

SA.553 (CHINA)

Courses

SA.553.101. Advanced Topics in Chinese Foreign Policy: China's Periphery Relations. 4 Credits.

This seminar prepares students to conduct original research on Chinese foreign policy by introducing key theoretical and methodological approaches to interpreting China's evolving foreign policy toward its neighboring countries. This course takes as its premise that much can be learned about China's foreign policy by studying the way China manages its relations with countries along its land and maritime borders. The seminar is designed to help students conduct original research on Chinese foreign relations drawing on key theoretical and methodological approaches. Readings and class discussions give most attention to four interrelated topics: 1) the historical sources of China's approach to border relations and the evolution of China's "neighborhood policy;" 2) Beijing's shifting perceptions of border security; 3) China's principal strategies and tactics for engaging neighboring countries; 4) the actors involved in China's foreign relations with its neighbors. Note: successful completion of this course fulfills the capstone requirement for second-year MAIR students.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.749[C]

SA.553.102. China and International Law. 4 Credits.

Over the past thirty years, China has gone from being one of the most isolated countries in the world to a major player in international affairs. Yet despite its growing power and influence, it maintains an ambivalent attitude towards international law and the liberal international order. This class will explore that ambivalence, and will in particular examine how China might adapt to the existing world order and the ways in which China will look to influence its evolution. The class will cover China's approach to international peace and security, China's membership in the WTO, Beijing's engagement with the international human rights regime, and the South China Sea dispute, among other topics.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.602[C]

SA.553.103. China's Political Economy in Transition. 4 Credits.

This course examines the political and institutional foundations sustaining contemporary China's economic growth and reforms, as well as the consequences of its transition. The course focuses on several paradoxes. How does China push for market-oriented reforms without democratizing the authoritarian political system? Is the state still in control in today's economy? How does China reconcile the communist party ideology with its fast-growing private sector, and with elements of capitalism? How does the state balance the centralization and decentralization of economic policy making and implementation? What is the rationale and the consequences of China's internationalization? How does the US-China tech war influence China and its position in the global value chain? Can the "China model" work in other contexts? We will examine these important questions through a combination of conceptual frameworks, real world examples, and policy analysis.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.740[C]

SA.553.104. Chinese Foreign Policy. 4 Credits.

This course analyzes the evolution of the People's Republic of China's foreign policy. It deals with China's objectives, institutions, instruments of policy, changing alignments, and growing role in the international system, directing considerable attention to specific policy issues and the policy process.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.702[C]

SA.553.105. Contemporary Chinese Politics. 4 Credits.

Analyzes the domestic politics of the People's Republic of China, with particular emphasis on the reform era. This introductory course covers political history, policy process and institutional issues, leadership and the challenge of socioeconomic modernization. Focuses on recurrent and substantive policy issues in Chinese politics.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.228[C]

SA.553.106. Leadership in China. 4 Credits.

This course is a broad survey of what leadership looks like in China. The main through-line of the course is the iterative and evolving dynamics between incentives/constraints and agency. We will explore the state as the playing field where these dynamics are played out, over time (to explore continuity and change) and across space (to explore adaptation and innovation). The course does not presume prior knowledge of China or Chinese language, but students new to the study of China are encouraged to pay special attention to the cumulative nature of the course and invest in the readings, particularly in the first four weeks. Although some of the themes of this course may minimally overlap with/reinforce other courses offered at SAIS, the approach to this class will be significantly different.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.752[C]

SA.553.107. The Turbulent Triangle: Taiwan, China and the United States. 4 Credits.

Examines how Taiwan has developed into an economic powerhouse and an open, stable society but also presents one of the thorniest issues in China-U.S. relations. Considers Taiwan's unique international status and its complex sense of identity. Examines the roots of ongoing tensions between Mainland China and Taiwan and the U.S. and how Taiwan, despite its achievements, threatens to become once again a flashpoint.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.729[C]

SA.553.108. China's Maritime Power and Asian Maritime Security. 4 Credits.

