The Global Politics of China

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Department: School of Public Policy, Central European University
Number of Credits: 2.
Teaching Format: Lectures and seminar discussions.
Course Status: Elective.
Office Hours: Tuesday 4-5pm, October 6 u. 7, 2nd floor, Office 241.

Course Description

This course provides an intensive introduction to the global politics of China. As well as a crucial intellectual challenge today, China is also increasingly important for a range of policy engagements. While China has become globally prominent in recent times, this course is not just about current affairs per se. It also explores how China came to be in its current circumstances, and the interconnections between China’s ‘domestic’ and ‘global’ relations. The first part of the course explores the politics of history and China’s modern historical trajectory. Going beyond a unitary conception of the Chinese state, the second part examines the nature and domestic sources of China’s foreign policy before exploring key themes in its global relations. Finally, it analyses China’s changing engagement with and role in global governance. Throughout, it will involve active learning.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

This course aims to provide an intensive orientation to the changing global politics of China. While providing a structured framework to achieve this, it also seeks to enable individual learning pathways and enhance analytical, writing and verbal skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

• Understand the historical trajectory behind China’s current world role, and the politics of history;
• Understand the interplay between China’s domestic and global politics;
• Critically assess and engage debates about China’s (re)emergence and evolving global role.
• Undertake further, more indepth study into the global politics of China.

Course Overview

Seminar 1: Introduction (7 January)
Seminar 2: ‘Make The Past Serve the Present’ (14 January)
Seminar 3: ‘Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones’: Reform and Going Global (21 January)
Seminar 4: ‘Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics’ (28 January)
Seminar 5: Foreign Policy Making (4 February)

Reading Week
Seminar 6: The Party and Global Power: Political Influence and Military Role(18 February)
Seminar 7: China and the United States (25 February)

Optional Course and Final Paper Consultation
Seminar 8: China and the Global South: Cases in the Belt and Road Initiative (4 March)
Seminar 9: China and Global Governance (11 March)
Seminar 10: China in Global Governance: Policy Evidence (18 March)
Seminar 11: Conclusions (25 March)

Please note: This syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. Amendments may be made during the course of the term. You will be notified via Moodle about any amendments.
Assessment

- Participation, including preparation: 15%
- Presentation exercise: 15%
- Final paper (3,000 words): 70%. Deadline: 5pm, 23 April 2019 (submission to Moodle).

Course Requirements and Classroom Policy

Full attendance is expected. Please arrive in time for classes to begin on time. You are required to complete assigned readings prior to class. Given the richness and complexity of the subject, you are also encouraged to read more than these, especially concerning questions and subjects that particularly interest you. Use of phones, laptops or other electronic devices is strictly not permitted during class.

China Watching

This course encourages you to keep up to date with China-related current events. Classes may start with a ‘China Watching’ slot where you will be asked to succinctly share a key news story (or stories) and, at times, respond to follow-up questions. It is up to you what you choose to cover. Try to define the themes or issues that interest you most and use this as a chance to pursue these in greater depth, thereby complementing the more general coverage of the course.

Background Reading

You are encouraged to read into and around each subject, and to develop and pursue your own interests within – and beyond - these. The Supplementary Readings annex at the end of this syllabus provides a selection of topical sources or seminal texts from different periods of scholarship. Books worth consulting by way of background to the course as whole include:


Academic Journals

You are encouraged to use academic journals as a quick, often more useful and up to date way to engage with China, especially on recent and current affairs. Try *The China Quarterly, The China Journal, The Journal of Contemporary China,* and *The Chinese Journal of International Relations.*

Supplementary Background

You are strongly encouraged to read fiction and other non-fiction works about China. This will enhance your cultural literacy and provide alternative windows on to many of the themes that we will explore. Try, for starters, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (Penguin, 2009; Julia Lovell trans.), and Qian Zhongshu, *Fortress Besieged* (Penguin, 2006). Wang Xiaofang’s *The Civil Servants Notebook* (Melbourne: Penguin, 2012) and Chan Koonchung’s *The Fat Years* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2012) illuminate aspects of domestic politics and (imagined) foreign policy.

You are also encouraged to explore primary news film footage, documentaries, films, music and popular culture about China. Consider the political themes raised in, for example, Jing Wu’s popular smash hit *Wolf Warrior II* (2017).

News and Information

For the latest developments in China, see *Pacific Forum: Comparative Connections, China Leadership Monitor, China Brief, East Asia Forum; China Digital Times; China Dialogue,* and the *South China Morning Post; Sinica podcast; China Policy Institute Analysis; Chublic Opinion; Sixth Tone.* *China Vitae* is a very useful who’s who and who’s doing what guide to Chinese politics.

Major Chinese news outlets have English editions. Try the *People’s Daily, Liberation Army Daily, Global Times* and *Xinhua.* Government websites, such as the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Council,* or the *Ministry of Commerce* are also worth checking. There are good Twitter news feeds about different aspects of China, as well as on *Weibo* (see Jonathan Sullivan, ‘China Scholars and Twitter’, *The China Quarterly 7 February 2017*). An invaluable mailing list is *Sinocism* (consider subscribing to the free weekly version of this to follow events; the daily version requires subscription). SupChina likewise have a subscription email news service; try listening to their *Sinica podcasts.*

Feedback

Rolling feedback and suggestions of readings and new sources to incorporate are welcome.
Course Sessions

1. Introduction (7 January)

This session introduces the course, and will seek to clarify your expectations and key questions about China. It will also set the scene for the sessions that follow.

