

US-CHINA RELATIONS

TERM: Spring 2021
WEBSITE: [POLS 1824T](#)
TIME: Friday 3-530pm
CLASSROOM: Watson 114

PROFESSOR: Tyler Jost
OFFICE: Watson Room 342
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OFFICE HOURS: Thursday 4-6pm ([Calendly](#))

COURSE SUMMARY

This undergraduate seminar explores the evolution of contemporary US-China relations since 1989 through the lens of political science. The course is divided into three parts. The first section introduces theories of international competition and provides a background on US-China relations between 1949 and 1989. The second and third sections then look at the evolution of US and Chinese strategies, as well as specific security, economic, and diplomatic behaviors.

SHOULD I TAKE THIS COURSE? AND WHY?

I believe there are two reasons to take this course. First, this course is aimed at providing students with in-depth knowledge about how social science research is done. The readings go far beyond the survey courses on Chinese foreign policy offered at Brown, offering students the opportunity to engage with primary source material from the United States and China. Particularly in the first half of the course, our readings will include many of the government documents and memoirs used by historians and political scientists to write the secondary sources on the syllabus. This offers an introduction to the craft of scholarly research on US and Chinese foreign policy.

The second reason is substantive in nature. In the past several years, policymakers, academics and pundits have begun to postulate that the United States and China have entered a new “cold war.” While it is increasingly clear that *something* has changed in US-China relations, the nature and origins of that change remain fiercely debated. My hope is to provide you with material that will help you draw your own conclusions. While I predict that not everyone will arrive at the same answer, I do expect that everyone will develop historical and theoretical building blocks that will make their answers better informed.

During the first part of the course, we will begin by introducing some theoretical frameworks by which to understand why states compete and cooperate. *Please note that there are readings for the first week of class.* Weeks 2 through 5 will then build on these theoretical perspectives through examining primary and secondary sources. During the second and third part of the course, the syllabus pairs one or two general readings on international relations theory with several applications to the case of US-China relations. The goal is to critically evaluate how well theoretical frameworks illuminate why a change occurred.

While there are no formal prerequisites, it is *strongly* recommended that students have basic familiarity with Chinese politics prior to taking this course. This might be accomplished by taking one of the other courses on Chinese politics offered at Brown (e.g. POLS 1290 or POLS 1350) or through a careful reading of a general political history (e.g. *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction*, *The Search for Modern China*, or *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping*) prior to enrolling.

The course syllabus includes numerous Chinese readings, which should be accessible to students who have completed at least four years of language study. However, all Chinese-language readings are paired with English-language alternatives for students interested in the course but who do not possess Chinese language skills.

COURSE GOALS

The overall goal of this course is for students to develop informed and nuanced opinions regarding the state of contemporary US-China relations. You should leave the class with a historical sensibility regarding the origins of cooperation and competition between the United States and China, as well as mastery of a set of theoretical perspectives that the social sciences lend to explaining these issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts for the course. All readings will be available through the Brown Library Online Course Reserves Access (OCRA). While not required, students that have not taken a course in international relations theory may find it helpful to consult an introductory text, such as *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (4th edition).

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This seminar is discussion-based. The success of a discussion-based class model hinges on three things. First, it requires you to invest time in engaging with the material prior to class. I expect everyone to devote sufficient time to complete all readings in advance. I do reserve the right to cold call during class. Second, it requires you to engage with the material with a critical eye and come to class prepared to share your thoughts. On the one hand, assigned readings in this course represent the culmination of years of careful academic research by some of the leading scholars in the field. Try to remain open-minded and take what the author is saying seriously. On the other hand, the study of Chinese foreign policy is filled with contestation. Class discussion will aim to bring out multiple sides of the debate and encourage you to start developing ideas about where you stand. Third, in-class discussion and debate requires that we be respectful of each other's opinions. That includes the instructor. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is problematic in any way, please contact me.

