The United States and China in the 21st Century: Past, Present, and Future

Course Objective and Description:

This seminar aims to provide an in-depth examination of U.S.-China diplomacy in the 20th century and to shed new light on current US-China relations at the beginning of the 21st century. It inquires whether a broad and persistent pattern exists in U.S.-China interactions throughout the 20th century, and whether this pattern may, subconsciously as well as consciously, persist into the early 21st century. Put another way, are there some enduring themes or visions of modernity, identity, and world order, which are deeply embedded in the national history, culture and society on both sides of the Pacific? Could those visions transcend both sides’ ideological rhetoric, transcend the Cold War framework, and continue to exist in the background of U.S.-China interactions in the post-Cold War world?

To inquire whether there are deep-rooted mainstream assumptions in China’s continued quest for modernity and a new identity, and in America’s continued search for a new world order, and to bring them to more conscious reflections, this course will be divided into six parts:

Part I introduces new theoretical approaches to the study of American East Asian relations in the past two decades, such as cognitive psychology and the cultural school of thought, or the humanist/normative dimensions of international relations;

Part II explores the major similarities and differences between classic Chinese and Western philosophies;

Part III examines American exceptional historical experiences and compares them with China’s search for modernity and new identity in modern times. It examines how Chinese cultural heritage and China’s place in the international system provided the broader contexts for China’s quests for modernity, from the Constitutionalist movement to the republican revolution in the early 20th century. It also explores how American Progressive reformers, particularly
Wilsonian liberal internationalists, responded to China’s democratic reformers, before the rise of the Chinese Communist Party.

Part IV focuses on US-China interactions during the early Cold War. It mainly focuses on two case studies: US-China military confrontation in the Korean War and indirect military confrontation in the Vietnam War.

Through these two in-depth case studies, the questions to be raised with regard to IR theory are: Did U.S.-China confrontations in the early Cold War result from an inevitable conflict of vital national interests and moral principles? Or were the origins and evolution of U.S.-China antagonism engendered by the fallout of counterproductive foreign policies on both sides, the bitter fruit of repeated misjudgments of each other’s intentions, or the fatal consequences of an illusion -- the perceived incompatibility of national interests and principles?

Part V provides a comprehensive study of US-China interactions in the post-Cold War world. It will particularly focus on the following issues: the Taiwan question, the Tibetan question, the issue of democracy and human rights in US-China relations. US-China economic relations, and China’s military defense policy in US-China diplomacy.

In Part VI, students will participate in class simulations and debates on current controversial issues in U.S.-China relations. An important objective of these simulations and debates is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical perspectives, and to explore whether the emerging theoretical paradigms in the field of American East Asian relations, particularly the normative consideration of international relations, could help to minimize the chance of war, to construct a win-win relationship between the American and Chinese people, and to build a great world society in the future.

Course Requirements:

Each student in the seminar will be required to write an in-depth senior thesis of 30 pages in length (typed and double spaced), to participate in class discussions, to take the midterm and final exams, and to participate in class simulation and class debate.

Paper proposal (5 pages) will be due on March 14. It should include:

1). A summary of secondary sources on your research topic: what are those authors’ different approaches? What are their different arguments and conclusions?
2). What is your argument? What is your theoretical approach? What is new in your research thesis?
3). An annotated bibliography (at least 30 books/documents/articles).

In April you should complete your draft of the senior thesis. In your process of revising the draft, you are encouraged to discuss about the revision with the instructor.

The senior research paper (30 pages) will be due on April 29. It should combine
both theoretical and historical perspectives in analyzing a contemporary issue in U.S.–China diplomacy. Moreover, it should demonstrate what is new in your research paper, either in terms of your research question, or in terms of your theoretical approach. Finally, it should explore the implication of your case study for the development of international relations theory.

Guidelines on writing senior research papers and class simulations will be posted on Angel.

**Grade Determinants:**

- Class Participation and Discussion: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Class Simulations: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Senior Research Paper: 25%

**Required Readings:**

Warren I. Cohen: *America’s Response to China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010);

Fritjof Capra: *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* (Boston, 1999: 25th anniversary edition);


Wm. Theodore deBary: *Nobility & Civility: Asian Ideals of Leadership and the Common Good* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004);

David C. Kang: *China rising: peace, power, and order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007);

*Coursepack* at Budget Printing (Trowbridge Plaza).

