# Course Syllabus

## INTL 4875: Chinese Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective

### Spring 2026

***Pre-requisites:*** INTL 1100 or INTL 1100E or INTL 1100H or POLS 1101 or POLS 1101E or POLS 1101H or POLS 1101S or any 2000-level HIST course

## Course Meeting Times

**Class Meeting Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:55-11:15

**Class Meeting Location:** Baldwin Hall 322

## Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Rongbin Han

**Email:** email via eLC

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 15:00-16:00 or by Appointment, Candler Hall 322

**Website:** https://spia.uga.edu/faculty-member/rongbin-han/

*The best way to contact the instructor is via email. Emails are normally returned within 24 hours during working days. Please reach out if you do not receive a response beyond the timeframe.*

## Course Description & Details

Course examines the evolution of China's foreign relations and its foreign policy, with a focus on the various factors that affect Chinese foreign policy decision-making, China's interactions with various countries and regions, as well as the rise of China and its global implications.

### Course-level Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to:

1. recall and apply key concepts in international affairs (e.g., the international system, actors in the international system, the principles of sovereignty and anarchy).
2. compare and contrast various political systems and consider their advantages and disadvantages from the perspective of different societal actors.
3. explain, critique, and apply the major theoretical approaches and models used within international relations and comparative politics.
4. evaluate the causes and effects of historical and contemporary global events, by choosing and applying appropriate theoretical models, interpreting and contextualizing past research findings, and/or analyzing empirical data (qualitative or quantitative).
5. locate sources of data and evaluate their credibility and their appropriateness for testing a given theory or hypothesis.

6. articulate opinions on certain global issues, informed by the application of theoretical models, research findings, and/or empirical data (qualitative or quantitative).
7. express their opinions on certain global issues through formal writing assignments and have the opportunity to revise and refine their writing in response to feedback from the instructor.
8. identify the key components of social science research.
9. appreciate and analyze policy interdependence--that is, how the choices that one actor or group of actors make (e.g., citizens, firms, countries) affect the lives and decisions of other actors or groups of actors.

## COURSE TOPICS

- China in the World: Power, Geography, History, and Memory
- History of Chinese Foreign Relations & Evolving Chinese Foreign Policy
- China and the U.S.
- China and Russia
- China and the Developing World
- China and the Cross-Strait Relations
- China's Economic Statecraft and Its Foreign Policy
- China's Technological Development and Its Global Impact
- China's Military Growth and Its Implications
- China's Soft Power
- Human Rights in Chinese Foreign Relations
- Chinese Nationalism

## Required Course materials

**Course materials will be made available on ELC or through UGA Library.**

**Recommended Books (You do not have to purchase them)**

Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (The Free Press, 1988).

John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (Oxford University Press, 2016). **[E-book available via UGA library]**

***These two books provide needed background knowledge about China.***

Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China (*4th Edition) (Macmillan, 2015).

Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China* (2nd edition) (W. W. Norton & Co., 2004).

**Useful Sources:** https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/center-china-analysis/about

## Assessment and Grading

***Participation (20%)*** This class will be a discussion-based. Please read and reflect upon assigned readings and students' response papers (see below) before coming to class and actively engage in in-class or online discussion. You are also encouraged to attend the office hours.

***Response papers (20%)*** Write two response papers (maximum two-page, single spaced) on the dates you select. The paper must (1) effectively summarize ALL assigned readings (not a laundry list); (2) elaborate on two to three points that interest you the most in a critical fashion; and (3) raise two discussion questions at the end. The papers are due 2 days prior to the date you select so that they can be shared with the class before our meetings. The response paper writers are expected to facilitate the discussion.

***China Soft Power/International Image Assignment (25%)*** Identify one mainstream media, Chinese state media or social media representation of China (news reports, a YouTube channel, etc.). Do your research and write a summary report to explain how it represents China and whether you think the representation is accurate or not (explain why you think so); discuss how the particular presentation of China may affect foreign perceptions of China and Chinese soft power. Also briefly explain why you select this source and representation of China. The summary report should be approximately 6-8 pages double-spaced. We will share the reports on eLC so that we can have a critical discussion.

***Movie Review (5%)*** Please select one movie we watch and write a review (800-1000 words), covering the stories (plot) and analyzing how it is relevant to themes covered in the class. You may also pick a movie to review on your own. Check with the instructor in this case.

***Applied History Policy or Research Paper (30%)*** You are expected to write a policy or research paper as a final project. The paper should focus on a selected topic on Chinese foreign policy from the applied history perspective, meaning it must use historical data, employ the historical analysis approaches, or study a contemporary phenomenon/event in comparison with a historical perspective. A few examples include: the evolution of U.S.-China relations since 1949, Chinese foreign policy making under Mao, comparing China's rise to that of other powers, comparing U.S.-China competition to the U.S.-Soviet Cold War, what we can learn from the Cuba Missile Crisis, and the Ping-pong diplomacy and its contemporary implications. You shall share an outline of the proposed research/policy project with the instructor for feedback and necessary guidance.