TIME ALLOTMENT

You should expect to spend approximately: 10 hours per week (on average) reading and reviewing the material (130 hours total); 2.5 hours writing each of the two response papers (5 hours

total); 5 hours researching and preparing your final paper proposal; and 25-30 hours researching, writing, and revising your final paper. **Please note that this course involves an moderately intensive reading load.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COLLABORATION

Plagiarism violates the academic policies of Brown University and the norms of the scholarly community. Consequences for plagiarism are often severe, and can include suspension or expulsion. Brown's [Academic Code](#) provides specific details regarding how to properly cite material. A general rule of thumb is, if you are in doubt, ask for clarification. If you are still in doubt, *include the citation*. Students may find additional support for the writing requirements in this course at the [Brown Writing Center](#). You are encouraged to discuss course material and assignments with classmates. This is critical to academic work. In the end, however, all assignments must be your own work. You should acknowledge assistance given by other students. For example, if a classmate provided comments on an earlier draft, simply include a footnote acknowledging the assistance (you will see this convention in nearly every assigned reading).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY (MAY CHANGE)

Students are not permitted to use technology of any kind (laptops, tablets, cell phones) during class. This seminar is primarily discussion-based, meaning that we should be actively listening while others are speaking in order to better engage with their argument. In addition, there is a growing body of evidence that students perform better in technology-free learning environments. Students who take handwritten notes show improved ability to understand and remember concepts. Perhaps more important to the community, other studies show that students who multitask on laptops not only tend to score lower on tests but also end up distracting those around them.

ACCESSIBILITY

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information contact [Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#) (401-863-9588; SEAS@brown.edu).

Brown University welcomes students from around the country and the world, and the unique perspectives international and multilingual students bring enrich the campus community. To empower multilingual learners, an array of support is available including language and culture workshops and individual appointments. For more information about [English Language Learning](#) support at Brown, contact the ELL Specialists (ellwriting@brown.edu).

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSIGNMENTS

30% Participation
35% Response Papers
35% Final Paper

Participation. Active participation is the cornerstone of an academic seminar. Creating a healthy learning environment requires both your attendance and your active contribution to the discussion. I will allow one unexcused absence, but any additional absences require permission and/or a Dean's excuse. For each class missed, you will need to complete one additional response paper covering that week's material. Please come to class on time. I reserve the right to treat a late arrival greater than 10 minutes as an absence.

Participation will be evaluated based both on the frequency and thoughtfulness of your contributions. Exemplary participation consistently meets the following criteria: (1) complete comprehension of the week's readings; (2) ability to draw connections across readings; (3) engagement with your classmates' ideas; and (4) novel insight. Above average participation consistently meets some of these criteria. Acceptable participation consistently makes a good faith effort but is inconsistent in execution or engagement. Unacceptable participation is consistently uninvolved or otherwise disrespectful. I will contact you if your participation is unacceptable.

Response Papers. You will write two brief (500 words) response papers over the course of the semester based on the assigned readings for a given week. An exemplary response paper makes an argument that demonstrates mastery of the assigned material, critically engages with the authors' arguments, and advances an original or novel insight into the week's topic. An above average response paper meets at least one of these criteria. An acceptable paper makes a good faith effort. While there is no one-size-fits-all model for a response paper, try to think about how these readings speak to one another. Do the authors disagree about the facts, the explanation, or both? Who do you find more compelling? What historical events or theoretical concepts covered in other weeks of the course might complement or contest the author's argument? Please submit response papers over Canvas by **Thursday at 9pm** on your assigned week. For students submitting a response paper for a missed class, please email the paper directly to me.

On the first day of class, we will have a sign-up sheet for the specific weeks to complete your response papers. To ensure an even distribution across the semester, only three or four students will write response papers in a given week. However, if you have a pressing interest in a topic and are not able to secure a slot, please let me know! I'll do my best to accommodate.

