

Institutions and the Food System (E 36)

Winter term 2022/2023

Andreas Thiel

Please, register for the course in advance via Ecampus: https://ecampus.uni-kassel.de/gisserver/pages/cs/sys/portal/hisinonelframePage.faces?id=qis_vvz_anonym&navigationPosition=link_qis_vvz_anonym&noDBAction=y&init=y

Study Programs: M.Sc. Sustainable International Agriculture, International Food System and Consumer Studies, Ökologischer Landbau

Time: Thursday, 8:30 – 12:30

Start: 27.10.2022

Where: Room: H 12 in Witzenhausen

Virtual excursion 2-3 February 2023, participation is obligatory, topic: Governance, institutions and politics of Agroecology

Website: <http://www.uni-kassel.de/go/iapug>

Contents and objectives of the module

What are food systems, what are some key features of the European food system and its global impact and what is the role of Europe and the European Union for global food systems and agriculture? Further, what are governance and institutions and how do they structure the role of Europe in global food systems and agriculture, respectively how does Europe structure institutions and governance? What are fora in which agriculture and food systems are negotiated and how do institutions and governance structure these negotiations? These are the questions that the course aims to address. For that purpose, it will iterate between concepts and theories on the one hand and discuss their empirical application to the food system on the other. Conceptually, the course will adopt an understanding of institutions and governance in food systems and natural resource management starting from the perspective of the Bloomington School of Political Economy. It will apply this lens to a diverse set of situations in which actors interact including broader Social-ecological systems. Subsequently, it will focus on particular theories that address contracting, property rights, cooperatives, value chains or collective action and co-management and change of institutions in food and agri-environmental systems. The approach will be illustrated through group exercises and presentation and discussion of literatures.

Against this background the aims of the course are

- a. to introduce the role of Europe in agriculture worldwide and its role for sustainability (i.e. social, economic and environmental dimension)
- b. to introduce main actors and actor groups shaping agriculture and food systems from the perspective of Europe but also worldwide
- c. to introduce the concept of food systems and its implications for analysis
- d. to introduce the role of institutions and governance and enable institutional analysis of agriculture and the food system relying on approaches the Bloomington School of Political

- Economy (Institutional Analysis and development framework (IAD), SES analysis, institutional fit, polycentric governance and network of adjacent action situations)
- e. to introduce institutionalist theories of particular fields of analysis such as property rights, contracts, cooperatives, co-management and multi-level governance
 - f. to apply ideas of institutional analysis throughout meetings with stakeholder as part of a virtual excursion

Methods and approach

The module is divided into lectures (1/3), explicitly interactive periods such as student-led seminars (1/6), exercises and group work (1/3) and a virtual excursion, including its preparation (1/6).

Teaching methods will be applied as follows:

- (a) Preparation of all participants through directed reading of the relevant literature (for each session literature is available on moodle, grouped into core and advanced readings). Literature relevant for a specific session will be made available at least two weeks in advance. Students are expected to read the literature specified for each session before the session;
- (b) Explanation of the main topics and the “chain of thoughts and arguments” by the lecturers;
- (c) In-depth study and discussion through student-led seminars, literature discussions, exercises and group work;
- (d) Excursion and its preparation to deepen the understanding of institutions in the food system;
- (f) Course work

Desirable previous knowledge for participation in the module

Knowledge of Agricultural and Environmental Policy Studies, Economics, Environmental and Resource Economics, Development Economics.

Moodle

For participation in the course students are required to subscribe to the internet platform Moodle of University of Kassel. It can be found under <https://moodle.uni-kassel.de/moodle/index.php>
The key for the moodle course will be sent through e-campus and issued throughout the first sessions in class.

Details - course work:

a) Weekly course work

Students will be asked to undertake different kinds of course work throughout the entire semester. 80% of the tasks handed out need to be worked on by students. This course work will comprise of written, concise answers to 2-4 specified questions on course contents in most of the cases. **Answers should never surpass 350 words per question.** For few sessions, it may also comprise of reading literature and presenting/ reflecting upon it in class, and/ or submitting relevant questions. Course work can be done in groups of up to two students. The average mark of all weekly course work will account for 50% of the final mark of the module. Responses need to be submitted on Wednesday, 6 p.m. before the next session. The best response of the participants will be taken as a reference and it will be assessed as 1,0. Other submissions will be assessed accordingly.

Additionally, all students need to develop questions for one of the meetings that will be organized as part of the excursion on governance, institutions and politics of agroecology.

b) For the second piece of course work students have three options out of which they need to choose one. This course work accounts for 50% of the final mark of the module.

