

International Relations Theory and the Rise of China

SPCL 400.303 – Spring 2014

Instructor:

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Course Information:

Wednesday 4:00-5:50
Graham Memorial 212

Office Hours:

By appointment

Prerequisites:

None

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Stephen Gent

Materials available through Sakai

Target Audience: This course is based on scholarship in political science, but may also be valuable to majors in economics, public policy, global studies, history, and Asian studies and anybody with a substantive interest in China.

Course description: China's rapid and sustained economic growth over the past 30 years has fundamentally altered the lives of millions of everyday Chinese. It has also altered China's international status. China's economy is pivotal to the economic well-being of both its neighbors and the world, it boasts an increasingly capable military that can both deter and threaten others, and it remains the world's most populous country. These features and the potential for continued economic growth have given China the ability to play a large role in shaping international politics.

These changes have also sparked an increasingly prevalent debate around the world over how China will wield its newfound influence. Some argue that China's rise, like other historical changes in the international power distributions, will result in increased tension between China and the world's established powers—with a relatively high likelihood of armed conflict. Others argue that shared interests and repeated interactions will allow China to pursue its goals peacefully.

Course goals: International relations theory can help us make sense of this debate. In this course, we will use China's international relations as case studies against which to test major theories of international relations. In doing this, we will ask whether or not theories of international relations can explain specific aspects of China's international behavior. We will also attempt to predict China's future international behavior, and analyze how this behavior may change along with changes in the international system or China's growth trajectory.

It is my hope that students will leave this course with an enhanced ability to link theoretical claims to real world implications, and analyze current events and public dialogue on international relations through a broader perspective.

Course structure: This is a small seminar course that will be primarily discussion-based. Each week, an academic paper will be paired with a short news or analysis article on a specific current

event surrounding China's international behavior. We will discuss the links between the theory and the current event and critically examine the theory's explanatory ability.

Expectations: This course does not assume prior knowledge of international relations theory or substantive knowledge on China. However, to participate fruitfully in our discussions, you must come to class having thoroughly read and understood the readings assigned for that class. The volume of reading and assignments has been kept relatively minimal, in accordance with this course's weight and character. However, in order to profit from our discussions and to create a culture of inquiry in the class, students must come to class prepared.

Please remain engaged in the discussion for the entirety of each class. Laptops are not forbidden but are discouraged—there will be little need to take notes in this class. Please do not text or engage in any behavior that will distract others.

Students should actively seek out news on China, and are encouraged to bring thoughts on current events to class. In addition to *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, and other mainstream publications, students may be interested in reading the following:

The Diplomat (Asia-Pacific international affairs): <http://thediplomat.com/>

The Sinocism China Newsletter (Compilation of news from Chinese and English-language sources): <https://sinocism.com/>

Xinhua (Chinese news service, in English): <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/>

China Real Time Report (*Wall Street Journal* China blog): <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/>

South China Morning Post (Hong Kong-based daily):

<http://www.scmp.com/frontpage/international>

Andrew Erickson (analysis of Chinese military affairs): <http://www.andrewerickson.com/>

Requirements: In addition to the readings, students will be expected to complete **five** one-page (double-spaced) responses to the readings. The responses should use standard font and margins (Times New Roman 12pt, 1.25 inch side margins, 1 inch top/bottom margins). The responses should analyze whether or not China's international behavior aligns with the expectations of the week's theoretical reading, using a relevant current or historical case as the basis for analysis. For example, if writing on deterrence and escalation, you could link Schelling's theory to China's behavior during the Taiwan Strait Crisis. These responses will be used as starting points for our discussions. A schedule will be distributed after the first day of class that assigns each student to specific weeks for responses.

Grading:

This course is Pass/D+/D/Fail. To receive a 'Pass', a student must earn the equivalent of a 'C-' or better. Students earning a 'D+' or 'D' will receive credit for the course while a grade of F will result in no course credit. For the purpose of computing a grade point average, a PS grade does not count as hours attempted; therefore, a PS grade does not affect a student's grade point average. However, grades of D+, D, or F under the Pass/D+/D/Fail option count as hours attempted and are treated in the same manner as D+, D, and F grades earned in any other course (2013-2014 Undergraduate Bulletin).

Letter Grade Numeric Equivalent for this course: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 100-72; D+ 66-69; D 60-65; F below 60.

The students' grades will be calculated as follows:

18% — Responses (x5; calendar of due dates forthcoming)

Responses will be assessed on the extent to which they demonstrate understanding and critically appraise a given theory. Responses are due at the beginning of the class to which they are assigned. Responses submitted within 24 hours of the deadline will be graded with a one letter grade penalty. Papers submitted within 48 hours of the deadline will be graded for half credit. Responses received after 48 hours will receive a score of zero. General grading rubric:

A – The paper demonstrates understanding of the theory and analyzes critically an example applicable to the theory. The connections between the theory and the example are made clear and the paper takes a stance on the theory's explanatory power.

B – The paper demonstrates some understanding of the theory and analyzes an applicable example. The paper connects the theory to the example and takes a stance on the theory's explanatory power.

C – The paper shows some understanding of the theory and puts forth a related example, but the connections between the theory and the example are not made clear.