**Recommended Readings:**

Steve Chan: *China, the US and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique* (Routledge, 2007);
A. Tom Grunfeld: *The Making of Modern Tibet* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996);


    Thomas Pogge: *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007);

Topics and Assignments


January 19: Concepts of Culture, Ideology and Perceptions/Misperceptions in the Study of American East Asian Relations

Required Readings:

Paul A. Cohen: “Toward a China-Centered History of China,” in coursepack;

Gil Rozman: Introduction, The East Asian Region, in coursepack;


John King Fairbank: Introduction to Akira Iriye’s Across the Pacific, in Coursepack;

January 24: Concepts of “Fundamental Attribution Error” and “Cultural Internationalism” in IR Theory

Required Readings:


Akira Iriye: chapter 2, Cultural Internationalism and World Order, in coursepack;

Part II. Shared Human Concerns and Key Differences in Classic Chinese and Western Cultural Heritages

January 26 An Imaginative Conversation on the Nature of Universe, Power, and
Hegemony: *I-Ching* and Thucydides/Socrates

**Required Readings:**


Thucydides: Preface to *The Peloponnesian War*; on Google;


January 31  
**An Imaginative Conversation on the Future of Humanity:**
Lao Zi’s *Tao-te Ching* / Confucius and Pericles/Socrates

**Required Readings:**

Lao Zi: *Tao Te-ching*, in *Coursepack*;

Confucius on the Great Commonwealth; on Google:

“Pericles’ Funeral Oration,” on Google;

Socrates on ethics, justice and Athens-Sparta relations, on Google.

February 2  
**An Imaginative Conversation on Governance or State-Society Relationship:**
Lao Zi/Confucius and Plato/Aristotle

**Required Readings:**

Plato: *Republic*; on Google;

Aristotle: *On Man in the Universe*; on Google;

Confucius: [http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm#six](http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm#six);


Feb. 7  
**An Imaginative Conversation on Human Nature**
Lao Zi/Confucius and the Bible

**Required Readings:**
Wm. Theodore de Bary: *Nobility & Civility: Asian Ideals of Leadership and the Common Good*, Preface, chapter one: “Confucius Noble Person”;


**Part III.** Unusual Encounters: American Progressives and China’s Democratic Reformers in the Early 20th Century

Feb. 9: From the Constitutionalist Movement to the Republican Revolution of 1911

*Required Readings:*

“Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Will”, March 11, 1925, in *coursepack*;


Feb. 14: A New World Order? Wilsonian Liberal Internationalism vs. Sun Yat-sen’s “Three Principles of the People”

*Required Readings:*

Sun Yat-sen on the Principle of Nationalism, in *coursepack*;

Sun Yat-sen on the Principle of Democracy, in *coursepack*;

Sun Yat-sen on the Principle of People’s Livelihood, in *coursepack*.

James Reed: *The Missionary Mind and American East Asia Policy, 1911-1915*, on Angel.

**Part IV.** Volatile Encounters: US-China Interactions during the Cold War

February 16 The Age of Chinese Revolution: A Soviet Conspiracy or a National and Social Revolution (Land Revolution and Women’s Revolution) in China? Opposing Interpretations in the American Literature

*Required Readings:*


February 21: Historical Case Studies in the Cold War (I): U.S.-China Military Confrontation in the Korean War

**Required Readings:**

Rosemary Foot: *The Wrong War*, chapters 1-4 and 8 (pp. 23-130, 232-246), on Angel;

Newly Declassified Documents on the Origins of the Korean War: the Nehru government’s message to the Truman administration on Zhou Enlai’s warning, Stalin’s telegram to Kim, and State Department’s memo, etc.; will be sent to you in class.

February 23  Historical Case Study in the Cold War (II): U.S.–China Confrontation in the Vietnam War

**Required Readings:**


Gordon H. Chang: *Friends and Enemies*, chapters 3, 5, 8 and 9 (pp. 81-115, 143-174, 228-284);


Feb. 28  Class Discussions: US-China confrontation in the Korean War and the Vietnam War – What lessons can we learn here? What are the implications of these lessons for the development of IR theory?

