COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:
This course introduces graduate students to theoretical and empirical methods for analyzing the structure and organization of agri-food marketing channels, and the effect of information asymmetry and quality differentiation in food supply chains. The course is designed to deepen analytical and critical thinking skills. It is run as a combination of lectures and seminar discussions based around a set of weekly readings. Upon completion of the course students should be able to: a) apply the transaction cost economics framework to analyzing vertical coordination in agri-food supply chains; b) assess the economic effects of quality differentiation in agri-food markets; and c) critically assess research methodologies and frame research questions pertaining to the economics of agri-food marketing.

Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor

Key Dates
October 3 – Research paper outline due
October 3 – Assignment 1 handed out. Due on October 12
November 21 – Research paper due
November 21 – Assignment 2 handed out. Due on December 3
December 7-10* – Final exam (take-home)
(* Final exam dates are tentative and subject to scheduling).

ASSESSMENT:

Grade Determination
Research Paper 35%
2 Assignments (10% each) 20%
Participation 10%
Final Examination 35%

Research Paper (35%)
This will be a research topic drawn from a list of topics provided by the instructor unless the student has a particular topic that he/she wishes to pursue. If the latter is the case this topic should receive approval of the instructor by September 26. Students should hand in a 1-2 page
outline of the research paper for feedback and discussion with the instructor by October 3. The paper is expected to be a major research work. While no length is specified, papers should range between 5000 and 6500 words in length in order to research the topic in sufficient detail.

The paper is due at the start of class (2:30 p.m.) on November 21 2018. Late papers will be penalized 10% of their final grade for each day late (2:30 p.m. being the cut off time for each late day). No extensions will be given for one week prior to the due date (i.e. November 14 2018) without a medical certificate.

Papers must be the student’s original work and also must not have been used for another class. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students should familiarize themselves with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines on academic misconduct at [http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/) and are strongly encouraged to read the following guidelines on academic integrity: [http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/2017%20academic%20integrity%20handout.pdf](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/2017%20academic%20integrity%20handout.pdf)

Assignments (20%)
There will be two assignments, each worth 10%. The assignments are designed to test the student’s analytical and critical thinking abilities.
Assignments must be submitted to the instructor via email prior to midnight on the days indicated. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of their final grade for each day late (midnight being the cut off time for each late day).

Participation and attendance (10%)
Participation by all students in the class discussions creates an effective and dynamic learning environment. Students are expected to attend all classes and have prepared for class by having read thoroughly the assigned readings prior to each class, and to contribute actively to the weekly discussions in class. A participation grade will be assigned by the instructor.

Final Exam (35%) (take-home)
Questions comprising 50% of the final exam are included in this course outline. Five of these questions will be selected for the final exam (comprising 50% of the exam grade). The remainder of the exam (50%) will consist of material students have not previously seen. Further details are provided on pp.8-9 of this course outline.

Subject to scheduling, the final exam will be available at 12pm (midday) on Friday December 7 and will be due at 12pm on Monday December 10 2018. However, these dates are tentative and will be confirmed at a later date subject to other exam scheduling. Students should therefore avoid making prior travel, employment, or other commitments for the entire final exam period (December 8-22) until the exam schedule has been confirmed. If a student is unable to write an exam through no fault of his or her own for medical or other valid reasons, documentation must be provided and an opportunity to write the missed exam may be given. Students are encouraged to review all examination policies and procedures: [http://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php](http://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php)
IMPORTANT:

Integrity Defined (from the Office of the University Secretary)

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Student Conduct & Appeals section of the University Secretary Website and avoid any behavior that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should read and be familiar with the Regulations on Academic Student Misconduct (http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/StudentAcademicMisconduct.pdf) as well as the Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals (http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/StudentNon-AcademicMisconduct.pdf)

For more information on what academic integrity means for students see the Student Conduct & Appeals section of the University Secretary Website at: http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/forms/IntegrityDefined.pdf

If in doubt… ASK!

OTHER INFORMATION:

Recording of the course:
Students are permitted to record the course, subject to the permission of the instructor. Just ask.

Student feedback:
Your feedback on the course is important to me and helps me revise and change the course from year to year. Please take the time to complete the course evaluation at the end of the semester. I also welcome any informal feedback as the course progresses.

Instructor availability:
I have an open door policy, so please feel free to stop by my office if you have questions about the course material. I can be reached by email or phone if you’d like to set up an appointment. See the front page of this course outline for my contact information
Copyright
Course materials are provided to you based on your registration in a class, and anything created by your professors and instructors is their intellectual property, unless materials are designated as open education resources. This includes exams, PowerPoint/PDF slides and other course notes. Additionally, other copyright-protected materials created by textbook publishers and authors may be provided to you based on license terms and educational exceptions in the Canadian Copyright Act (see http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html).

Before you copy or distribute others’ copyright-protected materials, please ensure that your use of the materials is covered under the University’s Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines available at https://library.usask.ca/copyright/general-information/fair-dealing-guidelines.php. For example, posting others’ copyright-protected materials on the open web is not covered under the University’s Fair Dealing Copyright Guidelines, and doing so requires permission from the copyright holder.