Final Paper. The final paper is designed for you to make a focused, scholarly argument pertaining to some aspect of US-China relations. The paper should make a *narrow* argument that speaks to the existing literature. A general rule of thumb is that more focused questions are almost always better. There are three general format options. The first is to advance a historical argument about what is or has happened. For example, you might argue that the signals that Mao sent the United States in 1969 were not clear. The second is to advance a theoretical argument about why something happened or is happening. For example, you might argue that the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1995 resulted from leader emotions, rather than declining territorial claim strength. The third is to apply a theoretical concept discussed in the course to a specific policy issue. For example, you could argue that participation in international institutions in the 2000s has or has not affected China's attitudes regarding foreign intervention.

Whichever model you choose, you should structure your paper with a brief (generally 5-6 pages double spaced) review of the historiography or theory surrounding your research question, followed by substantive discussion of empirical evidence (generally 14-15 pages double spaced). The introduction of your paper should clearly state your argument in a few paragraphs. The

conclusion should *briefly* summarize the paper's findings and discuss the implications. Please write the final paper in the language of hypothesis testing. Whether or not you choose to adopt the more technical, academic style of some of the political science articles we will read is up to you. While students are free to use Chinese-language materials, there are ample topics that can be addressed without such skills.

Please submit a short, 200-word abstract of your research topic to me by **Thursday February 17 at 9pm**. In addition, students are required to schedule at least one 15 minute office hour session with me. The thirteenth class session will be used as an optional workshop for your final papers. A draft of your final paper is due prior to class that week. The final paper is due on **Friday May 6 at 9am**.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: Foundations

1. INTRODUCTION - JANUARY 28

- Westad, Odd Arne. "The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Are Washington and Beijing Fighting a New Cold War." *Foreign Affairs*. 98 (2019): 86.
- Brands, Hal and John Lewis Gaddis. "The New Cold War: America, China and the Echoes of History." *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2001.
- Shi Yinhong, "China-US Rivalry in the Recent Past, Present, and Future: Implications for China's Grand Strategy in the New Era" available on [YouTube](#) [07:05-54:00]

2. THEORIES OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION - FEBRUARY 4

- Rosato, Sebastian. "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers." *International Security* 39.3 (2015): 48-88.
- Glaser, Charles L. "The Security Dilemma Revisited." *World Politics* 50.1 (1997): 171-201.
- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Chapter 1.
- Tomz, Michael R., and Jessica L.P. Weeks. "Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 107.4 (2013): 849-865.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - FEBRUARY 11

- Chen Jian. "The Myth of America's 'Lost Chance' in China: A Chinese Perspective in Light of New Evidence." *Diplomatic History* 21.1 (1997): 77-86.
- Xia Yafeng. "China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8.4 (2006): 3-28.
- Vogel, Ezra F. *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011. Chapter 11.

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- (Optional) Sutter, Robert G. *US-China Relations: Perilous Past, Uncertain Present*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Chapters 3 and 4.

Part II: US-China Relations, 1989-2007

4. PRC STRATEGY AFTER THE COLD WAR - FEBRUARY 18

Theoretical Concepts: threat perception

Empirical Focus: Tiananmen, peaceful evolution, Taiwan

- Herrmann, Richard K., and Michael P. Fischerkeller. "Beyond the Enemy Image and Spiral Model: Cognitive–Strategic Research after the Cold War." *International Organization* 49.3 (1995): 415-450.
- Spohr, Kristina. *Post Wall, Post Square: How Bush, Gorbachev, Kohl, and Deng Shaped the World After 1989*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. Chapter 1.
- Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf. *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011. Chapters 10 and 11.
- Nathan, Andrew J., and Andrew Scobell. "How China Sees America: The Sum of Beijing's Fears." *Foreign Affairs*. 91 (2012): 32.

