

IR 333: China in International Affairs

Fall 2024

Instructor: Dr. Victoria Chonn-Ching

Days: Tu and Th, 8:30 – 9:50 a.m.

Class location: DMC 260

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Office location: DMC 354

Additional office hours (online): Can be booked using the following link:

<https://victoriaccusc.youcanbook.me>.



Photo of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to IR 333: China in International Affairs! This class offers a variety of readings that will help students better understand China's global role and its interactions in the 20th and 21st centuries. To note, this is not a *comprehensive* class on China (e.g., culture, society, politics) or a class solely on US-China competition (we'll have some sessions dedicated to the discussion of this topic). Instead, we will focus on different scholarly work and narratives that examine modern China and how it engages internationally, including the actions of different Chinese actors and their outcomes, as well as the regional and global responses to the country's actions (and inaction). I ask students to reflect on their own expectations of **what China is supposed to be and what it is** based on the country's *behavior*, what has shaped those views, and what else can be further explored.

The readings for this class can be extensive. This is not to "torture" students. The aim is to expose you to a variety of scholarship that you can critically read and discuss in class. This means that students should complete the reading assignments and other materials to the best of their ability before each class to make it as interactive as possible. While I understand that schedules can sometimes be packed and unpredictable, I encourage everyone to at least *try* to complete the

reading assignments as best as possible. *You are responsible for your own time management.* Moreover, being prepared will help students ask for clarification or address and discuss issues that emerge *after* reading the material. *Students should not expect class time to serve as a replacement for reading. If needed, pop reading assessments will be conducted.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To understand China’s global interactions and engagement in the 20th and 21st centuries, we need to examine what has shaped the country’s positions in the globe, its actors, as well as the key historical events that have influenced the decision-making processes of China’s leadership. Learning about China’s evolution in modern times will give us insight about how the country and its leaders view the country and its relationships with the rest of the world. In addition, we will focus on selected exchanges between China and key country-partners, covering issues such as China’s global investments and financing, geostrategic interests, and the country’s overall role in the world. Another important component of this class is the analysis of the evolution of US-China relations and strategic competition, addressing an ongoing concern: whether China seeks to displace the US-world order. Again, keep in mind that this issue is not the only focus of this class. We are learning about China in international affairs, and this includes learning about why China interacts with many international actors, how—and vice-versa.

In short, the main objective is to provide foundational knowledge about China and its place in the world. Students will examine the extent to which the country has become a global power, what that may mean, and the challenges it faces within and outside its boundaries.

CLASS MATERIALS

Students will read a diverse set of journal articles, opinion pieces, and policy reports. We will also read selected chapters from the following books (*all of them available through the USC Library, except *Governing China*—I will be providing the chapters*) and watch some videos. As such, there is no need to purchase the books unless you are interested in owning some (or all) of them.

- Lieberthal, Kenneth (2004). *Governing China—From Revolution Through Reform*, Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).
- Thurston, Anne (2021). *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Ye, Ming. (2020). *The Belt Road and Beyond: State-Mobilized Globalization in China: 1998–2018* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Class engagement	10%
Reading reaction papers (3 in total, will drop the lowest grade)	30%
Midterm exam	20%

Class project (in-class activity)	20%
Final paper	20%

1. Class engagement – 10%

Students are expected to *critically* read each week’s assigned materials and contribute to class discussions and activities. **The class will be as interactive and engaging as you make it to be.** In this class, I hope students can learn, listen, and grow as professionals and individuals. We all come from different backgrounds and embody many distinct stories, so be respectful at all instances. Participation *depends* on each student—if students miss a lot of classes, then this part of the course may be affected and, most importantly, students may miss important class material.

2. Reading reaction papers – 30%

The first response paper must be submitted by **September 19** by 11:59 p.m. The responses should not exceed three (3) pages, double-spaced, and 12-point font. The objective is to showcase a critical understanding of one reading that is completed in advance. Responses cannot be done “retroactively.” For example, a response submitted on September 19 should not be of a reading assigned for September 12.

Points that can be assigned to the responses:

Points	Description
< 10	Response is unclear and needs work—it does not show critical analysis of the readings.
10 – 12	Student provides a summary with some descriptions and facts, showcasing some understanding of the material. There is no analysis or critical assessment of the issues presented
12 – 13.5	Student provides a detailed summaries and descriptions of the issues, offering minimal analysis. There is some analysis of the material, but the assessment is superficial.
13.5 – 15	Student provides a critical assessment of the reading by clearly presenting the main arguments and issues, and by examining the effects and implications of the information provided by the material, the strengths and weaknesses, and potential concerns when applicable and relevant.