For more information about copyright, please visit https://library.usask.ca/copyright/index.php where there is information for students available at https://library.usask.ca/copyright/students/rights.php, or contact the University’s Copyright Coordinator at copyright.coordinator@usask.ca or 306-966-8817.

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COURSE CONTENT

This course is based around a set of weekly readings as indicated below. Students are expected to have read the material prior to class and to come to class prepared to participate in discussion about the material. Specific references to articles will be made during class discussions, so having the material on hand in class will be essential.

To maximize understanding, it is recommended that the articles for each week be read in the order in which they appear below. All readings are available via Blackboard (see “Course Materials”)

PART I: TRANSACTION COSTS & THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

[September 5 – No classes to accommodate math camp]

Week 1 – September 12: Introduction: Why Institutions Matter
(rescheduled to 6pm to accommodate math camp)

Week 2 – September 19: Institutions & the Boundaries of the Firm


Week 3 – September 26: Transaction Cost Economics (TCE)


Week 4 – October 3: Empirical Applications of TCE to Agrifood Marketing

PART II: SUPPLY CHAINS, CONTRACTS AND MARKET POWER

Week 5 – October 10: Spot Market Transactions


Week 6 – October 17: Contracts: Information and Hold-ups


Week 7 – October 24: Vertical Integration, Contracts and Incentives


Week 8 – October 31: Value Chains and Relationship Sustainability


PART III: PRODUCER GROUPS AND COLLECTIVE MARKETING

Week 9 – November 7: Supply Management Marketing Boards


NOVEMBER 15 – FALL BREAK WEEK - NO CLASS

Week 10 – November 21: Generic Advertising in Commodity Markets


PART IV: QUALITY SIGNALS AND STANDARDS

Week 11 – November 28: Information Asymmetry and Quality Signals


Week 12 – December 5: Food Safety, Quality Assurance and Traceability


QUESTIONS FOR THE FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be a take-home exam consisting of two parts. Part I will include five essay questions selected from the list below and comprising 50% of the final exam grade. Part II of the exam will consist of additional unseen material (50% of final exam grade). The purpose of the take-home style exam is to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate analytical and critical assessment skills in more depth than is generally possible in an examination room setting. As such, students are expected to answer these questions independently. As a rough guide, to address the topics adequately, answers to the essay questions below should be around 1500 words in length.

It is strongly recommended that you complete each essay below weekly as the course progresses.

1. XXXXXX
2. XXXXXX
3. XXXXXX
4. XXXXXX
5. XXXXXX
6. XXXXXX
7. XXXXXX
8. XXXXXX
9. XXXXXX
10. XXXXXX
11. XXXXXX

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Examinations with Access and Equity Services (AES)

Students who have disabilities (learning, medical, physical, or mental health) are strongly encouraged to register with Access and Equity Services (AES) if they have not already done so. Students who suspect they may have disabilities should contact AES for advice and referrals. In order to access AES programs and supports, students must follow AES policy and procedures. For more information, check [http://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php](http://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php) or contact AES at 966-7273 or aes@usask.ca.

Students registered with AES may request alternative arrangements for mid-term and final examinations. Students must arrange such accommodations through AES by the stated deadlines. Instructors shall provide the examinations for students who are being accommodated by the deadlines established by AES.

Student Supports

Student Learning Services

Student Learning Services (SLS) offers assistance to U of S undergrad and graduate students. For information on specific services, please see the SLS web site [https://www.usask.ca/ulc/](https://www.usask.ca/ulc/).

Student and Enrolment Services Division

The Student and Enrolment Services Division (SESD) focuses on providing developmental and support services and programs to students and the university community. For more information, see the SESD web site [http://www.usask.ca/sesd/](http://www.usask.ca/sesd/).
University of Saskatchewan Grading System for graduate courses

The following describes the relationship between literal descriptors and percentage scores for courses in the College of Graduate Studies and Research:

90-100 Exceptional
A superior performance with consistent strong evidence of
- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful, critical evaluation of information;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an exceptional ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently;
- an exceptional ability to analyze and solve difficult problems related to subject matter.

80-89 Very Good to Excellent
A very good to excellent performance with strong evidence of
- a comprehensive grasp of subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of information;
- a very good to excellent capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a very good to excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently;
- a very good to excellent ability to analyze and solve difficult problems related to subject matter.

70-79 Satisfactory to Good
A satisfactory to good performance with evidence of
- a substantial knowledge of subject matter;
- a satisfactory to good understanding of the relevant issues and satisfactory to good familiarity with the relevant literature and technology;
- a satisfactory to good capacity for logical thinking;
- some capacity for original and creative thinking;
- a satisfactory to good ability to organize, to analyze, and to examine the subject matter in a critical and constructive manner;
- a satisfactory to good ability to analyze and solve moderately difficult problems.

60-69 Poor
A generally weak performance, but with some evidence of
- a basic grasp of the subject matter;
- some understanding of the basic issues;
- some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject matter;
- some ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.

<60 Failure
An unacceptable performance.