politics of consumption (single-spaced, 5-page with figures and tables). Open-book & open sources. Early submission is allowed as long as you can submit hardcopies.

**BONUS PARTICIPATION POINTS (Up to 10 points):**

**10 Points:** You ask good questions or make good comments regularly (about once a week).  
**5 Points:** You ask good questions or make good comments sometimes (about once every other week)  
**5 Points:** You volunteer to do 5-minute mini-research presentation (see below for the details).
About this Course:

This course will examine the politics of food in a global economy. The first five weeks will examine the politics of food producers (farmers and food industries), and the last five weeks will examine the politics of food consumers. In addition to learning important issues in the politics of food, we will also learn the following:

**Political Economy Theories and Concepts:** learn key theories in political economy such as the logic of collective action, how political institutions affect public policy outcomes, tragedy of commons and various solutions to the common-pool resource problem, and how special interest groups influence policy-making process.

**Scientific Literacy:** develop skills to read and understand peer-reviewed articles in science and social sciences and to make evidence-based decisions in your life.

**Research Skills:** learn how to conduct original research and communicate the findings accurately and visually using figures and tables.

Expectations:

(1) **Readings**
I will assign three articles or chapters (60-100 pages) each week. Readings are available at: [https://ted.ucsd.edu/](https://ted.ucsd.edu/) (Search for Instructor “Naoi”). To do well on the exams (i.e., better grade than B), you must read the assigned materials carefully before the class, attend class each week, and be prepared to discuss the readings analytically and critically in your projects.

(2) **Assignments I and II**
They are research projects, not exams. What this means is that you can consult any source (except for Wikipedia—see (5) below) as long as you cite them.

(3) **Extensions and Quiz Retake**
You must have a documented reason (i.e., medical, extenuating personal circumstances, etc.) for not being able to turn in an assignment or quiz on time. You will need to bring in supporting documentation to be granted an extension or request a quiz retake.

Note that we will not accept any email submission of your essays or quizzes. We will, however, accept late final exam in our mailboxes, which are located on the third floor of the Social Sciences Building. For Assignment II, late essays will be penalized one third of a grade per day (e.g., an A- paper becomes B+ the next day) until it bottoms at C. Note that essays that are turned in after 5 pm on Friday will not be counted as turned in until Monday morning.

(4) **Academic Honesty**
Cheating, plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. Please refer to the UCSD policy on integrity of scholarship for further details. If you are caught cheating in this course (this includes plagiarism), you will receive a letter grade of F. I reserve the right to check your essays electronically when
necessary.

(5) Wikipedia penalty
Please do not cite Wikipedia. As Michael Scott (in the TV show “The Office”) said: “Wikipedia is the best thing ever. Anyone in the world can write anything they want about any subject…you know you are getting the best possible information”. NOT. I will deduct one point from your projects each time you cite Wikipedia as a source.

Course Outline

Part I: The Politics of Food Producers

TOPIC 1: The Politics of Agricultural Protection Around the World
TOPIC 2: Political Institutions and Agricultural Protection
TOPIC 3: Environmental Challenges to Farming and Fisheries
TOPIC 4: Politics of Famine and Hunger
TOPIC 5: Processed Food Industries

Part II: The Politics of Food Consumers

TOPIC 6: Public Health Consequences of Food Policies (1): Obesity
TOPIC 7: Public Health Consequences of Food Policies (2): GMOs
TOPIC 8: Ethical Consumption –Fair Trade, Sustainability, Animal Rights and Locally-grown Produce

Workshop I (January 23): Q and As Session on the Assignment I (Bring your questions & laptops) & Mini-research presentations

TBA: Guest Lecture by Dr. Tala Al-Rousan (UCSD Public Health/UCSF) on Refugees & Public Health

Workshop II (March 1): Causal Inference and the Importance of Experiments
Workshop III (March 8): Q and As Session on the Assignment II (Bring your questions & laptops) & Mini-research presentations

January 9: Overview of the Class and Explanations for Assignment I

Check out the dataset and related materials for the Assignment I:

Scroll down the above website and click: “Core database (updated to 2011)”. You will be using this data for the Assignment I.

