

IR 407: Chinese Foreign Policy
University of Southern California
Spring 2017

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Course meetings: Thursday 2:00pm–4:50pm
Location: TBD
Course website: TBD
Office hours: Thursday 11:00am–12:00pm and by appointment

Version: February 27, 2017

Description

This advanced undergraduate seminar explores contemporary issues in Chinese foreign policy. It explores how Chinese policymakers pursue their goals: through diplomacy, force, trade, propaganda, and normative appeals to soft power. The course asks students to consider a number of important questions. To what degree can leading international relations theories explain China's behavior abroad? Given the broad spectrum of Chinese political actors — the paramount leader, political elites, the military, and the public — whose preferences are influential, and when? What role do geographic features, economic interests, and secessionist movements play? Does China have a grand strategy, and if so, what is it? The course presumes familiarity with the basic contours of Chinese history and politics.

Requirements

The course has five requirements, listed below.

1. Participation, 20%
2. Midterm, 30%
3. Research Paper, 30%
4. Research Paper Outline, 10%
5. Presentation, 10%

First, students are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to class and contribute substantially to class discussions. The success of an undergraduate seminar depends almost entirely on the quality of class discussions, and thus, participation will constitute 20% of final grades. Second, students will complete a midterm on Thursday, February 23, which will constitute 30% of final grades.

Third, students will submit a research paper by the final day of exam period, which will constitute 30% of final grades. The research paper may focus on a topic of the student's choosing. Students may write either a *Foreign Affairs* style piece that advances a particular argument about China, or they may write a *World Politics* style review article of several books that are germane to the course. Students should upload a one page outline of their research paper to the course Blackboard by March 31. The outline will constitute 10% of final grades.

The final requirement consists of a presentation, which will constitute 10% of final grades. During the first course meeting students will select a course meeting for which they will present the assigned weekly readings. Subsequent course meetings will begin with student presentations. These presentations should skillfully elucidate the theoretical arguments of the articles or books under review, offer preliminary thoughts on the quality of the empirical evidence the authors adduce in support, situate conclusions in the broader course, and offer a set of points for subsequent discussion. These discussion responsibilities are designed to prepare students to lead public discussions about complicated issues, a skill that is increasingly critical for professional success.

Technology Policy

Please make sure that your cell phones are silenced and put away before class starts. Laptops will not be permitted in class. Recent research shows that students take better notes by hand¹ and that they learn less, both individually and collectively, when laptops are in the classroom.²

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards.³ Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct.⁴ If you engage in plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, you will fail the course. If you aid someone else's misconduct, you will fail the course.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity⁵ or to the Department of Public Safety.⁶ This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men⁷ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage⁸ describes reporting options and other resources.

¹<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159>

²<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254?np=y>

³<https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>

⁴<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>

⁵<http://equity.usc.edu>

⁶<http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>

⁷<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/>

⁸<http://sarc.usc.edu>

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute,⁹ which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs¹⁰ provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information¹¹ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30am–5:00pm. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is 213.740.0776.

Recommended Reference Works

Students who seek additional background on Chinese history or politics would do well to start here.

Kenneth Lieberthal (1995). *Governing China*. New York: W.W. Norton. [This textbook is an excellent introduction to China's government. Chapters 6-7 are especially useful.]

Jonathan Spence (2001). *The Search for Modern China*. New York: WW Norton. [This is a superb history of modern China.]

Warren I. Cohen (2010). *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*. Fifth Edition. New York: Columbia University Press. [This is an excellent history of US-China relations. Students may wish to skip the first third of the book on the Republican period, and begin with the founding of the PRC in 1949.]

Thomas Christensen (2015). *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*. New York: W.W. Norton. [This book is written from the perspective of a US policymaker, and is a useful barometer of current American thinking on China.]

Week 1: Introduction, Course Overview, and Historical Trends

Date: Thursday, January 12

The introductory meeting will provide an overview of the course, the contours of the Chinese state, and the history of Chinese foreign policy. It will be the only class meeting in which I lecture. In class, students will select two course meetings for which they will present half the assigned weekly readings.