This course explores maritime security in Asia, with a focus on the People's Republic of China's maritime power and its consequences for regional order. Students will work to understand the nature of China's maritime rise, and consider how it is shaping regional maritime security dynamics as well as the strategies of the major regional players -- including the US, Japan, India, the Koreans, Australia, and southeast Asian nations. The course begins with the end of the Second World War in the Pacific as the historical baseline for grappling with contemporary regional maritime security questions. Subsequent areas of concentration include: past and present tensions in the Taiwan Strait, maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas, the functions of the US alliance network in the first and second "island chains," regional fisheries management, marine environmental conservation, offshore energy development, and the evolution of international maritime law and order in Asia. While anchoring on China's maritime strategy, the course addresses traditional and non-traditional maritime security issues among all of the major regional stakeholders.

SA.553.109. China's Growing Global Economic Influence. 4 Credits.

China has come to play an increasingly influential role in global trade, finance, and economic governance. This course will analyze China's global economic influence through an analysis of issue areas (supply chains, regional integration, currency internationalization), global initiatives (OBOR, AIIB), and regional impacts. In addition to describing China's role in the global economy, the course will also focus on the domestic economic pressures that have influenced China's global behavior and the costs/benefits to China's domestic economy from its increasing global exposure.

SA.553.110. U.S.-China Relations. 4 Credits.

Examines U.S. policy toward China and specific U.S.-Chinese political, economic, cultural and security relations, with emphasis on the post-1949 period. Gives special attention to the foreign policy processes in each nation, recurrent policy issues and their implications for each nation's behavior, and relations with third parties.

SA.553.111. China's Economy: Reforms, Performance and Challenges. 4 Credits.

By some measures, China now has the world's largest economy. By any measure, China has contributed more to global economic growth over the past decade than any other country. Yet recent and ongoing developments have led to considerable pessimism regarding China's ability to transition to a high income economy. How can we explain China's rapid growth over the past four decades? Is this recent pessimism justified, and, if so, what must China do to avoid getting stuck in a middle income trap? Focusing on these questions, this course aims to help students develop a deeper understanding of the Chinese economy.

SA.553.112. China's Political Economy Research Seminar. 4 Credits.

China's Political Economy Research Seminar is focused on understanding developments in China's political economy. Through engagement with existing literature and the development of original research, students will tackle ongoing debates and puzzles related to China's political economy. There will be a particular focus on local and regional economic development, state-firm relations, and central-local relations. The course will teach students to consume research by presenting and evaluating key theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches in China studies, and it will help students produce research by developing relevant methodological and data analysis skills, culminating in a ~6000 word term paper. The study trip component—involving a week of travel to China during spring break—will allow students to learn about the views of Chinese officials, practitioners, and scholars.

SA.553.113. Research Seminar: China and Its Strategic Frontiers. 4 Credits.

This course explores China's changing approach to its frontiers, both its territorial periphery and the frontiers created by its rising capabilities to use what are often described as "global commons," such as the oceans, polar regions and outer space. Through close readings of academic and policy-oriented literature and primary research, this class enables students to delve into emerging issues in China's role on the global stage. A goal is for students to explore how the admixture of China's renewed emphasis in its governance on centralized leadership by the Chinese Communist Party, its push to advance its already considerable technical and technological prowess, and its growing concern with military-security as well as development in its civil and military planning is reshaping China's foreign and security policy and attendant international relations.

SA.553.114. China's Global Economic Engagement: Research Seminar and Study Trip. 4 Credits.

The focus of the course is China's external economic engagement through a political economy lens. The course will teach students to produce original research by developing relevant methodological and data analysis skills related to Chinese and international political economy, culminating in a ~6000 word term paper. The study trip component—involving a week of travel to China during spring break—will allow students to learn about the views of Chinese officials, practitioners, and scholars. (Limit 12, application capstone)

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.750.751[C]

SA.553.115. The Chinese People's Liberation Army and China's Search for Military Power and Security, 1949-Present. 4 Credits.

