

Bio

Audrye Wong is an assistant professor of political science and international relations at the University of Southern California, and a Wilson Center China Fellow. Her research examines how states use non-military means, including economic and informational tools, to gain geopolitical influence, with a substantive focus on China's foreign policy and Asia-Pacific security issues. Before coming to USC, Audrye was a Grand Strategy, Security, and Statecraft Postdoctoral Fellow at MIT's Security Studies Program and the Harvard Kennedy School. She received a PhD in Security Studies from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, where she was a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow. She holds or has held appointments with Harvard's Fairbank Center, the Brookings Institution, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Her research has been supported by the U.S. Department of Defense, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Tobin Project, and the Bradley Foundation.

IR 499 The Money and The Message: Influence and Statecraft in World Politics

In this advanced undergraduate seminar, we will examine new strategies through which countries can gain influence and power on the global stage in the 21st century. As the world has become more interdependent, economic and informational tools have become more prominent in national security and foreign policy toolkits. In recent years, we have seen how the flow of information can be weaponized and distorted to change minds and create political divisions – think Russian interference in U.S. elections and social media disinformation campaigns. Additionally, global commerce has promoted peaceful exchanges to some extent but also enabled the wielding of economic clout by powerful countries – the dominance of the U.S. dollar has enabled Washington to impose financial sanctions on countries such as Iran and North Korea, while China is actively using the lure of its consumer market and foreign investments to get companies and governments to fall in line with its demands. When and how might economic and informational tools be used for geopolitical influence? Are authoritarian regimes better able to marshal the money and the message for foreign interference activities or otherwise? What does China's rise, including in these non-military domains, mean for U.S. hegemony, how have other countries in the international system responded, and what does this mean for the trajectory of world order? While this course has no formal prerequisites, familiarity with introductory political science and international relations coursework is recommended.