⁹<http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>

¹⁰http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

¹¹<http://emergency.usc.edu>

Recommended:

Susan V. Lawrence and Michael F. Martin (2013). "Understanding China's Political System." Congressional Research Service Report, March.

Week 2: Public Opinion and Propaganda

Date: Thursday, January 19

To what degree do Chinese citizens support the Chinese state? Are their opinions shaped by state propaganda, or do their opinions constrain foreign policy?

Bruce Dickson (2016). *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival*. Chapters TBD.

Jessica Chen Weiss (2014). *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 2, 3, 6-8.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review*.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts (2017). "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument." Forthcoming at *American Political Science Review*.

Week 3: Elite Politics and Collective Leadership

Date: Thursday, January 26

China's domestic politics have long been characterized by factionalism among competing groups of political elites. Is Chinese foreign policy factional as well? Who are China's political elites? What are their foreign policy preferences and how do they pursue them? How influential are elites compared to other actors such as the paramount leader or the public? What characterizes Xi Jinping's collective leadership versus that of earlier generations of Chinese leaders?

Suisheng Zhao (2016). "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival." *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): 83-97.

Cheng Li (2016). *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership*. Chapters TBD.

Week 4: Territory, Ethnicity, and Security

Date: Thursday, February 2

What role do territory and ethnicity play in shaping China's security? What explains the recent impoundment of Xinjiang citizens' passports? How do Chinese leaders think about territorial integrity, and how do they respond to secessionist movements?

Taylor Fravel (2008). *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*. Chapters TBD.

David Brophy (2016). *Uygher Nation*. Harvard University Press. Chapters TBD.

Week 5: The PLA

Date: Thursday, February 9

The military plays a crucial role in the politics of many autocracies. Yet in China, party leaders claim, the “gun serves the party.” To what extent is that true? Does the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) simply execute the military aspects of China’s foreign policy, or does it play a role in policy formulation? How are PLA capabilities and goals evolving in the conventional, cyber, and nuclear realms? What role do cyber capabilities play in China’s foreign policy?

Phillip C. Saunders and Andrew Scobell, eds. (2015). *PLA Influence on China’s National Security Policymaking*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Week 6: Tiananmen and Human Rights

Date: Thursday, February 16

What explained the events of June 4, 1989? What happened in Tiananmen Square? How did the events of that day affect China’s relations with the world subsequently? How have Chinese human rights practices evolved since then? Has Western engagement with China on human rights issues been successful in eliciting better human rights practices?

Louisa Lim (2015). *The People’s Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited*. Oxford University Press. Chapters TBD.

Andrew Nathan and Perry Link, eds. (2001). *The Tiananmen Papers*. Chapters TBD.

Thomas Lum (2015). *Human Rights in China and U.S. Policy: Issues for the 114th Congress*. Congressional Research Service.

Week 7: MIDTERM

Date: Thursday, February 23

Week 8: Chinese Capitalism

Date: Thursday, March 2

Understanding “capitalism with Chinese characteristics” is essential to understanding China’s economic policies abroad. This week explores the domestic foundations of China’s economy. What explains China’s massive growth in the 1980s? How was the rural entrepreneurship of the 1980s overtaken by the statist policies of the 1990s? What was the “Shanghai model?” Why did inequality and social welfare issues become salient in the 2000s, and to what degree have they been addressed? To what extent can China’s growth trajectory be compared with the post-Soviet trajectory characterized by “frozen reform?”

Yasheng Huang. “How did China Take Off?”

Yasheng Huang. *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics*. Chapters TBD.

Minxin Pei (2016). *China's Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of Regime Decay*. Harvard University Press. Chapters TBD.

