

HERTOG 2021 SUMMER COURSES

DEBATING US-CHINA STRATEGIC COMPETITION

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Christian Brose, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
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Is conflict between the United States and China inevitable? Is China's aggressive rise a sign of its strength – or its weakness? Do democracies have an edge over autocracies in great-power rivalries? Or will China's investment in technology and economic power enable it to outcompete the U.S.? This online course, led by noted national security experts and practitioners, will illuminate these and other debates about strategic competition between the U.S. and China.

Books:

- Daniel Blumenthal, *The China Nightmare* (AEI 2020)
- Christian Brose, *The Kill Chain* (Hachette Books, 2020)
- Matthew Kroenig, *The Return of Great Power Rivalry* (Oxford University Press, 2020)
- H.R. McMaster, *Battlefields* (Harper, 2020)

Discussion Papers: Each fellow will be responsible for completing a brief discussion paper (1-2 pages, single-spaced). See below for your assignment. Papers are due the day before your assigned session by **5 PM ET**. They should be posted on the course Slack channel and will be part of the assigned readings for the session. Paper-writers should be ready to briefly present their ideas during the seminar.

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

10:00 a.m. to Noon ET

The China Nightmare
Instructor: Dan Blumenthal

Readings:

- Dan Blumenthal, *The China Nightmare*

Discussion Questions:

1. What is driving U.S.-China competition? Is the rivalry between the U.S. primarily a battle of ideas or a battle of resources? Is China a challenge because of its ideology or its power?
2. Does China seek regional hegemony in Asia? Global hegemony? What would Chinese hegemony look like?
3. How does China's historical experience inform its grand strategy? What continuities and discontinuities do you see with China's strategy, past and present?

4. How do China's weakness and vulnerabilities also drive its grand strategy?

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

10:00 a.m. to Noon ET

The Return of Great Power Rivalry
Instructor: Matthew Kroenig

Readings:

- Matthew Kroenig, *The Return of Great Power Rivalry*

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are some states able to achieve enduring international leadership and others are not? How much does regime type matter for sustained global leadership?
2. Of the seven case studies of rivalries presented by Kroenig, which best illuminates U.S.-China rivalry? Why?
3. Does Chinese nationalism enhance the security of China and the PRC regime, or does it undermine it?
4. Is a free and democratic China possible? Should greater political freedom in China be a goal of U.S. policy?

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

10:00 a.m. to Noon ET

The Kill Chain
Instructor: Christian Brose

Readings:

- Christian Brose, *The Kill Chain*

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the contribution of emerging technologies versus traditional technologies for achieving geostrategic goals?
2. To what extent will the future battlefield be shaped decisively by new technology or by new ideas? (Argue for, and against, "techno-determinism.")
3. Compare Brose's argument with Kroenig's. Which system is superior for driving innovation – the American market-driven economic model or the Chinese state-led model?

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

10:00 a.m. to Noon ET

Battlegrounds

Instructor: H. R. McMaster

Readings:

- H. R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds*

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did it take so long for the U.S. to “wake up” to the China problem? What were the successes and the failures of the “engaging and balancing” strategy of the last generation?
2. The Trump Administration’s 2017 National Security Strategy redefined Washington’s approach to China as one of “long-term, strategic competition.” What is strategic competition? How does it differ from past policy? What would it mean to win?
3. Does competition entail conflict? Does the rise of China necessitate a “Thucydides Trap” scenario with the U.S.—are we inevitably destined for war?

Closing Reflections:

1. In their books, Blumenthal and Kroenig argue that China has serious weaknesses – economic atrophy, growing debt, environmental problems, a rapidly aging population, and a closed political system that stifles dissent. By contrast, Brose emphasizes China’s strengths as a rising economic, military, and technological power which will soon overtake the U.S. Which perspective do you find more persuasive?
2. How do the different authors understand the nature of the Chinese regime? The role of ideology for China’s strategy? The relationship of China’s ruling class to its people?
3. In the view of the authors, what is driving U.S.-China competition? Is the competition primarily a contest over territory, economic influence, ideology, etc.? What is the desired endgame for both China and the U.S., according to the authors?
4. How optimistic – or pessimistic – are the different authors about America’s ability to compete with China?
5. What strategic approach and policies do the different authors recommend to U.S. policymakers? Where do they differ, and where do they overlap?