3. Midterm – 20%

The midterm will be in-person on **October 15**. Students requesting special accommodations should make the corresponding requests to the OSAS office so I can timely coordinate with the OSAS office. I will provide all material needed for the exam. No need to bring Bluebooks.

4. Class project – 20%

Students will be asked to examine China’s bilateral relationship with a designated country. Students can choose to work in groups of maximum three (3) people or individually and will be expected to discuss their analysis on **October 29**. More details will be provided in class.

5. Final paper – 20%

Students will write a final paper on a prompt that will be provided after the midterm. The paper will be due the last week of class. Below is the format and more details will be given in class.

Written submission format:

- 8-10 pages, excluding bibliography. No cover page needed.
- 12-point font (i.e., Times New Roman, Calibri, Cambria, or equivalent)
- 1-inch margins
- Double-spaced
- Style citation of choice. No footnote citations.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale for this class is as follow:

A	96-100	C	73-76
A-	90-95	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

CLASS POLICIES

MAKE-UP REQUIREMENTS

There will be **no make-up assignments and tests for unexcused absences**. **Acceptable excuses**, which include medical, family, or other emergencies and official university-related business, must be provided to me in writing **in advance** to be considered. Students who are unable to complete a requirement for legitimate reasons that do not qualify as excused under university guidelines, and who provide notification may, at my discretion, complete a requirement belatedly. Any requirement turned in on after the deadline will incur a **10-15% penalty**. *Submissions after a week from the original deadline will not be accepted and will be assigned a grade of zero.*

GRADING POLICY

Students may contest the grade on an exam and/or assignment due to clerical error up to one week after it is returned. Students will need to submit a written description of the error they believe occurred along with the exam and/or assignment. Clerical mistakes will be corrected, and the corresponding partial credit will be provided. Keep in mind that **this process does not guarantee the grade to go up**. In addition, everything submitted by students is graded according to the criteria and rubric provided on this syllabus; thus, **requests for regrading that are not due to clerical error will not be accepted**.

E-MAIL POLICY

Students are expected to send respectful and complete email messages. I will address you with courtesy and respect, thus students should write back in a similar fashion. I will try to reply to

students' messages in a timely manner. Please allow a **wait-period of 48 hours** after you send a message for me to email back. I will try my best to respond as soon as I see your messages.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug 27: Introduction

- Class introduction. No readings.

Aug 29: China's Power Status – What Kind of Power?

- Council on Foreign Relations. "China's Approach to Global Governance". Available at <https://www.cfr.org/china-global-governance/>
- Listen to the following podcast: <https://chinapower.csis.org/podcasts/chinas-upstart-strategy/>

Sep 3: How Can We "Study" China?

- Acharya, Amitava (2014). "International Relations Theory and the 'Rise of Asia' in *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*, edited by Saadia Pekkanen, pp. 120-138.
- Weiss, Jessica Chen (2021). "A World Safe for Autocracy? China's Rise and the Future of Global Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 98, Issue 4.
- Please watch: "What is the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation?" with Elizabeth Economy. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45PL-M_K_5w (3 mins.).

Sep 5: No class. I'll be presenting at the American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Convention.

Sep 10: China's Imperial Collapse

- Lieberthal, Kenneth (2004). *Governing China*. Read chapter 1: The Legacies of Imperial China.
- Kaufman, Allison (2011). "The Century of Humiliation and China's National Narratives," Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing.

Sep 12: Mao's Era—From Revolution to Republic (prioritize the chapter)

- Lieberthal, Kenneth (2004). *Governing China*. Read chapter 4: The Maoist Era.
- PBS, "China: A Century of Revolution (Part II– 1949-1976)". Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMaXSKH2w3c> (120 mins.).

Sep 17: Deng's Mandate—The Reform Era

- Lieberthal, Kenneth (2004). *Governing China*. Read chapter 5: The Reform Era.
- Please watch:
 - The Economics of China, Episode 1: "Three Chinas". Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq39i84l8MU> (17.55 mins.).

- The Economics of China, Episode 2: “Deng’s Hidden Political Revolution”. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg7MEWXyMmo> (12.44 mins.).

Sep 19: The China Model

- Fewsmith, Joseph (2011). “Debating ‘the China Model’,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 35, pp. 1-7.
- Zhao, Shuiseng (2010). “The China Model: Can It Replace the Western Model of Modernization?” *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 19, Issue 65, pp. 419-436.
- Please watch: The Economics of China, Episode 3: “Let Many China Models Bloom”. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2JVB0sxq1w> (18 mins).

Sep 24: China in the World Order(s)

- Johnston, Alastair Iain (2019). “China in a World of Orders,” *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 9-60.
- Economy, Elizabeth (2024). “China’s Alternative Order—And What America Should Learn from It,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June issue. Available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/chinas-alternative-order-xi-jinping-elizabeth-economy> (The reading is also on Brightspace).

