# Topics in Food Economics

| Course title – Intitulé du cours | Topics in food economics |
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| Level / Semester | M1 / S2 |
| School - Composante | Ecole d'Economie de Toulouse |
| Teacher - Enseignant responsable | Zohra Bouamra-Mechemache |
| Other teacher(s) - Autre(s) enseignant(s) | Catarina Goulão. |
| Other teacher(s) - Autre(s) enseignant(s) | |
| Other teacher(s) - Autre(s) enseignant(s) | |
| Credits | |
| Teaching Hours CM | 20 |
| Teaching Hours TD | 7 |
| Teaching Hours TP | |
| Course Language | English |
| Language for TD and/or TP | English |

## 1. *Presentation*

Life cannot subsist without food. Civilization started with the domination over the natural environment and food supply. From local food supply, civilization engaged in trade, and nowadays food can only be thought of in its global and international market.

The food industry has experienced many technological changes in its production, storage and distribution. The food chain encompasses complex relationships between agricultures, food processors, wholesalers and retailors and regulation occurs in each and very phase of the food chain. All forms of market structure, from monopoly to perfect competition or monopsony can be found in the food chain.

Food markets are perhaps the most regulated markets due to the potential impact that food has in human health. There have been widely spread famines and even in 2017, the UN officially declared famine had returned to Africa, with about 20 million people at risk at death from starvation. But also in developed occidental world people are at risk. Avian influenza or the BSE (mad cow disease) are just some examples with substantial health impacts and economic consequences. Also, in the world about 2 billion people are overweight or obese which significantly affect their health in the long term.

Food and agricultural markets thus are an excellent laboratory for the application of microeconomic principles with market failures and government interventions. The course applies microeconomic methodologies to food and nutritional problems. Students will thus gain knowledge and skills in the analysis of food markets specifically. The course examines both the industrial organization of the food chain and the rationale for public intervention in food markets. First, it deals with the organization of the food chain and related issues. Then, it explores different current economic policy issues such as food security, food safety, the linkages between food and health, the impact of nutritional policies.

The course should appeal to students with an interest in market analysis, public policy analysis, and health economics. The application is on food economics but the student will master the major microeconomics tools with application to many economic topics.

### 2. Faculty instructors

The course is given by Zohra Bouamra-Mechemache (ZB), Catarina Goulão (CG). They are specialized on the economics of the food sector and have good scientific and professional networks. For any questions related to the course, students are welcome to contact catarina.goulao@tse-fr.eu, zohra.bouamra@tse-fr.eu. Please write the following subject in every e-mail exchange with us: "M1-TOPICS IN FOOD ECONOMICS". Depending on the questions, we will answer by email or propose an appointment. Questions are welcome.

### 3. Objectives of the course and educational goals

This course covers the basic principles of food economics and discusses problems and how they can be addressed with policies based on those principles.

Students will learn how to use micro-economics' tools to address real world problems applied to the food industry. It is assumed that students engage in independent critical reading around the topics listed, and will have to develop their ability to provide written and oral comments on a topic.

Students are not expected to become equally competent in each area. A deeper analysis of topics covered in this course is proposed in the M2 program.

### 4. Requirements

Basic game theory and intermediate level in microeconomics. Basic knowledge of industrial organization.

### 5. Practical arrangements

The course includes lectures and 'classes'. Attendance to 'classes' is mandatory and attendance to lectures is highly recommended (experience shows that students who attend only a fraction of the lectures perform badly, as they are not involved in the course). Slides and references will be on the Moodle platform before the corresponding lectures so that students can browse and read recommended materials.

Evaluation is based on continuous assessment. This assessment includes participation during the lectures (15%), and a report on a specific question chosen by the students (85%). The report is due by the end of the semester and it will be presented orally.

To prepare their written report students have to choose a topic of research (related to the topics discussed during the lectures and approved by instructors). During the semester students will gather information, quantitative data when needed, read papers, studies. Based on this work they will have to write a report. To help students to build their report, two feedback meetings are organised with the instructors (TD), and an oral presentation of the preliminary version of the report is organized. At the end of presentations, the other students are invited to ask questions and discuss the issues raised during the presentation. A priori, this work will be in group of 2 to 3 students (this will depend on the number of students attending the course). More details will be provided during the first lectures.

### 6. References

There is no text covering the whole domain. A reading list will be provided at the beginning of the course and available on Moodle.

## 7. *Session planning*

**Context and Motivation (ZB)**
1. Food Markets: an introduction
2. Global food situation
**Food security (ZB)**
3 and 4. Evolution and future of food security
**Food Chain (ZB)**
5. Organization of the food chain
6. Horizontal and vertical agreements in the chain
**Food and Health (CG)**
7. Current situation and long term impacts
8. Economics of Obesity
**Nutritional Policies (CG)**
9. Nutritional policies (I)
10. Nutritional policies (II)
**Food Safety (CG)**
11. Issues, policies
12. Trade and food standards