Recommended reading/watching

- Beijing Olympics opening ceremony (2008) highlights

2. ‘Make The Past Serve the Present’ (14 January)

Taking the long view, this session considers the change from China’s relative historic strength to weakness in the face of European-led encroachment and incorporation into the modern international nation-states system. It also considers the pertinence of the past today. How are different interpretations of history mobilized in the pursuit of political purposes today?

Required Watching/Reading

- Documentary excerpts: ‘River Elegy’ (Héshâng; first broadcast by CCTV in June 1988; 58 mins).
- Document no. 9 (2013).

Supplementary Reading/Watching

- Alice Lyman Miller, ‘Some Things We Used to Know About China’s Past and Present (But Now Not So Much)’, in John E. Wills (ed.), Past and Present in China’s Foreign Policy: From “Tribute System: to “Peaceful Rise” (Portland: Merwin Asia, 2010): 31-60.
- Documentary: Chung Kuo, Cina (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1972).
3. ‘Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones’: Reform and Going Global (21 January)

This class explores China’s Reform and Opening period under Deng Xiaoping, the main trends and debates in foreign policy after 1989, especially the ‘go global’ strategy and the domestic political context under President Hu. These are essential to understanding and engaging current debates.

Required Reading


Supplementary Reading


4. ‘Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics’ (28 January)

How has China’s foreign policy been evolving under President Xi Jinping?

Required Reading


Supplementary Reading


5. **Foreign Policy Making** (4 February)

This class examines the key individuals, institutions and processes of the CPC-state involved in foreign policy making.

**Required Reading**

• Jing Sun, ‘Growing Diplomacy, Retreating Diplomats: How the Chinese Foreign Ministry has been Marginalized in Foreign Policymaking’, *Journal of Contemporary China* 26, 105 (2017): 419-433.

**Supplementary Reading**


Reading Week

6: **The Party and Global Power: Political Influence and ‘Carrying a Sword’** (18 February)

What are the interconnections between the CPC’s exercise of domestic power and its evolving global engagement, including the role of the PLA? How are traditional foreign policy principles being reconciled with new challenges of protecting Chinese overseas nationals and interests?

**Required Reading**


### Supplementary Reading


### 7. China and the United States (25 February)

China’s relations with the United States are by far the most important of all, the significance of which has important implications for world order as well. At a time of considerable uncertainty, this class will take stock of recent context and current contours of relations.

#### Required Reading

- TBC

#### Supplementary Reading


8. China and the Global South: Cases in the Belt and Road Initiative (4 March)

9. China and Global Governance (11 March)

How has China’s engagement with and contribution to global governance been changing? Should Beijing enhance its contribution to global public goods? Or is such an idea – and global governance more generally - a new containment strategy by the West?

**Required Reading**


**Supplementary Reading**

- Shaun Breslin, ‘China and the global order: signalling threat or friendship?’, *International Affairs* 89, 3 (2013): 615-634.

11. Conclusions (25 March)
Annex: Additional Readings
Note: this is a selection of different types of literature arranged in no particular order but designed to introduce a representative range to accompany each class.

2. The Past(s) in the Present

- Jonathan Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).
- Frederic Wakeman, The Fall of Imperial China (Free Press 1975).

Republican China

- Frank Dikotter, The Age Of Openness: China before Mao (Hong Kong Press, 2008).
- Jonathan Fenby, Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China He Lost (Free Press, 2005).

After 1949


**History and Current Politics**


3. Reform and Going Global

4. ‘Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics’

- Hong Yu, Motivation behind China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank’, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26, 105 (2017), 353-368.

5. Foreign Policy Making

*Foreign Policy Making*

- Stuart Harris, *China's Foreign Policy* (Polity Press, 2014).
• Nien-Chung Chang Liao, ‘The sources of China’s assertiveness: the system, domestic politics or leadership preferences?’, *International Affairs* 92, 4 (2016): 817-834.

6. Inside/Outside: Power and the Party

**The Party**

• Hong Liu and Els van Dongen, ‘China’s Diaspora Policies as a New Mode of Transnational Governance’, *Journal of Contemporary China* 25,102 (2016): 805-821

**Domestic Politics**

• Duan Xiaolin, ‘Unanswered Questions: Why We may be Wrong about Chinese Nationalism and its Foreign Policy Implications’ *Journal of Contemporary China* 26, 108 (2017): 886-900.
• S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *Xinjiang: China’s Muslim Borderland* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004).

Cross-Straits Relations

• Wenxing Hu (ed.), *New dynamics in cross-Taiwan Straits relations: how far can the rapprochement go?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).
8. PLA and global power

- Howard French, China’s Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa (Knopf: 2014).

China and the Global South: Case Studies


Africa


**Latin America**

• Special Issue: ‘From the Great Wall to the New World: China and Latin America in the 21st Century’, The China Quarterly 209 (2012).


• Foreign Ministry of the PRC, ‘China’s policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean’ (Beijing, 5 November 2008).


9. **China and the United States**


• *Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walker, China, the United States, and Global Order (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).


• Henry Kissinger, On China (Penguin: 2012).

11. China and Global Governance

11. China in Global Governance: Policy Themes

Economics

Security
in Maritime and Continental Asia”, *Asian Security* Online 2017
[https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2017.1378181](https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2017.1378181)
• Sunghee Cho, ‘China’s Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations since the 2000s’, *Journal of Contemporary China* (2018), DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2018.1542216

**Human Rights**
• *Beijing Declaration* adopted by the First South-South Human Rights Forum, 11 December 2017.
• Dingding Chen and Katrin Kinzelbach, ‘Democracy promotion and China: blocker or bystander?’, *Democratization* 22, 3 (2015): 400-418.

**Global Environment**

**Global Cyber Governance**