Sep 26: Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics?

- Hung, Ho-fung (2024). “China’s ‘state capitalism’ in comparative and historical perspectives,” *Economy and Society*, pp. 1-24.
- McNally, Christopher A. (2012). “Sino-Capitalism: China’s Re-emergence and the International Political Economy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 64, Issue 4, pp. 741-776.

Oct 1: Economic Diplomacy

- Lai, Christina (2018). “Acting One Way and Talking Another: China’s Coercive Economic Diplomacy in East Asia and Beyond,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 169-187.
- Pearson, Margaret M. (2014). “China’s Foreign Economic Relations and Policies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*, edited by Saadia M. Pekkanen, pp. 160-178.
- Please watch The Economics of China, Episode 7: “Learning and Mislearning from China”. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_b8NU5rF7I (8.58 mins).

Oct 3: Entering a New Era—Xi Jinping’s China

- Kilpatrick, Ryan Ho (2024). “Self-revolution,” in *China Media Project*. Available at https://chinamediaproject.org/the_ccp_dictionary/self-revolution/
- Li, Cheng (2019). “Xi Jinping ‘Progress’: Domestic Moves Toward a Global China,” *The Brookings Institution*, pp. 1-15.
- Shirk, Susan (2018). “China in Xi’s New Era”: The Return to Personalistic Rule,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 22-36.

Oct 8: Rethinking China's Rise

- Beckley, Michael (2021). "Conditional Convergence and the Rise of China: A Political Economy Approach to Understanding Global Power Transitions," *Journal of Global Security Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 1-9.
- Zhang, Feng (2012). "Rethinking China's Grand Strategy: Beijing's Evolving National Interests and Strategic Ideas in the Reform Era," *International Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 318-345.
- Please watch:
 - The Economics of China, Episode 5: "China's Gilded Age". Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGEz9buNJas> (23.21 mins).

Oct 10: No class. Fall break.**Oct 15: In-class midterm****Oct 17: (China's) Soft Power and Hard Power**

- Nye, Joseph S. Jr. (2023). "Peak China?" *Project Syndicate*. Available at <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/peak-china-debate-calls-for-careful-assessment-by-joseph-s-nye-2023-01>
- Repnikova, Maria (2022). "The Balance of Soft Power: The American and Chinese Quests to Win Hearts and Minds," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August. Read parts 1, 3, and 6.

Oct 22: The Making of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- Ye, Min (2020). *The Belt Road and Beyond: State-Mobilized Globalization in China: 1998-2018* (New York: Cambridge University Press). Read chapters 1, 2, and 5.

Oct 24: Weaponization and Perceptions of the BRI

- Garcia Herrero, Alicia and Jianwei Xu (2019). "Countries' Perceptions of China's belt and Road Initiative: A Big Data Analysis," Working Paper, Issue 1, *Bruegel*, pp. 1-20 (Please make sure to also read/revise Annexes 3-11).
- Zhao, Suisheng. (2020). "China's Belt-Road Initiative as the signature of President Xi Jinping diplomacy: Easier said than done," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 29, No. 123, pp. 319-335.

Oct 29: Class project (in-class activity)**Oct 31: China in the World: Africa**

- Brautigam, Deborah (2019). "Misdiagnosing the Chinese infrastructure push." *The American Interest*. Available at <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2019/04/04/misdiagnosing-the-chinese-infrastructure-push/>
- Zhu, Keren, Ben Mwangi and Lynn Hu. (2023). "Socio-economic impact of China's infrastructure-led growth model in Africa: A case study of the Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway," *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 614-638.

Nov 5: Special Elections Topic (optional)

- National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (NCUSCR). “Candidates on China: Election 2024”. Available at <https://www.ncuscr.org/trump-harris-china-election-2024/>

Nov 7: China in the World: Southeast Asia

- Bing, Ngeow Chow (2014). “Southeast Asians Are Using China Engagement to Compel Greater U.S. Greater Regional Involvement,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Available at <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2024/01/southeast-asians-are-using-china-engagement-to-compel-greater-us-regional-involvement?lang=en>
- Han, Enze (2024). “China’s complex presence in Southeast Asia,” *EastAsiaForum*. Available at <https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/05/10/chinas-complex-presence-in-southeast-asia/>
- Shambaugh, David (2018). “U.S.-China Rivalry in Southeast Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 85-127.

