# Agri-Food Economics

## Prof. Stefano Boccaletti

***Text under revision. Not yet approved by academic staff.***

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course aims to describe the main problems and organisation of the agri-food system, in order to understand how the characteristics of a final food are the result of the strategies implemented at different stages, the forms of coordination adopted, and the policies undertaken. The overall course aim is to integrate the economic knowledge acquired in previous years with new tools of sectorial economics that allow an initial overall critical assessment of the agri-food supply chain. In particular, during the course students should be able to react to the lecturer's requests expressed in the form of questions or other interactive methods, so beginning to demonstrate their own critical abilities.

At the end of the course, students will be in possession of a complete perspective of the agri-food *supply chain* and will therefore be able to describe the different components, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The course, thus, provides students with the basis on which to further develop their economic analysis skills at subsequent stages of their educational path.

COURSE CONTENT

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| Topics | ECTS |
| *The agri-food system:* relationships between its components, information technologies. | 0.5 |
| *The demand for agri-food products:* dynamics of food consumption, new consumption patterns, demand for quality and safety. | 0.8 |
| *Distribution:* evolution of food distribution in Italy, dominant types of business, strategies. | 0.8 |
| *The food industry:* structural features of the Italian food industry, strategies of SMEs and large companies, innovation. | 0.8 |
| *Agriculture:* structural weakness of the primary sector, industrialisation of agriculture, agricultural cooperation. | 0.8 |
| *Market power, coordination and integration:* monopoly and monopsony, vertical relationships in the presence of market power, vertical integration. | 0.5 |
| *Agri-food and commercial policies* | 0.8 |
| *Practical activities:* carried out at the end of each topic. | 1 |

READING LIST

For each topic covered, the lecturer will provide reading references and supplementary material during the course.

TEACHING METHOD

Lectures in person or recorded (if lectures in person are not allowed), during which the course topics will be addressed using a theoretical approach supported by the use of multimedia tools; in this way, students will be guided in their learning of the most challenging sections, such as the construction of graphs and the development of mathematical proofs. Upon completion of each topic the lecturer will interact with the class (physically or virtually), leaving room for any requests for clarification.

The presentations used in class will be made available in advance on the Blackboard platform, together with the reading references used. Furthermore, a *file* will be provided, also available on Blackboard, which will be updated from time to time with the contents and reading list of each lecture. The 'Collaborate Ultra' Blackboard application will be used for recorded lectures, complemented by the use of a virtual whiteboard.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

There are two tests, one interim and one final, both written, each of which contributes 50% to the final mark. If the student does not pass the interim test, the final one will concern the whole course program and represent the 100% of the final evaluation. The interim test has a validity limited to the academic year in which it is taken. In both tests, the questions cover both the most descriptive parts of the course and the more strictly methodological parts; in the latter case, the student is explicitly requested to respond using graphs and/or simple proofs. The marks attributed to the individual questions may vary depending on the test. In addition, and on an experimental basis, software (for example, Mentimeter) will be used to interact with students, assess their degree of learning during the course, and stimulate their attention.

The assessment aims to provide a sufficiently precise measure of the student's overall level of preparation on the entire course programme, and to help the lecturer understand both the student's reasoning ability and his/her mastery of the methodological tools in interpreting the real economic phenomena characterising the agri-food chain.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

To understand the topics covered, students must know the basic notions taught in the 'Institutions of Political Economy and Statistics' and 'Mathematics' courses; the contents of the course 'Institutions of Political Economy and Statistics - Political Economy Module' are a necessary prerequisite for understanding the topics covered, even if not formally so.

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at http://docenti.unicatt.it/.