5. US STRATEGY AFTER THE COLD WAR - FEBRUARY 25

Theoretical Concepts: unipolarity

Empirical Focus: New World Order, liberal international order, "responsible stakeholders"

- Monteiro, Nuno P. *Theory of Unipolar Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Chapter 4.
- Spohr, Kristina. *Post Wall, Post Square: How Bush, Gorbachev, Kohl, and Deng Shaped the World After 1989*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. Chapters 6 and 9.
- Steinberg, James B. "What Went Wrong? US-China Relations from Tiananmen to Trump." *Texas National Security Review*. (2020).
- (Optional) The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, 1996.

6. SECURITY I - MARCH 4

Theoretical Concepts: arming, conflict

Empirical Focus: 1993 Military Guidelines, 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1999 Belgrade Bombing, 2001 EP-3 Incident, Anti-Succession Law

- Fravel, M. Taylor. "Shifts in Warfare and Party Unity: Explaining China's Changes in Military Strategy." *International Security* 42.3 (2017): 37-83.
- Silove, Nina. "The Pivot Before the Pivot: US Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia." *International Security* 40.4 (2016): 45-88.
- Jost, Tyler. "Authoritarian Advisers: Institutional Origins of Miscalculation in Chinese Foreign Policy." Working paper.

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- Suettinger, Robert L. *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of US-China Relations 1989-2000*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004. Chapter 6.
 - Tang Jiaxuan. *Heavy Storm and Gentle Breeze: A Memoir of China's Diplomacy*. New York: Harper Collins, 2011. Chapter 5.

7. ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE I - MARCH 11

Theoretical Concepts: economic interdependence

Empirical Focus: WTO accession, "Going Out" strategy (走出去战略), Strategic (&) Economic Dialogue

- Gartzke, Erik. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51.1 (2007): 166-191.
- Tan, Yeling. *Disaggregating China, Inc.: State Strategies in the Liberal Economic Order*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2021. Introduction.
- Dreher, Axel, Andreas Fuchs, Bradley Parks, Austin M. Strange, Michael J. Tierney. *Banking on Beijing: The Aims and Impacts of China's Overseas Development Program*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Chapter 2.
- Naughton, Barry and Yao Yang. "The Economic Relationship," in *Debating China: The US-China Relationship in Ten Conversations*. Hachigian, Nina, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Chapter 2.

8. DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS I - MARCH 18

Theoretical Concepts: soft power, public opinion

Empirical Focus: strategic reassurance, responsible stakeholder

- Goldsmith, Benjamin E., Yusaku Horiuchi, and Kelly Matush. "Does Public Diplomacy Sway Foreign Public Opinion? Identifying the Effect of High-Level Visits." *American Political Science Review* (2021): 1-16.
- Medeiros, Evan S., and M. Taylor Fravel. "China's New Diplomacy." *Foreign Affairs*. 82 (2003): 22.
- Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf, ed. *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996*. Columbia University Press, 2001. Chapter 7.
- Qian Qichen. *Ten Episodes in China's Diplomacy*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005. Chapter 6.
- Wu, Xinbo. "Chinese Perspectives on Building an East Asian Community in the Twenty-First Century." *Asia's New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition and the Search for Community* (2009): 55-77.

Part III: US-China Relations, 2008-present

9. CHANGES IN PRC STRATEGY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES - MARCH 25

Theoretical Concepts: international status

Empirical Focus: hide-bide strategy (韬光养晦), active accomplishment (积极有所作为), fighting without breaking (斗而不破)

- Doshi, Rush. *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapter 1 (skim pp. 3-6) and 7.
- Yuan Peng, "The Coronavirus Pandemic and a Once-in-a-Century Change." (RCC translation)
- Weiss, Jessica Chen. "A World Safe for Autocracy: China's Rise and the Future of Global Politics." *Foreign Affairs*. 98 (2019): 92.
- Economy, Elizabeth C. "China's New Revolution: The Reign of Xi Jinping." *Foreign Affairs*. 97 (2018): 60.
- (Optional) Fravel, M. Taylor. "US-China Relations at the Chinese Communist Party's Centennial." Testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. January 2021.
- (Optional) Wang Jisi and Hu Ran. "From Cooperative Partnership to Strategic Competition: A Review of China-US Relations 2009–2019." *China International Strategy Review* 1.1 (2019): 1-10.