Nov 12: China in the World: Latin America

- Myers, Margaret, Angel Melguizo, and Yifang Wang (2024). “New Infrastructure—Emerging Trends in Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *The Dialogue*, pp. 1-20.
- Urdinez, Francisco, Fernando Mouron, Luis L. Schenoni, and Amancio J. de Oliveira (2018). “Chinese Economic Statecraft and U.S. Hegemony in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis, 2003-2014.” *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 58, Issue 4, pp. 3-30 (*don’t worry too much about the formulas. Instead, focus on the hypotheses and arguments, and the outcomes the authors find*).
- Wise, Carol and Victoria Chonn Ching (2018). “Conceptualizing China-Latin America relations in the twenty-first century: the boom, the bust, and the aftermath,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 21, Issue 5, pp. 553-572.

Nov 14: No class. In DC presenting at the CAPS-RAND-NDU-USIP Conference**Nov 19: China in the World: The Middle East**

- Alterman, Jon (2024). “China and the Middle East.” Congressional Testimony published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
- Lons, Camille, Jon Alterman, Chas W. Freeman Jr., and jim Moran (2022). “The Rise of China in the Middle East,” *Middle East Policy*, No. 29, pp. 3-24.
- Please watch “2024 Carnegie Global Dialogue: China and the Middle East”. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Von3ow5OskQ> (52 mins.).

Nov 21: The US and China: Evolving “Friendnemies”?

- Thurston, Anne F. (2021). “Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations,” in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, edited by Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 3-31.

- Madsen, Richard. (2021). "The American Dream and the China Dream: Unpeaceful Evolutions," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, edited by Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 120-145.
- Please watch:
 - "Has the U.S. engagement with China failed?" with Diana Fu and Yu Sun. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8I47HidLNo> (12:47 mins).
 - "Where do the U.S. and China most clash on foreign policy?" with Elizabeth Economy. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyYXM-R4hf4> (3:49 mins.).

Nov 26: U.S.-China Trade War

- Allen, Craig. (2021). "U.S.-China Retrospective: Forty Years of Commercial Relations," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, edited by Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 146-173.
- Lukin, Alexander (2019). "The US–China Trade War and China's Strategic Future," *Survival*, No. 61, pp. 23-50.
- Zhou, Weihuan and Henry Gao (2020). "US-China Trade War: A Way Out?" *World Trade Review*, No. 19, pp. 605-617.

Dec 3: Military Competition and Technology Development

- Campbell, Charlie (2019). "'The Entire System is Designed to Suppress Us.' What the Chinese Surveillance State Means for the Rest of the World," *Time*. Available at <https://time.com/5735411/china-surveillance-privacy-issues/>
- Freeman, Chas W. (2021). "U.S.-China Military Relations: From Enmity to Entente and Maybe Back Again," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, edited by Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 295-334.
- Kroeber, Arthur R. (2024). "Unleashing 'new quality productive forces': China's strategy for technology-led growth," *Brookings*.
- Please watch "What will the Tik Tok ban mean for Chinese tech in the U.S.?" with Wenchi Yu. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyuDVAXW0nE> (10.01 mins.).

Dec 5: Redefining U.S.-China Relations

- Lieberthal, Kenneth and Susan Thornton (2021). "Forty-Plus Years of U.S.-China Diplomacy: Realities and Recommendations," in *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations*, edited by Anne Thurston (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 365-390.
- Please watch "Should the U.S. Decouple from China?" with Clark Packard. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_36pc9cPis (5.22 mins.).

Dec 8: Final paper due by 11:59 p.m. (Pacific Time). No late submissions.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND SUPPORT MATERIAL

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism or presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words, is a serious academic offense with consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (<https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information about university policies on scientific misconduct on <https://policy.usc.edu/research-and-scholarship-misconduct/>.

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* (<http://equity.usc.edu>) or to the *Department of Public Safety* (<https://dps.usc.edu/>). 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 Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (<https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home>) provides confidential support and other resources.

COVID-19 AND OTHER HEALTH POLICIES

Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's health and COVID-19 policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. This means that students must follow the university's mandates at all times, regardless of vaccination status.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Every student in this course, regardless of background, sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, physical or mental ability or any identity category, is a valued and equal member of the class. We all bring different experiences and perspectives to USC, and it is those experiences and perspectives that will enrich the course content. My intent as an instructor is to provide an inclusive learning environment where individual differences are respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength.

For additional information and resources, I encourage you to visit Dornsife's Office of Diversity (<https://dornsife.usc.edu/dei/>) and/or USC's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (<https://diversity.usc.edu/resources/>).

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Many USC schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Some helpful centers and institutes are:

- The American Language Institute (<https://ali.usc.edu/>), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for students whose native language is not English and may need support.
- The Office of Disability Services and Programs (<https://osas.usc.edu/>), which provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. The student is responsible for submitting the necessary certification forms to the professor during the first two weeks of class.
- If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information (<http://emergency.usc.edu>) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.