See eLC for more information about each course requirement, including the updated due dates.

## Missed Exams, Late Assignments, & Re-grading Requests

Please submit your assignments timely. Late assignments will be accepted, though for fairness, it may result in a penalty of one third of a letter grade per day. For questions about your grade, report to the instructor **within one week** from the time you receive the grade, with a written appeal explaining why you think your grade should be changed. Please bear in mind that the regrading process may end up with higher, lower or no change in your grade.

## Final Grades

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| A 93-100 | A- 90-92.99 | B+ 87-89.99 | B 83-86.99 | B- 80-82.99 |
| C+ 77-79.99 | C 73-76.99 | C- 70-72.99 | D 60-69.99 | F 0-59.99 |

# Course Statements & Policies

## UGA Honor Code

As a University of Georgia student, you agree to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: www.uga.edu/honesty.

## Accommodation for Disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the *Accessibility & Testing*. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting https://accessibility.uga.edu/.

## Attendance & Participation Policy

The course is discussion based. You are expected to attend the class and be prepared to engage in discussion. Please notify the instructor, preferably ahead of time, should you have any legitimate reasons to be absent.

## Policy on Recording Lectures

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

## Use of AI in this Course

UGA's policy is that the use of AI for coursework is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by me (your course instructor) ahead of time. In this class, ***use of GAI tools should be limited to providing support as you develop your thinking and knowledge base.*** In addition, there are some general rules to follow:

- You may not represent output generated by a GAI tool as your own work. Any such use of GAI output must be appropriately cited or disclosed, including quotation marks and in-line citations for direct quotes. Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. Suspected unauthorized assistance, plagiarism, or other violations of UGA's "A Culture of Honesty," will be reported to the Office of Academic Honesty. For full details on how to properly cite AI-generated work, please see the APA Style article, How to Cite ChatGPT, for instance

- If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with GAI and copying from GAI, I recommend that you do not have your assignment and the GAI tool open on your device at the same time. Instead, take notes in your own words while you interact with the GAI tool, then use your notes to remind you of what you've learned and to inform your work. Never copy output from GAI tools into your assignment. Instead, use your interaction with the tool as a learning experience, then close the interaction down, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your improved understanding. (Sidenote: This advice extends to AI assistants that are directly integrated into a composition environment or grammar modulation tool.)
- Finally, GAI is highly vulnerable to inaccuracy and bias. You should assume GAI output is wrong unless you either know the answer or can verify it with another source. It is your responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output used.

## UGA Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Accessibility & Testing: accessibility.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting well-being.uga.edu.

## Student Success Resources

The Office for Student Success and Achievement (OSSA) empowers students to achieve success throughout their academic journey. Through free peer tutoring, academic coaching, UNIV student success courses, Bulldog Basics, and first-generation student support, we promote well-being, student learning, and community building. To connect with OSSA, email *ossa@uga.edu*, call (706) 542-0163, or visit Milledge Hall (near Reed Hall and Sanford Stadium).

## DISCLAIMER

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## Course Schedule & Activities

**Week 1 (January 13 & 15) History as Data, Method, and Research Subject**

**Meet & Greet: Introduction to the Course**

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Cirone, Alexandra, and Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2022. "Historical Persistence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (1): 241–59.

**Suggested:**

Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (The Free Press, 1988), Chapter 1.

Yuhua Wang, "Blood Is Thicker Than Water: Elite Kinship Networks and State Building in Imperial China," *American Political Science Review* 116:3(2022): 896–910.

**Week 2 (January 20 & 22) China in the World: Power, Geo-Politics and History**

Kirshner Jonathan, "The tragedy of offensive realism: Classical realism and the rise of China," *European Journal of International Relations* 18:1(2012):53-75.

Yan Xuetong, "The Age of Uneasy Peace: Chinese Power in a Divided World," *Foreign Affairs*, 98:1(2019), 40–49.

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Colin Flint, Zhang Xiaotong, Historical–Geopolitical Contexts and the Transformation of Chinese Foreign Policy, *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12:3(2019), 295–331.

David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," *International Security* 27:4(2003): 57–85.

**Suggested for the week:**

Alastair Iain Johnston, "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations," *International Security* 44:2(2019), 9–60.

**Week 3 (January 27 & 29) Evolution of Chinese Foreign Policy and Foreign Policy Making**

Ryan Hass, "The Trajectory of Chinese Foreign Policy: From Reactive Assertiveness to Opportunistic Activism," *The Asian Forum*, November 4, 2017.