March 2  **Midterm Exam (Bluebooks are Required)**
Part V. U.S.- China Diplomacy in the Age of Chinese Reform and the post-Cold War World

March 14 The Age of Chinese Reform: Deng’s “Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” -- A Desperate Effort to Save Chinese Communist Party or a Sharp Departure from the Soviet Model? Competing Interpretations in the American Literature

Required Readings:

Deng Xiaoping: “To Build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,” June 30, 1984, in coursepack;

Deng Xiaoping: “We must safeguard world peace and ensure domestic development,” May 29, 1984; in coursepack;


Hu Jingtao (Chinese President, 2003-2013): “China will stick to socialist road”; People’s Daily, Dec. 3, 2004; in coursepack;

Hu Jingtao: “To Build Democracy with Chinese Characteristics,” People’s Daily, September 8, 2005; in coursepack;

Wen Jiabao (Chinese Premier, 2003-2013): “Speech at summit of ASEAN plus China, Japan and ROK,” in coursepack;

Wen Jiabao: “Peace is a logical choice for China,” Dec. 2005; in coursepack;

“Chinese Premier calls for respect of civilizations, vows to stick to reform, opening up,” in coursepack;


Paper Proposal Due (5 pages)

March 16 America’s China Policy Debates in the post-Cold War World:

Required Readings:

Sam Huntington: “A Clash of Civilizations?” in *coursepack*;

Sam Huntington: “If Not Civilization, What?” in *coursepack*.


John Taylor: “China-US relations: Do not diverge because of misunderstanding;” in *coursepack*;


March 21

The Taiwan Question in U.S –China Diplomacy in the post-Cold War World

Required Readings:

President Truman’s Statement on the Taiwan Question, January 5, 1950, in *coursepack*;

Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s Speech on the Taiwan Question at the National Press Club, Jan. 12, 1950, in *coursepack*;


“The Joint U.S.- China Communiqué, Shanghai, February 27, 1972,” in *coursepack*;

“Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the People’s Republic of China and the United States of America,” January 1, 1979, in *coursepack*.

“The Taiwan Relations Act”, 1979, on Google;


March 23

The Tibetan Question in U.S. – China Diplomacy in the post-Cold War World
Required Readings:


Melvyn C. Goldstein: “Change, Conflict and Continuity among a Community of Nomadic Pastoralists: A Case Study from Western Tibet, 1950-1990,” in *coursepack*;

Reuter: “Internet Brings Market Economy to Tibet,” July 4, 1999; in *coursepack*.


March 28 Democracy and Human Rights in U.S.- China Diplomacy in the post-Cold War World

Required Readings:

James Fallows;

Recommended Readings:

“Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” on Angel;


March 30 China, WTO, and U.S. – China Economic Relations in the post-Cold War World

Required Readings:

Nicholas Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy*, “Forward” by Michael H. Armacost, in *coursepack*;

“U.S., China locked in trade disputes,” *Washington Post*, Jan. 4, 2010; on Angel;


http://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/wto-wind-industry-throwdown-u.s.-vs-china1/

http://www.earthtechling.com/2010/12/china-defends-wind-power-subsidies/

“U.S. Threatens China on Rare Earths, Wind Subsidies,” *SustainableBusiness.com* News, Dec. 27, 2010

“China Says Other Countries Should Exploit Rare Earths,” *Bloomberg News*, Dec 30, 2010

April 4  
China’s Military Defense Policy in the post-Cold War World

**Required Readings:**


David C. Kang: *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia*;

“Gates, China Say Stronger Military Ties Needed To Avoid Conflict,” *FoxNews.com* January 10, 2010
http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/01/10/china-say-stronger-military-ties-needed-avoid-missteps/

Will introduce the most recent developments on US-China controversy over Chinese military strategy.

April 6:  
Class discussions/debates on current US-China relations
Part VI. Class Simulations

April 11 China’s Population Control Policy in US-China Relations (Human Rights and Women’s Rights);

April 13 Currency Exchange Rates and Intellectual Property Rights in US-China Relations (Economy);

April 18 Trade and Environmental Protection in US-China Relations (Economy);

April 20: The Taiwan Question in US-China Relations (Security).

****** Course Summary ******

April 25: Ways of War and Peace: Positivism and Normative Dimension of International Relations Theory (I)

Required Readings:


April 27: Ways of War and Peace: Positivism and Normative Dimension of International Relations Theory (II)

Required Readings:

Fritjof Capra: *The Tao of Physics*, Chapter 3 and Epilogue;


April 29 (F) (4:30 pm): Senior Paper Due (30 pages) (Hard Copy Required) (To ensure fairness in grading, no late paper will be accepted without a doctor’s note.)

May 4 (W) (5:45 –7:45 pm): Final Exam (Bluebooks Required): (To ensure fairness in grading, no make-up exam will be given without a doctor’s note).

May 6 (F) (4:30 pm). Honors Senior Paper Due (40 pages).