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 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 three requirements, listed below.

1. Participation, 30%
2. Midterm, 30%
3. Research Paper, 40%

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 30% of final grades. Second, students will complete a midterm on Friday, October 6, which will constitute 30% of final grades.

Third, students will submit a research paper by the final day of exam period, which will constitute 40% of final grades. The research paper may focus on a topic of the student’s choosing. Students will write a 20-25 page Foreign Affairs style piece that advances a particular argument about China.
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 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 not English should check with the American Language Institute which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs 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 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.

1 http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159
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
9 http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali
10 http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html
11 http://emergency.usc.edu
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.]


Introduction and Course Overview

Date: August 25 (Week 1)

The introductory meeting will provide an overview of the course.

Reference:


Foundations: China’s Path to Prosperity

Date: September 1 (Week 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? Can China be understood through the analytical lens of Acemoglu and Robinson?


The Rise of Xi

Date: September 8 (Week 3)

This week explores China’s trajectory from the end of Huang’s book to the present. What explains Xi Jinping’s rise to power? Has collective decision making in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) given way to personalist rule? What economic realities do Chinese leaders and citizens confront, and how might that condition China’s international behavior?


Public Opinion

Date: September 15 (Week 4)

This week examines various arguments about the role of public opinion in China’s foreign policy. What is preference falsification, and how does it affect how we should measure public opinion in China? How do Chinese citizens view their government and foreign affairs? To what extent do they demand and consume uncensored information? How nationalist are or aren’t they? How does public opinion affect foreign policy in China, if at all?


Chinese Military Modernization and Crisis Management

Date: September 22 (Week 5)

How are PLA capabilities and goals evolving in the conventional, cyber, and nuclear realms? What implications does this have for the regional power balance in East Asia? 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? 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? Is China pursuing a Monroe Doctrine?


Cold War II? US-China Military Rivalry

Date: September 29 (Week 6)

What are the sources of distrust in US-China relations? Are the United States and China stuck in a security dilemma? Are they in a “Cold War II” or the foothills of one as Henry Kissinger has suggested? Has China “peaked” and if so, what does that portend for Chinese foreign policy?


Midterm Exam
Date: October 6 (Week 7)

Break: Fall Recess
Date: October 13

Taiwan
Date: October 20 (Week 8)

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? Should the United States pursue a policy of strategic ambiguity or something else?


Democracy versus Autocracy?
Date: October 27 (Week 9)

To what extent should US-China competition be seen as a form of systems competition between democracy and autocracy? What is the global liberal order? Does China’s rise challenge it, and if so, how? How are China and the United States seeking soft power? How does soft power further Chinese and US security goals, and how successfully are they building and using it? Can the two sides influence each other to serve their national security objectives, and if so, how?


**Human Rights**

Date: November 3 (Week 10)

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?


**No Class: Veterans’ Day**

Date: November 10
Economic Statecraft
Date: November 17 (Week 11)

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?


No Class: Thanksgiving Break
Date: November 24

Technology
Date: December 1 (Week 12)

How are new technologies affecting US-China competition?