10. CHANGES IN US STRATEGY TOWARD CHINA - APRIL 8

Theoretical Concepts: power transitions, trade protectionism

Empirical Focus: the "Pivot", the 2016 and 2020 American elections

- Powell, Robert. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60.1 (2006): 169-203.
- Medeiros, Evan S. "The Changing Fundamentals of US-China Relations." *The Washington Quarterly* 42.3 (2019): 93-119.
- [Interview with Wu Xinbo](#) by Tang Jie. *The Diplomat*, 2020.
- (Optional) Haass, Richard. "The Age of America First: Washington's Flawed New Foreign Policy Consensus." *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2021.
- (Optional) Autor, David H., David Dorn, and Gordon H. Hanson. "The China Shock: Learning from Labor-Market Adjustment to Large Changes in Trade." *Annual Review of Economics* 8 (2016): 205-240.

11. SECURITY II - APRIL 15

Theoretical Concepts: military coercion, arms control

Empirical Focus: Air-Sea Battle, PLA Strategic Support Force, South China Sea

- Coe, Andrew J., and Jane Vaynman. "Why Arms Control Is So Rare." *American Political Science Review* 114.2 (2020): 342-355.
- Saunders, Phillip C. "US-China Relations and Chinese Military Modernization." Jacques deLisle and Avery Goldstein, eds. *After Engagement: Dilemmas in US-China Security Relations*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2021.
- Cunningham, Fiona. "China's Search for Coercive Leverage in the Information Age." Working paper.
- Chubb, Andrew. "PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970–2015." *International Security* 45.3 (2020): 79-121.
- Mastro, Oriana Skylar. "The Taiwan Temptation: Why Beijing Might Resort to Force." *Foreign Affairs*. 100 (2021): 58.
- (Optional) Deal, Jacqueline. "China Could Soon Outgun the U.S." *Politico*. May 27, 2021.

12. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION II - APRIL 22

Theoretical Concepts: economic coercion

Empirical Focus: Community of Common Destiny (人类命运共同体), Belt and Road Initiative, Copenhagen/Paris/Glasgow, the US-China trade war

- Farrell, Henry, and Abraham Newman. "Weaponized Interdependence." *International Security* 44.1 (2019).
- Gewirtz, Julian. "The Chinese Reassessment of Interdependence." *China Leadership Monitor* 64 (2020).
- Lind, Jennifer, and Daryl G. Press. "Markets or Mercantilism? How China Secures its Energy Supplies." *International Security* 42.04 (2018): 170-204.
- Vortherms, Samantha, and Jiakun Jack Zhang. "Political Risk and Firm Exit: Evidence from the US-China Trade War." Working paper.
- Kania, Elsa B. and Adam Segal. "Globalized Innovation and Great Power Competition." Jacques deLisle and Avery Goldstein, eds. *After Engagement: Dilemmas in US-China Security Relations*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2021.

13. DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS II - APRIL 29

Theoretical Focus: domestic audiences

Empirical Focus: peripheral diplomacy (周边外交), wolf warrior diplomacy (战狼外交)

- Martin, Peter. *China's Civilian Army: The Making of Wolf Warrior Diplomacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapter 11.

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- Mattingly, Daniel C., and Elaine Yao. "How Soft Propaganda Persuades." *Comparative Political Studies*. Forthcoming.
 - Weiss, Jessica Chen, and Jeremy L. Wallace. "Domestic Politics, China's Rise, and the Future of the Liberal International Order." *International Organization* 75.2 (2021): 635-664.
 - Johnston, Alastair Iain. "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations." *International Security* 44.2 (2019): 9-60.
 - Ye, Min. "Fragmentation and Mobilization: Domestic Politics of the Belt and Road in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 28.119 (2019): 696-711.