LAWS: (code) Agricultural Knowledge Systems, Biodiversity and Food Security
Dr. Chidi Oguamanam

Course Description

This is a seminar in which students are expected to discuss, conduct research, generally explore and write papers on a range of issues relating to the intersection of agricultural knowledge systems (AKS), biodiversity, sustainability, farmers' rights, food security and food safety. Classes focus on a range of topics drawn from the historical and contemporary transformations in agricultural systems from traditional agricultural practices, conventional/industrial agriculture and the modern era of agricultural biotechnology. In addition to exploring the legal framework for global governance of agriculture, the seminar explores the political economics of agricultural production, and the tensions at the intersections competing knowledge systems that drive agricultural transformations as well as their ramification for sustainable agriculture, food security and food safety. Topics covered include the legal framework for the governance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, the intricate relationship between agriculture, food, medicine and biodiversity and the environment, the advent of modern agricultural biotechnology and genetic engineering and its relationship to traditional agricultural practices of indigenous and local communities, the role of intellectual property in the control of agricultural economy, the centrality of biological diversity and biological resources in agricultural innovation and production. Students are encouraged and shepherded to generate and explore researchable issues in their areas of interests in order to meet their individual and/or collective expectations from the seminar.

No technical background or expertise is required for enrollment in the seminar. Students are, however, expected to have sufficient interest, motivation and explorative attitude in order to optimize their participation in the seminar. They are expected to use of the Internet and other research tools to access seminar-related materials and conduct research on a final paper. Students are reminded of the laws and regulations against plagiarism. A high standard of academic and research integrity is required and will be rewarded. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the University, Faculty of Law policy on plagiarism and academic honesty and integrity. They are expected to be rigorous in crediting the work and ideas of others. Any paper or assignment submitted by a student in this seminar may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion, or even revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. Prior to submitting any paper or other assignment, students should read and familiarize themselves with the policies referred to above.

Evaluation

A major research paper between 24 and 25 pages (including footnotes of 10"), double spaced 12" font size Arial on self-selected topic (subject to approval) = 65%. An abstract and outline (A&O) of the paper, not more than two double spaced pages = 5%. Class attendance = 10%; class participation = 10%; leading class discussion on specific subject =10%. Arrange to discuss your chosen research paper topic before you prepare your A&O. Feedback will be provided on the A&O before the students prepare the major paper. Evaluation of the major paper will place emphasis on a number of considerations including originality, research rigor, arrangement/presentation and structure of the paper, knowledge of subject matter, grammar, clarity and accessibility, and overall impression of the paper as a piece of academic work.