This course is designed to provide an overview of the development of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) from the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to the present, and to enable students to analyze Chinese military capabilities, evaluate the ongoing modernization of the PLA, and assess the implications for regional and global security. The course will build a framework for analyzing Chinese military and security developments by focusing on a number of theoretical and practical issues, including issues such as the problems of assessing foreign military transformation in peacetime; the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to assessing the capabilities of the PLA (such as by tracking progress in PLA capabilities over time, comparing contemporary PLA capabilities with those of the U.S. military, and evaluating the PLA's ability to perform its missions); key events in the history of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), primarily since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; modernization of China's military hardware including conventional ground, air, and naval forces, nuclear and conventional missile forces, and space and counter-space capabilities; and the implications of China's expanding national security interests for the future missions and capabilities of the Chinese military.

SA.553.116. China's National Security Perspectives. 4 Credits.

Along with China's emergence as a great power, Communist Party leaders in Beijing face a wide range of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. This course examines Chinese perspectives on, and responses to, contemporary national security issues such as Taiwan and cross-Strait relations, energy security and sea lane protection, space and cyberspace security, North Korea's nuclear program, proliferation more generally, and what Beijing perceives as U.S. "suppression, containment, and encirclement." Also considered will be security-related budget issues, as well as the responses of others to China's rise in such areas as technology competition and export control policy.

SA.553.117. Chinese Politics and Climate Change. 4 Credits.

This course explores the intersection of two dominant forces shaping the twenty-first century—China and climate change. As simultaneously the world's largest carbon emitter and the dominant player in developing and deploying clean technologies, China's actions are of global consequence. The course will address many questions. How are China's emissions changing? What factors push and retard the country's energy transition? How is China shifting its development models and what economic and environmental consequences should we expect to see? Who are the key actors shaping climate policies, and how can we assess their incentives? What opinions does the Chinese public express about climate change? How do geopolitics and energy security enter into the political economy calculus of firms and the government?

SA.553.118. China's Urbanization and the World. 4 Credits.

This course analyzes China's urbanization—a world-historical transformation critical to the country's economic development—and uses urbanization as a lens to examine Chinese politics, economics, and society over the past century. Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party was powered by peasants, yet pushed policies that ultimately starved tens of millions in the countryside while keeping urban areas fed. In China's Reform Era, hundreds of millions of farmers left the countryside to build and reside in cities, joining the industrial and service sector labor force. Doing so required immense amounts of physical material, land, and labor from around the world, literally reshaping the globe and its economy. This class addresses a number of questions. What policies and politics shaped China's urbanization? What is the range and variety of experience across China's cities and rural areas versus urban ones? How is China shifting its development model today? What political and economic consequences should we expect to see in the wake of these changes? How has and will China's urbanization reverberate around the world?

SA.553.119. Contemporary Debates and Perspectives on China's Foreign Relations. 4 Credits.

China's prominence in the news cycle and policy discourse reflects the immense and growing importance of China's role and impact in the world. Substantively, there is hardly a profession or sector where what happens inside China does not touch upon or impact what happens outside China. This course seeks to give you the training and knowledge to decipher and contribute to these conversations in order to have a better understanding of the strengths and limits of different approaches. Students will understand these debates that are taking place within China, as well as the ongoing debates about China. These conversations are unfolding in many different communities and idea marketplaces, across many different modes and styles of analysis and writing about China. Students will develop literacy and proficiency in these three modes of writing: academic, policy, and journalistic.

SA.553.120. China's Great Power Competition at the Planetary Frontiers. 4 Credits.

This course explores China's role in great power competition in the "planetary frontiers," focusing on the deep oceans, outer space, and the polar regions. China understands these planetary frontiers as critical to global leadership and, as such, is intensifying its competition with other powerful states, foremost the United States, which sees sustaining its command of these arenas as vital to its national power. China is pursuing the technologies and production capabilities, as well as the influence over governing structures and norms to enable it to shape these domains in ways that best align with its interests. Each of the class's 12 seminars interrogates these spaces through the lens of relevant academic theories and frameworks to assess the competitive balance within them and its implications for the direction of changes in the global balance of power, evolving definitions of sovereignty, and other facets of international relations, including the nature of international law and multilateral regulatory regimes, industry standards and practices, and global ethics and justice claims.