Additional Resources

Hertog Syllabi with discussion questions

- [Chinese Grand Strategy](#), Dan Blumenthal
- [U.S.-China Strategic Competition](#), Various Instructors
- [Nixon in China: Did We Get China Wrong?](#), Dan Blumenthal
- [Rising China & U.S. Foreign Policy](#), Eric Brown
- [The North Korean Crisis](#), Christopher J. Griffin
- [Nuclear Strategy & World Order](#), Eric Edelman
- [American Grand Strategy](#), Aaron Friedberg
- [American Grand Strategy](#), Jakub Grygiel
- [World Order & American Foreign Policy](#), Robert Kagan

Multimedia

- [Aaron Friedberg: The Rise of China and the Strategic Challenge to the United States](#)
- [Aaron Friedberg II: On increasing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship](#)
- [Stephen Rosen: The Harvard government professor on today's geopolitical challenges and American leadership in the world](#)
- [Stephen Rosen II: On the current geopolitical environment, the threat of a rising China, and the consequences of American disengagement from the world](#)
- [Eric Edelman: On the rise of authoritarianism around the world, and his career in government](#)
- [Eric Edelman II: On restoring American leadership and the dangerous consequences of American retreat from the world](#)
- [Eric Edelman III: On America's strategic position in the Post-Post-Cold War era—and the threats we face](#)
- [Robert Kagan: On authoritarianism as a strategic threat to America and the liberal world order](#)

Primary Sources

- [Richard Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam," October 1967](#)
- [Joint Statement Following Discussions with Leaders of the People's Republic of China, February 27, 1972](#)
- [Deng Xiaoping, "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts and Unite as One in Looking to the Future," December 13, 1978](#)
- [Deng Xiaoping, "Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles," March 30, 1979](#)
- [National Security Directive 140, April 21, 1984](#)
- [President George H. W. Bush, News Conference on Tiananmen Square, June 5, 1989](#)
- [President Bill Clinton, "China and the National Interest," October 24, 1997](#)
- [President Bill Clinton, Speech on China Trade Bill, March 9, 2000](#)
- [Robert Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" September 21, 2005](#)
- [Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," October 2011](#)
- ["Xi Jinping's Report at the 19th CPC National Congress," Xinhua, November 3, 2017](#)
- [Trump Administration, National Security Strategy, 2017](#)
- [Mike Pence, Remarks by Vice President Pence on the Administration's Policy Toward China, October 4, 2018](#)

- [Mike Pompeo, “Communist China and the Free World’s Future,” July 23, 2020](#)

U.S.- China Policy Timeline

1839–42	First Opium War, between China and Great Britain; beginning of the “Century of Humiliation”
August 1842	Treaty of Nanjing, ending the First Opium War
1856–60	Second Opium War
1894–95	First Sino-Japanese War
September 1899 & July 1900	Open Door Policy, issued by U.S. Secretary of State John Hay for the protection of equal privileges among countries trading with China
1899–1901	Boxer Rebellion
1911	Chinese Revolution
1912	The Qing Dynasty falls
1931–32	Japanese invasion of Manchuria
1937–45	Second Sino-Japanese War
1945–49	Chinese Civil War
October 1949	People’s Republic China established.
June 1950	Korean War breaks out.
August 1954	First Taiwan Strait Crisis
February 1956	Khrushchev makes a secret speech denouncing Stalin’s dictatorial rule; “De-Stalinization” begins.
1958	Mao Zedong launches the Great Forward plan to modernize China’s economy.
March 1959	Tibetan Uprising
October 1964	China’s first atomic test
May 1966	Mao launches the Cultural Revolution
March 1969	Sino-Soviet Border Conflict
April 1971	Ping-Pong diplomacy between the U.S. and China.