Week 9: Economic Statecraft

Date: Thursday, March 9

Scholars sometimes characterize political affairs as high politics and economic affairs as low politics. However, some statesmen and women leave office convinced that economic relations between states are as—if not more—important than political-military relations. This week, we explore the economic side of Chinese foreign policy. To what extent do economic interests shape Chinese foreign policy? To what extent does China martial economic tools such as state-owned enterprise investment and financial institution lending to serve its political interests?

William Norris (2016). *Chinese Economic Statecraft: Commercial Actors, Grand Strategy, and State Control*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapters TBD.

Henry Sanderson and Michael Forsythe (2013). *China's Superbank: Debt, Oil and Influence - How China Development Bank is Rewriting the Rules of Finance*. Bloomberg Press. Chapters TBD.

Philip Lipsky (2016). "Who's Afraid of the AIIB?" *Foreign Affairs*.

Week 10: Exchange Rate Politics

Date: Thursday, March 23

The exchange rate between the renminbi and the US dollar has been one of the most controversial issues in US-China relations. How and why does China manage its currency? How has China's currency policy affected Chinese exporters and consumers? Is China's currency policy sustainable? What is a reserve currency, and is the renminbi likely to become one?

Paola Subacchi (2016). *The People's Money: How China Is Building a Global Currency*. Columbia University Press. Chapters TBD.

David A. Steinberg and Victor C. Shih (2012). "Interest Group Influence in Authoritarian States: The Political Determinants of Chinese Exchange Rate Policy." *Comparative Political Studies* 45(11): 1405-1434.

Week 11: Crisis Diplomacy

Date: Thursday, March 30

Some scholars and policymakers believe that the danger of militarized crises is particularly acute between China and the United States. Is this true, and if so, why? What crisis management tools might be employed to reduce the risk of crises? What are the sources of distrust in US-China relations? Are the United States and China stuck in a security dilemma?

Jervis, "The Security Dilemma."

Aaron Friedberg (2005). "Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security*.

Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi (2012). "Addressing US-China Strategic Distrust." John L. Thornton China Center Monograph Series, No. 4.

Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng with Danielle F.S. Cohen, eds. (2006). *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. China chapters: 2, 6, 7, 11.

Week 12: Taiwan

Date: Thursday, April 6

How has China's Taiwan policy evolved over time? What is public opinion about unification on both sides of the strait? How have recent political developments in Taiwan affected Chinese policy? What are the prospects for regional conflict over Taiwan?

Jonathan D. Spense (1990). *The Search for Modern China*. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 53-58.

Richard C. Bush (2013). *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations*. Brookings Institution Press. Chapters TBD.

TBA: a recent *China Leadership Monitor* article on current China-Taiwan relations.

Week 13: Japan

Date: Thursday, April 13

China's relations with Japan are some of its most fractious. What role does historical memory play in the relationship? To what extent does nationalism influence China's policy toward Japan? What is China's Japan policy, and does that policy serve China's national interests?

Richard C. Bush (2013). *The Perils of Proximity: China-Japan Security Relations*. Brookings Institution Press. Chapters TBD.

Week 14: South China Sea

Date: Thursday, April 20

China has dozens of ongoing territorial disputes with neighbors in the South and East China Seas. What is the source of these disputes? What prevents their resolution? Which parties enjoy stronger claims under international law? What explains China's declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone, as well as its construction of military bases upon disputed islands? How does Chinese policy differ in the two seas? Is China pursuing a Monroe Doctrine?

Peter Dutton (2011). "Three Disputes and Three Objectives: China and the South China Sea." *Naval War College Review* 64(4): 42-67.

M. Taylor Fravel (2011). "China's Strategy in the South China Sea." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 33(3).

John W. Lewis and Xue Litai (2016). "China's Security Agenda Transcends the South China Sea." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

Week 15: China's Future

Date: Thursday, April 27

In the final week of the course, we reflect upon the material covered thus far. We will debate the central question raised in Shambaugh's book: What is China's future? As China confronts the massive societal and economic hurdles overviewed thus far in the course, what should we expect from Chinese foreign policy in the next 5, 10, and 15 years?

David Shambaugh (2016). *China's Future*. Polity.