Description

China has been interacting with the world for millennia. No course can attempt a meaningful synthesis of that history in one semester. Therefore it is useful to begin with what this course is not. It is not a history course, nor is it a course on China’s domestic politics (though they often influence its international affairs in decisive ways). Instead, this course aims to explain China’s contemporary engagement with the world. To do so, it draws upon historical cases, empirical evidence, and international relations theory. Part I of the course presents students with theoretical tools and historical background on China’s foreign relations. Part II introduces the domestic political institutions that shape China’s engagement with the world. Part III focuses on China’s economic relations with the world. Part IV focuses on China’s political-military relations with major powers and multilateral organizations. The course concludes by asking, does China have a grand strategy in international affairs? If so, what is it, who is responsible for crafting it, and how successful has it been?

Requirements

The course has five requirements. First, students are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to class and contribute substantially to class discussions. Weekly reading assignments will average roughly 150 pages and will be available via Blackboard. This will constitute 10% of final grades. Second, a quiz on international relations theory and regional geography will be given on Tuesday, September 6, which will constitute 10% of final grades. Third, students will participate in an international crisis simulation on Thursday, November 10. Students will be assigned to countries implicated in the crisis and will prepare a three-minute presentation and a one-page memorandum on their country’s position. They will then attempt to resolve the crisis during the emergency UN meeting convened during class. This will constitute 10% of final grades.

Fourth, students will complete a midterm and final exam; they constitute 20% and 25% of final grades, respectively. The exams will require students to skillfully synthesize the course’s themes.

1To enable students to prepare, we will not meet on Thursday, September 1.
and draw on relevant scholarship. The midterm will be administered in class on Thursday, October 13; the final exam will be scheduled later.

The final course requirement is a presentation during the final week of class, which will constitute 25% of final grades. Working in groups, students will give 15 minute “briefings” to the class. These “briefings” should introduce the class to pressing issues in China’s international affairs, and may focus upon any topic that, due to time constraints, I have neglected during previous weeks. Prior to class presentations, each group will submit a 2,000 word written brief of the topic, which will anticipate the presentation and provide a foundation for discussion afterwards. Student groups will meet with me during Week 11 or Week 12 to discuss preliminary ideas. Possible topics include China’s engagement with Latin America, its policies on rare earth exports, or its stance on terrorism, among countless others.

**Technology Policy**

Please make sure that your cell phones are silenced and put away before class starts. I leave it to students to decide whether they will use laptops to take notes. Before making this decision please consult recent research that shows that students take better notes by hand and that they learn less, both individually and collectively, when laptops are in the classroom.

**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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct. 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 Diversity or to the Department of Public Safety. 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 Men provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage describes reporting options and other resources.

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

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2[http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159](http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159)
4[https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions)
5[http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct)
6[http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)
7[http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety](http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety)
8[http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/)
9[http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)
not English should check with the American Language Institute[10] which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs[11] provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information[12] 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.

**Required for Purchase**


**Recommended Reference Works**


**Part I: Analytical Tools and Historical Background**

**Lecture 1: Introduction and Course Overview**

Date: Tuesday, August 23

The introductory lecture provides an overview of the course.

**Lecture 2: Theories of International Politics**

Date: Thursday, August 25

This lecture introduces international relations theories that we will use to explain China’s international behavior throughout the rest of the course. We begin by asking, what are the leading IR paradigms? How well do they explain various aspects of Chinese foreign policy?

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Lecture 3: Historical Foundations
Date: Tuesday, August 30

This lecture describes the historical background that is crucial to understanding China’s contemporary interactions with the world. It summarizes the broad contours of China’s engagement with the world from the dynastic period to the present.


No Class: Prepare for Quiz
Date: Thursday, September 1

Quiz
Date: Tuesday, September 6

Part II: Institutions and Actors

Lecture 4: Institutions
Date: Thursday, September 8

This lecture introduces the institutions of Chinese politics and foreign policy. Which institutions enable the generation and execution of that policy? Has authority over foreign policymaking become fragmented over time, as with authority over domestic policy?


Lecture 5: The Paramount Leader
Date: Tuesday, September 13

China’s paramount leader possesses an extraordinary amount of power. How have different generations of Chinese leaders shaped China’s relations with the world? What priorities did they set? Are Chinese leaders today less powerful than their predecessors, and if so, why?


Lecture 6: The Public
Date: Thursday, September 15

This week, we will examine various arguments about the role of public opinion in China’s foreign policy. Does public opinion systematically affect foreign policymaking? If not, has it in some cases? Do Chinese policymakers employ public opinion strategically?