- I. Students can prepare student-led seminars in groups of up to two students. These seminars require 15 minutes presentations per student and should contain interactive elements such as guided discussion, role play, group work throughout. Topics should be agreed with the

lecturer and should address a question that goes beyond the course materials, applying the approaches discussed to particular topics. Assessment criteria will be discussed in class. It could also critically assess an approach. Seminars should last no more than the duration of the presentation + 10 - 15 minutes for interactions with module participants.

- II. Students could write an essay on a topic agreed with the lecturer (2500 words). It could also be an opinion piece. Structure and purpose and assessment criteria will be discussed in class. The purpose is to answer a particular question in relation to course contents that goes beyond it.
- III. Students could take an oral exam covering the course materials (25 minutes).

Contacts and Office Hours

Section "International Agricultural Policy and Environmental Governance"

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Office hours: Fridays 13:00 – 14:00 and Wednesdays 13:30 - 14:30 except 23 + 25. November, or upon agreement via email, meetings can also be held via zoom!

Outside of term upon previous agreement by email: thiel@uni-kassel.de

Tutor: Nadja Ahmad, in charge of excursion organization, email:

Session	Date, Lecturer	Content
1.	27.10. Thiel	What are food systems?
2.	3.11.	What is the role of Europe in the food system and in agricultural production worldwide?
3.	10.11. Thiel	What are institutions and governance? Principal agent, GT, Transaction costs
4.	17.11. Thiel	What are appearances of institutions and governance actors in the food system and in agriculture What are institutions and actors shaping the role of Europe in global agriculture and food systems?
5.	24.11. Nora Schütze	How to analyze institutions and governance in the food system – the IAD
6.	1.12. Thiel	The IAD and collective action research, examples: cooperatives and co-management and theories of collective action
7.	8.12. Thiel	The IAD and the SES and institutional fit Guest lecturers on Tunisian Agriculture
8.	15.12. Thiel	How to analyze institutions and governance in the food system? Polycentric governance and the NAS and their application
9.	22.12. Thiel	Research design and methods of institutional analysis
10.	12.1. Thiel	Particular institutional theories and their application Property rights regimes
11.	19.1. Thiel	Particular institutional theories and their application Contracts & transaction cost economics
12.	26.1. Thiel	Particular institutional theories and their application Value chains
13.	2.2. Thiel	Virtual excursion (somewhere here)
14.	9.2. Thiel	Reflection excursion and wrap-up

Potential term paper / student-led seminar topics

Topics can be derived from table above, see example ideas for student-led seminars. Students can also propose own topics, which could also be developed with the lecturer. Finally, partly overlapping ideas are:

1. What are institutions guiding decisions and influence of WTO, FAO, Standard organization (Geographical Origin, Organic Farming Standards, codex Alimentarius, etc.) and how do these explain the effect of corresponding actors on the global food system?
2. How does Europe and European policies affect agricultural production in your country and what is the role of particular institutions in that regard?
3. Why did value chains change in recent decades?
4. Are cooperatives socially preferable to private companies and if so, why?
5. Is regional marketing of farming products an effective way to overcome the principal agent problem?
6. What is the role of transaction costs and their distribution on market participants for Limit Value regulation versus Process regulation of organic farming produce?
7. How can we express Payments for Ecosystem services through a property rights and contracting approach and how can we assess it according to different criteria of justice (distributional, utilitarian, ...)?
8. Conceptualizing organic farming as polycentric governance, co-management and Network of Adjacent Action Situations. A useful approach or not? What can we learn for different contexts?
9. What role do new technologies in logistics (e.g. RFID) play for transaction costs of monitoring the value chain and what are potential implications for organic farming?
10. What is the role of trust in organic farming and how is its role explained from a New Institutional Economic approach?
11. The role of property regimes for agro-ecology. Why?
12. What is the role of selective incentives and group size for different types of farming associations?
13. Are organic farmers rational actors? How does this conception relate to the business and innovation cycles of their enterprise?
14. What is the role of informal contracts in the farming and food sectors?
15. How can we understand the Water-Energy-Food Nexus from an institutionalist perspective?
16. Institutional dimensions and barriers to successful CAP implementation
17. What are institutional determinants of the performance of organic farming and its expansion in different member states of the EU and worldwide?
18. Conventionalization of organic farming as institutional change, what are drivers and positions?
19. Can we analyze the EU Leader program (network approach to rural development) using collective action / co-management theory? What are findings?
20. Institutional fit and water management: the cases of the European Water Framework Directive, Integrated Water Resource Management and River basin management
21. Understanding organic farming sectors in particular countries through the lens of polycentric governance
22. Can collective action theory help to understand success and failure of different NGOs and association in the farming sector?
23. How deep does the societal transformation towards sustainability need to go? The role of property regimes
24. The role of quantitative data for institutional analysis?
25. Mixed methods and institutional analysis, potentials and problems?
26. The rural livelihoods framework and the role of institutions and different types of institutions. What else matters?

Others.... as emergent throughout the course or as suggested by participants