February 1972	Nixon visits China, signs the Shanghai Communiqué with Premier Zhou Enlai.
April 1975	End of the Vietnam War
September 1976	Mao Zedong dies.
November 1978	“Democracy Wall” movement, allowing greater freedom of political expression, in China begins.
December 1978	CCP launches “reform and opening up” policies backed by new leader Deng Xiaoping.
1979	Carter grants China full diplomatic recognition; Congress approves the Taiwan Relations Act.
1980	U.S. grants China “most favored nation” trading status, lowering tariffs on Chinese imports; Shenzhen is made the first “special economic zone.”
July 1982	Reagan Administration issues the “Six Assurances” to Taiwan.
August 1982	Reagan signs a third joint communiqué with the PRC to normalize relations.
June 1989	Tiananmen Square Massacre
November 1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall
1993	Clinton launches a policy of “constructive engagement” with China.
September 1991	Dissolution of the Soviet Union
March 1996	Taiwan’s first free presidential vote.
February 1997	Deng Xiaoping dies.
July 1997	The U.K. returns Hong Kong to Chinese rule.
October 2000	Clinton signs the U.S.-China Relations Act, granting China permanent normal trade relations with the U.S.
November 2001	China joins the World Trade Organization .
September 2005	In a speech, Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick calls on China to serve as a “responsible stakeholder.”
March 2007	China announces an 18 percent budget increase in defense spending for 2007, totaling more than \$45 billion.

September 2008	China becomes the largest U.S. foreign creditor
August 2010	China surpasses Japan as the world's second-largest economy
November 2011	Obama Administration calls for a U.S. "pivot" to Asia
February 2012	The U.S. trade deficit with China rises to an all-time high of \$295.5 billion in 2011. Trade tensions between the U.S. and China rise.
November 2012	Xi Jinping replaces Hu Jintao as president. Xi delivers a series of speeches on the "rejuvenation" of China.
June 2013	Obama hosts Xi for a summit to ease tense U.S.-China relations.
May 2014	A U.S. court indicts five Chinese hackers, allegedly with ties to China's PLA, on charges of stealing trade technology from U.S. companies.
November 2014	Obama and Xi issue a joint statement on climate change.
May 2015	U.S. calls on China to halt its land reclamation efforts in the South China Sea.
February 2017	Trump affirms One China Policy in a call with Xi.
April 2017	Trump hosts Xi at Mar-a-Lago; the Administration later unveils a ten-part agreement on trade.
March 2018	Trump administration announces sweeping tariffs on Chinese imports.
July 2018	U.S.-China trade war escalates with new tariffs.
October 2018	Pence delivers a speech on Trump Administration policy on China.
December 2018	Canada arrests the CFO of Huawei at U.S. request for violating trade sanctions against Iran.
March 2019	Huawei sues the U.S. for banning U.S. federal agencies from using its equipment.
May 2019	After trade talks break down, the U.S. and China raise tariffs.
August 2019	U.S. labels China a currency manipulator.
November 2019	Trump signs the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, supporting Hong Kong protestors.
December 2019	Cases of pneumonia detected in Wuhan, China, are first reported to WHO.

- January 2020 'Phase One' trade deal signed by U.S. and China; later that month, the Trump Administration restricted travel from China in response to the new coronavirus.
- March 2020 The WHO designate the novel coronavirus a pandemic.
- July 2020 Beijing passes a new national security law for Hong Kong; Trump signs an executive order ending the city's preferential trade status with the U.S.
- U.S. order China to close its consulate in Houston; China closes the U.S. consulate in Chengdu.
- In a speech, Pompeo declares U.S. engagement policy with China has failed.

China Maps