Lecture 7: Political Elites
Date: Tuesday, September 20

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?


Recommended but not required:

Lecture 8: The Military
Date: Thursday, September 22

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?


Lecture 9: The Media  
Date: Tuesday, September 27  
This lecture describes China’s robust propaganda machine. How does China’s state-affiliated media present China to the world? How does it attempt to filter Chinese citizens’ access to the world? Who is the target audience for Chinese propaganda?


Part III: “Low” Politics  
Lecture 10: China’s Domestic Economy  
Date: Thursday, September 29  
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. In Part III of the course, we explore the economic sources of Chinese foreign policy. What explains China’s massive growth since the late 1970s? To what extent do economic interests shape Chinese foreign policy? If so, whose economic interests matter? Do China’s economic interests conflict with its political and military interests?


Lecture 11: China’s Trade  
Date: Tuesday, October 4  

Lecture 12: Investment, Inward and Outward
Date: Thursday, October 6


Part IV: “High” Politics

Lecture 13: China-US Relations I
Date: Tuesday, October 11

This week we review the history of China’s engagement with the United States. How can that relationship be periodized (that is, have there been distinct eras in US-China relations)? What are the major turning points? What international relations theories best explain US-China interactions in each period?


Midterm Exam
Date: Thursday, October 13

Lecture 14: China-US Relations II
Date: Tuesday, October 18

This lecture examines various arguments about how China’s “rise” may affect US-China relations. Does China’s “rise” make conflict between the two states more likely? How might the two sides decrease the risk of conflict?


Lecture 15: China-Russia Relations
Date: Thursday, October 20

The Chinese Communist Party drew heavily from the Soviet example in the early years of the People’s Republic. Soon thereafter, the Sino-Soviet split emerged. Why did early relations sour? What were the dominant themes in Sino-Soviet relations during the Cold War? What are the main issues in China-Russia relations today?


Lecture 16: China-Japan Relations
Date: Tuesday, October 25

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? What is the role of the US-China-Japan security triangle?


Lecture 17: China and the Korean Peninsula
Date: Thursday, October 27
China has long been one of North Korea’s few supporters. How has this relationship evolved, and why does China continue to support North Korea? What are Chinese policies toward South Korea?


Lecture 18: South China Sea
Date: Tuesday, November 1

The empirical international relations literature shows that territorial disputes are the most intractable conflicts among states. 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 construction of military bases upon disputed islands? Is China pursuing a Monroe Doctrine?


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

Lecture 19: Taiwan
Date: Thursday, November 3

How was Taiwan first integrated into the Chinese political body? 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 mainland policy? What are the prospects for regional conflict over Taiwan?


Election Day
Date: Tuesday, November 8

Class will not be held as American election results will be coming in during our scheduled lecture time. In lieu of class, students should read Chinese state media coverage of the presidential election results. China Daily, People’s Daily, and Xinhua provide English language coverage. In addition, students should read:


Crisis Simulation
Date: Thursday, November 10

In this class, students will participate in an international crisis simulation. The crisis scenario will be announced in lecture on November 1; students will be assigned to countries then. In lieu of reading assignments for November 3, students will meet before class to write a one page brief on their country’s position on the crisis. In class on November 3, groups will present their nation’s position in a 3-minute statement. Groups will employ the rest of the UN emergency meeting to attempt to resolve the crisis through official and unofficial channels.

Lecture 20: China and Africa
Date: Tuesday, November 15

Much has been written on Chinese influence in Africa, real and imagined. What is the extent of Chinese investment in and trade with African countries? What are the reasons for this economic engagement? To what extent is it centrally planned? How has it affected the politics and economics of African countries?


Lecture 21: China and International Organizations
Date: Thursday, November 17

Thus far, the course has predominantly focused upon China’s bilateral relationships. What are China’s attitudes toward multilateral institutions? Have those attitudes evolved over time? When
is China more likely to pursue multilateral approaches to international issues as opposed to bilateral ones?


Part VI: Conclusion

Lecture 22: Does China Have a Grand Strategy?

Date: Tuesday, November 22

In the final week of the course, we reflect upon the material covered thus far. What is a grand strategy? To what extent does China have one? If it does, who is principally responsible for formulating it, and what are its aims? How successful have Chinese policymakers been in pursuing their international goals to date, and are their strategies likely to succeed in the future?


Lectures 24 and 25: Student Presentations

Dates: Tuesday, November 29, and Thursday, December 1