D – The paper misinterprets the theory and/or chooses an unrelated example. Writing is unclear and meaning is difficult to interpret.

F – The paper's meaning is unclear and demonstrates a lack of understanding and/or effort.

10% — Participation

Participation will be assessed on the degree to which students contribute meaningfully to class discussion. The grade assesses both the quantity and quality of comments. Students will be expected to present the views expressed in the papers on the days that they are due, and the quality of these presentations will be included in the students' participation grades. Students will be docked two participation points for an unexcused absence.

Absences: Students are allowed three excused absences for the semester. For an absence to be excused, students must email me 24 hours before class time with a legitimate excuse (papers and tests for other classes don't count). Students are allowed one unexcused absence for the semester. Exceeding either of these limits may result in a failing grade. Please inform me at the beginning of the semester if you expect to miss significant amounts of class or be regularly late for any reason.

Honor Code: "The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected." – *Taken from The Office of Student Conduct*

Readings: All readings are required and available on the course Sakai site. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, but such changes are unlikely. I will inform the class via email and in class of all changes. Any non-reading materials used in the class will be posted on Sakai.

Course schedule and reading list:

January 8 – Introduction

January 15 – The Role of Theory

Walt, Stephen M. 1998. "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy* 110: 29-46 (18 pages)

January 22 – China: Panda or Dragon? Part I

Ikenberry, G. John. 2008. "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs* 87 (1): 23-37. (15 pages)

Traub, James. 2006. "The World According to China," *The New York Times*. (September 3, 2006)

GROUP 1 Paper I due

January 29 – China: Panda or Dragon? Part II

Mearsheimer, John J. 2010. "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3 (4): 381-396. (16 pages)

The Economist. 2012. "The dragon's new teeth: a rare look inside the world's biggest military expansion." (April 7, 2012)

GROUP 2 Paper I due

February 5 – Conflict, Cooperation, and the Liberal-Realist Debate

Powell, Robert. 1991. "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory." *American Political Science Review* 85 (4): 1303-1320. (18 pages)

Feigenbaum, Evan A. and Robert A. Manning. 2012. "A Tale of Two Asias." *Foreign Policy*. (October 31, 2012)

GROUP 1 Paper II due

February 12 – Domestic Politics and International Relations

Putnam, Robert D. 1988. "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games." *International Organization* 42 (3): 427-460. (34 pages)

Vaida, Bara. 2005. "Red Star Rising on K Street." *National Journal*. (July 23, 2005)

GROUP 2 Paper II due

February 19 – Why War?

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Alastair Smith. 2008. *The Dictator's Handbook* (New York: Public Affairs). Chapter 9: War, Peace, and World Order, 225-249. (25 pages)

Aredy, James T. and James V. Grimaldi. 2012. "Defying Mao, Rich Chinese Crash the Communist Party." *The Wall Street Journal* (December 29, 2012)

GROUP 1 Paper III due

February 26 – Selectorate Theory

Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49 (3): 379-414. (36 pages)

Panda, Ankit. 2013. "Rationalist Explanations for War in the East China Sea." *The Diplomat*. (December 12, 2013)

GROUP 2 Paper III due

March 5 – Conflict and Pre-Conflict Dynamics: Deterrence and Escalation

Schelling, Thomas C. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press). Chapter 8: The Threat That Leaves Something to Chance, 187-204. (18 pages)

Page, Jeremy. 2013. "U.S.-China Nuclear Silence Leaves a Void." *The Wall Street Journal*. (April 13, 2013)

GROUP 1 Paper IV due

March 19 – Creating and Sustaining Cooperation

Axelrod, Robert and Robert O. Keohane. 1985. "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions." *World Politics* 38 (1): 226-254. (29 pages)

Calmes, Jackie and Steven Lee Myers. "U.S. and China Move Closer on North Korea, but Not on Cyberespionage." *The New York Times*. (June 8, 2013)

GROUP 2 Paper IV due

March 26 – Cooperation in Practice: Globalization and the International Economy

Drezner, Daniel W. 2005. "Globalization, harmonization, and competition: the different pathways to policy convergence," *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (5): 841-859. (19 pages)

Talley, Ian and William Mauldin. 2013. "U.S., China to Pursue Investment Treaty." *The Wall Street Journal*. (July 11, 2013).

April 2 – Why Peace?

Gartzke, Erik. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 166-191. (26 pages)

The Economist. 2011. "Taiwan's commonsense consensus." (February 24, 2011)

GROUP 1 Paper V due

April 9 – Hierarchy, Anarchy and the Longevity of the American System

Lake, David A. 2007. "Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics." *International Security* 32 (1): 47-79. (33 pages)

"America's Global Image Remains More Positive than China's." *Pew Research*, Global Attitudes Project. (July 18, 2013)

GROUP 2 Paper V due

April 16 – Chinese and American 'Grand Strategies'

Zheng Bijian. 2005. "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (5): 18-24. (7 pages)

Zoellick, Robert B. 2005. "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.

April 23 – What Does the Future Hold?

Christensen, Thomas J. 2011. "The Advantages of an Assertive China," *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2): 54-67. (14 pages)