This link will take you to regional and country-specific reports on agricultural protectionism using the above data:
Part I: The Politics of Food Producers

**TOPIC 1: The Politics of Agricultural Protection Around the World**

January 11: The Patterns of Agricultural Protection and Various Approaches to Explaining Them


Discussion Questions: Why some governments protect farmers more than others? Who shoulder the costs of agricultural protection? What are incentives of politicians in protecting farmers vs. providing cheaper food to consumers?

We will learn:
How do we measure agricultural protection across countries and across commodities?
What are governments’ objectives and the trade-offs that they face?
What are the non-institutional factors that shape the levels of protection?

Key Concepts: the logic of collective action, various measures of agricultural protectionism (tariffs, NRA, PSE, CSE etc), different government’s instruments of protection, economic vs. political efficiency

**TOPIC 2: Political Institutions and Agricultural Protection**

January 16 and 18: Regime Types, Electoral Systems and Agricultural Protection


We will learn: What are the institutional factors that affect the levels of protection?
Do democracies differ from autocracies in responding to farmers’ vs. consumers’ demands?
Which electoral systems empower producers (farmers) over consumers?
Key Concepts: politicians’ incentives in authoritarian vs. democratic systems, different types of electoral systems (majoritarian vs. proportional, single-member district vs. multi-member district systems),

January 23 (Tues): Review & Workshop on the Assignment I (Q and As Session)

Bring your questions and laptops!

**January 30 (Tues): DEADLINE FOR ASSIGNMENT I in Class. Staple your essays!**

**TOPIC 3: Environmental Challenges to Farming and Fisheries**

January 25 and January 30: Governing the Commons


Discussion Questions: What are the common-pool resource problems and what are various solutions to the problems?


Key Concepts: tragedy of commons, common-pool resource problem, various solutions to CPR problems.

**February 6 (Tues): Late submission for Assignment I in the class. Staple your essays!**

**TOPIC 4: Politics of Famine and Hunger**

February 1 and 6


Discussion Questions: Amartya Sen famously said: “No famine has ever taken a place in democracy”. Is this true? Why do famines occur more often under autocratic rules?
Key Concepts: tragedy of commons, common-pool resource problem, various solutions to CPR problems.

TOPIC 5: Processed Food Industries

February 8 and 13


Discussion Questions: How do food industries influence nutrition and health of the public? What role do regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) play?

Key Concepts: regulatory capture, delegation from Congress to bureaucratic agencies, politics behind the scientific knowledge

TOPIC 6: Public Health Consequences of Food Policies (1): Obesity

February 15 and 20


Discussion Questions: What accounts for the rise of obesity around the world? What can governments do to address obesity problems?

Key Concepts: nutrition transition, energy gap model, supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), variety of medical and welfare systems

TOPIC 7: Public Health Consequences of Food Policies (2): GMOs

February 22 and 27

Discussion Questions: Who are the winners and losers of biotechnological innovation such as GMOs and how do they influence regulatory decisions by governments? What are known and unknown health risks? Why some governments regulate them heavily while others do not?

Key Concepts: genetically modified organism, regulator testing, revolving door, labeling

**March 1:** Workshop II—Causal Inference and the Importance of Experiments

- Oster, Emily. 2013. *Expecting better: why the conventional pregnancy wisdom is wrong and what you really need to know.* Hachette UK, Chapter 4.

**March 6 (Tues): In-class Reading Quiz (TOPIC 1-TOPIC 7, Including Workshop II). Multiple choices & fill in blanks.** Bring a pencil and an eraser.


**March 8 (Thurs):** Workshop III—Q and A session for Final research memo. Bring your questions and laptops!

**TOPIC 8: Ethical Consumption –Fair Trade, Sustainability and Locally-grown Produce**

**March 13 & March 15**


Discussion Questions: What is ethical consumption? Who are more likely to pay premium for being ethical than others?

Key Concepts: “Willingness to pay” research, behavior vs. preference (attitudes), price premium for ethical consumption, labeling and traceability regulation
March 20 (Tues) Final research memo submission deadline between 2pm – 2:30 pm in the class.