Qingguo Jia, "From Self-imposed Isolation to Global Cooperation: The Evolution of Chinese Foreign Policy since the 1980s," *International Politics and Society* 2(1999), 168-178.

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David M. Lampton, "Chinas Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process: Is It Changing and Does It Matter?" in David M. Lampton ed. *The making of Chinese foreign and security policy in the era of reform, 1978-2000* (Stanford UP, 2001), Chapter 1.

Jean-Pierre Cabestan, “China’s foreign and security policy institutions and decision-making under Xi Jinping,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 23:2(2021), 319-336.

**Suggested for the week:**

Thomas Christensen, “More Actors, Less Coordination? New Challenges for the Leaders of a Rising China,” In Gilbert Rozman ed., *China’s Foreign Policy: Who Makes It and How is It Made?* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 22-37.

**Week 4 (February 3 &5) Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy**

Jessica Weiss Chen, *Powerful patriots: Nationalist protest in China's foreign relations* (OUP, 2014), 219-248.

Adam Y. Liu and Xiaojun Li, “Assessing Public Support for (Non)Peaceful Unification with Taiwan,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 33:145 (2024), 1-13.

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**Watch *My 1919* (1999, with English Subtitle, ahead of time) and Discuss**

**Week 5 (February 10 & 12) China’s Relations with the U.S.**

Chen, Jian, “From Mao to Deng: China’s Changing Relations with the United States” The Cold War International History Project Working Paper 92, Wilson Center.

U.S.-China Policy Foundation, “U.S.-China Relations: A Brief Historical Perspective,” *U.S.-China Policy Foundation*, August 2014. [especially pp. 1-6]

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Kenneth Lieberthal and Susan Thornton, “Forty-Plus Years of U.S.-China Diplomacy: Realities and Recommendations,” in Anne Thurston (ed.) *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations* (Columbia UP, 2021), 365-390.

Julian Gewirtz, “China Thinks America is Losing,” *Foreign Affairs*, 2020, 99:6, 62-72.

Yun Sun, “China Is Enjoying Trump 2.0,” Foreign Affairs, August 15, 2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/china-enjoying-trump-20

**Suggested for the week**:

John Garver, *China’s Quest* (Oxford UP, 2016), Chapters 3, 9, 11, 17, 23, 24.

Council on Foreign Relations: U.S.-China Relations: 1949-2024, https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-china-relations.

**Week 6 (February 17 & 19) China’s Relations with Russia and the Strategic Triangle**

Lowell Dittmer, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis,” *World Politics*. 33:4(1981), 485-515.

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Alexei D. Voskressenski, “China’s Relations with Russia,” in David Shambaugh (ed.), *China and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 233-250.

Clara Fong and Lindsay Maizland, “China and Russia: Exploring Ties between Two Authoritarian Powers,” https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-russia-relationship-xi-putin-taiwan-ukraine

**Suggested for the week:**

Michael S. Chase et al, *Russia-China Relations: Assessing Common Ground and Strategic Fault Lines*, National Bureau of Asian Research, NBR Special Report #66, July 2017.

John Garver, *China’s Quest* (Oxford UP, 2016), Chapters 5 and 6

**Week 7 (February 24 & 26) China’s Relations with the World beyond U.S. and Russia**

François Godement, “China’s Relations with Europe,” in David Shambaugh (ed.), *China and the World* (Oxford UP, 2020), 251–269.

Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heginbotham, “China’s Relations with Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East,” in David Shambaugh (ed.), *China and the World* (Oxford UP, 2020), 291–312.

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Michael Yahuda, “China’s Relations with Asia,” in David Shambaugh (ed.), *China and the World* (New York: Oxford UP, 2020), 270–290.

Srikanth Kondapalli, “Regional Multilateralism with Chinese Characteristics,” in David Shambaugh (ed.), *China and the World* (New York: Oxford UP, 2020), 313–340.

**Week 8 (March 3 & 5) The Taiwan Issue**

Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Cornell UP, 2003), Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 76-96).

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Lindsay Maizland, “Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 8, 2024.

Bonnie S. Glaser et al., “Dire Straits: Should American Support for Taiwan Be Ambiguous?" *Foreign Affairs*, September 24, 2020.

Jia Qingguo (2021). “Taiwan: Can A Perfect Storm Be Averted?" *China International Strategy Review* 3: 66-82.

M. Taylor Fravel, “China’s Potential Lessons from Ukraine for Conflict over Taiwan,” *Washington Quarterly* 46:3(2023), 7-25.

**Suggested for the week:**

Brendan Rittenhouse Green and Caitlin Talmadge, “Then What? Assessing the Military Implications of Chinese Control of Taiwan," *International Security* 47:1(2022), 7-45.

Joel Wuthnow et al., eds. *Crossing the Strait: China's Military Prepares for War with Taiwan* (National Defense University Press, 2023), Introduction and Chapter 1.

