

**POSC 190 (Honors Seminar for POSC Freshmen and Sophomores): Soft Power in Political Science and International Relations [Professor Stanley Rosen] Spring 2017**

This seminar will utilize the concept of soft power to understand the behavior of nation states, and how domestic politics and international relations are often closely related, particularly in terms of soft power generation.

Unlike hard power, which manifests through the use of coercion or incentives to generate influence, soft power involves a country attracting and co-opting others so that they will come to see their interests as being in alignment with those of the country with soft power. Soft power draws on resources such as culture, values and exemplary foreign policy behavior to create an international environment where others will be more inclined to cooperate and less likely to oppose the state's objectives (Nye 2004). The effectiveness of soft power resources depends on context; just as the effectiveness of military force cannot be accurately assessed without reference to the physical landscape in which that force will be applied, soft power cannot be understood without reference to the social context in which it operates (Nye 2004: 12). When the concept of soft power first emerged in the 1990s it was primarily used to analyze the foreign relations of the United States, but in more recent years it has been applied to a number of other countries, including Japan (Otmazgin 2008; Watanabe and McConnell 2008), India (Wagner 2010), Canada (Potter 2009), and, most recently, China. As the world's premier rising power and only significant potential challenger to U.S. primacy, China now represents the most important international test case for the theory and practice of soft power. In fact, while the class will look at soft power in a variety of nations – why, for example, have Japan and South Korea been so notably successful in exporting their popular culture beyond their own borders – arguably the most intriguing element in the examination of soft power projection today is the competition between a rising China and the world's only superpower, the United States, to win the hearts and minds of audiences in other countries.

The course will meet once a week and be conducted as a seminar rather than as a more standard lecture course. Each week there will be assigned reading and one class member will produce a short paper shared in advance with the other class members. The paper writer, with input from the instructor, will then lead the class in a discussion of the reading for that week. It is expected that each class member will write three of these short papers, depending on the number of students in the class. There will also be a term paper on a topic of the student's choice, worked out in advance and in consultation with the instructor. There will be considerable flexibility on the choice of term paper topic, for example it could be an analysis of an individual country or a comparison between countries in terms of soft power. I am very open to term papers on a topic that is of

particular interest to each student; there will be no “prompts” in this class in terms of term paper topics.

In keeping with the seminar format, there will be no exams in the class, and the final grade will reflect the grades on the short papers, class participation, and the term paper. I am of course quite happy to answer any questions you might have about the course.