**Week 9 Spring Break, No Class**

**Week 10 (March 17 & 19) Chinese Military and Foreign Relations**

Joel Wuthnow, & Taylor Fravel, “China’s military strategy for a ‘new era’: Some change, more continuity, and tantalizing hints,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *46:*6–7(2022), 1149–1184.

Lindsay Maizland, “China’s Modernizing Military,” Council on Foreign Relations, February 5, 2020. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-modernizing-military.

Zhao Tong, “The Real Motives for China's Nuclear Expansion,” Foreign Affairs, May 3, 2024, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/real-motives-chinas-nuclear-expansion.

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Watch **2025 China Victory Day Parade (ahead of time)** and discuss

**Suggested for the week:**

US Department of Defense (2023). *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, Chapters 2&3.

Chas W. Freeman Jr., “U.S.-China Military Relations: From Enmity to Entente and Maybe Back Again,” in Anne F. Thurston (ed.) *Engaging China: Fifty Years of Sino-American Relations* (Columbia UP, 2021), 295-334.

**Week 11 (March 24 & 26) China’s Economic Statecraft and Foreign Policy**

Jennifer Lind and Daryl G. Press, “Markets or Mercantilism? How China Secures its Energy Supplies," *International Security* 42:4(2018), 170-204.

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Xi Jinping, “Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a Community with a Shared Future,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, September 5, 2024.

Axel Dreher et al., *Banking on Beijing: The Aims and Impacts of China's Overseas Development Program* (Cambridge UP, 2022), Chapter 2.

Agathe Demarais, “The Winners from U.S.-China Decoupling,” *Foreign Policy*, July 15, 2024.

**Week 12 (March 31 & April 2) U.S.-China Competition: Ideology, Power or What?**

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

John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105:690 (2006), 160–162.

Yang Yao, “The New Cold War: America’s new approach to Sino-American relations,” *China International Strategy Review* **3** (June 2021), 20–33.

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Rush Doshi et al., “What Does America Want from China? Debating Washington’s Strategy—and the Endgame of Competition,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2024).

Wang Jisi, “The Plot Against China?: How Beijing Sees the New Washington Consensus," *Foreign Affairs* 100:4 (July/August 2021).

Rosemary Foot, “Positioning Human Rights in China-U.S. Relations,” in Christopher Sabatini ed. *Reclaiming Human Rights in A Changing World Order* (Brookings Institution, 2023), 31-49.

**Suggested for the week:**

Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015).

Jude Blanchette and Lily McElwee (eds.), *Defining Success: Does the United States Need an “End State” for Its China Policy?*, CSIS, 2024. See: https://www.csis.org/analysis/defining-success-does-united-states-need-end-state-its-china-policy

**Week 13 (April 7 & 9) China’s Tech Development and Its Global Impact**

Satoru Mori, “US Technological Competition with China: The Military, Industrial and Digital Network Dimensions," *Asia-Pacific Review* 26:1(2019), 77–120.

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Martin Beraja et al, “Exporting the Surveillance State via Trade in AI," *NBER Working Paper No. w31676* (September 2023), https://www.nber.org/papers/w31676

The Economist, “China has become a scientific superpower,” *The Economist*, June 12, 2024.

**Suggested for the week:**

Andrea Gilli and Mauro Gilli, “Why China Has Not Caught Up Yet," *International Security* 43:3 (2019), 141-189.

Hong Liu and Chunzi Miao, “Digital geopolitics in a VUCA world: China encounters a new global order,” *Global Policy*, 15: S6 (2024), 67-83.

**Week 14 (April 14 & 16) Soft Power and Beyond?**

Robert A. Blair, Robert Marty and Philip Roessler, “Foreign Aid and Soft Power: Great Power Competition in Africa in the Early Twenty-first Century," *British Journal of Political Science* 52:3(2022), 1355-1376.

Maria Repnikova, “Rethinking China’s Soft Power: ‘Pragmatic Enticement’ of Confucius Institutes in Ethiopia,” *The China Quarterly* 250(2022), 440–63.

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***China Soft Power/International Image Assignment findings presentations***

**Suggested for the week:**

Maria Repnikova, *Chinese Soft Power* (Cambridge UP, 2022).

Frances Yaping Wang, The Art of State Persuasion: China's Strategic Use of Media in Interstate Disputes (OUP, 2024).

Daniel Mattingly et al., “Chinese state media persuades a global audience that the “China model” is superior: Evidence from a 19-country experiment," *American Journal of Political Science* (2024), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12887

Jian Xu and Florian Schneider, “Influencers as emerging actors in global digital propaganda,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Online First. https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494251351221

**Week 15 (April 21 &23)**

***China Soft Power/International Image Assignment findings (Continued)***

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**Work on your final project! Instructor out of town for conference.**