

PPOL5340

China and the World: Policies and Development Strategies

Instructor:

Dr. Michael TYRALA

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(Office hours by appointment)

Teaching Assistant:

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Time: Thursdays, 18:30-21:20

Place: Room LG3009, Lift 3



Course Description:

Over the past four decades, China's astounding growth culminated in its rise as the second largest economy in the world. Following its 2001 "Going Out" policy, its 2013 launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, and its growing military spending and consequent assertiveness, China's presence and influence in the rest of the world has increasingly led to polarized reactions, diverging narratives, and shifting equilibriums of power. As the famous Harvard University historian and Sinologist Michael Szonyi wrote: *"China matters. In a certain obvious sense, China has always mattered and always will. What happens to a fifth of the world's population is important. But today China matters not only to the Chinese people themselves but also to Americans and to the rest of the world in some new, unexpected, and interesting ways – and not only because of China's large and growing role in the world economy. Of the many pressing problems facing our world – from climate change to economic growth to maritime security to counterterrorism – none can be solved or even addressed effectively without China's participation."* This is why it has become crucial for policymakers and experts from governments, public administrations, think tanks, civil society organizations, consultancies, and other relevant bodies to be acquainted with the uniqueness of China's evolving political, economic, and development model, its impact on the rest of the world, and the numerous challenges that lie ahead as the country assumes an ever more important role in global affairs. In this course, we will draw on key theories of global political economy, development, and international relations to foster this process of acquaintance, and apply it to China's relations with key powers, regions, countries, and actors within a wide variety of contexts and a broad range of global issues.

Course Objectives:

Upon successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between key theories of global political economy, development, and international relations, and use them to examine China's unique political, economic, and development model and its impact on the rest of the world.
- Understand and evaluate the policy processes involved in China's modern rise, and the implications of China's opening to the rest of the world.
- Critically analyze China's evolving role in key areas of global governance, and its evolving historical, political, economic, social, and cultural relations with key powers, regions, countries, and actors under an increasingly complex geopolitical environment.
- Assess and critique existing expert policy analyses and briefs on China and its relations with the rest of the world.
- Design and produce their own expert policy analyses and briefs on China and its relations with the rest of the world, with detailed policy recommendations on a wide range of relevant topics.

Course Structure:

This **3-credit course** combines lectures, videos, class and online discussions, and individual and group work to familiarize students with the various multifaceted issues related to China and its relations with the rest of the world. The approach is multidisciplinary, drawing on insights and methods from public policy, political science, global political economy, international relations, and development studies, and blends theory with practice through exposure to numerous real life case studies. The course is open to PPOL MPhil/PhD, MPP, MPM, and other MPhil/PhD/PG/UG students.

Overview of Assessment Tasks:

Assessment Task	Weight	Date
Attendance and Active Participation (Discussions of lectures, videos, required readings, and other course materials.)	20%	Throughout
Policy Brief (Mandatory for passing the course) (A 1,400–1,600-word Policy Brief written from the point of view of an analyst working for a government ministry, a government think tank, a civil society organization, or another similar body, addressed to a specific policymaker or a specific policymaking/influencing body.)	20%	17 November 2024
Peer Review of a Policy Brief (Mandatory for passing the course) (A 1,400–1,600-word Peer Review of a Policy Brief written from the point of view of the policymaker or policymaking/influencing body to which the assigned policy brief was addressed to.)	20%	26 November 2024
Final Quiz (Mandatory for passing the course) (A combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and long-answer questions based on material from the whole course.)	40%	12 December 2024

Explanation of Assessment Tasks:

(1) ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION (20%)

Attendance is mandatory, unless the student in question has a very good and ideally a properly documented reason, which should be provided to me (**Dr. Michael TYRALA**) at mtyrala@ust.hk, either as soon as you know before the missed class, or in cases of emergency as soon as possible after the missed class. Having more than four unexcused absences will result in 0/20 points for this portion of the overall assessment.

Lectures will frequently be interspersed with and followed by class discussions, and the Open Discussion Boards on Canvas will be available to contribute to on a regular basis as well.

There is a substantial amount of required workload to be done individually by each student in this course (on average around 40-45 pages per each of the 13 normal course weeks). Students are expected to set aside sufficient time to complete this required workload before each meeting, using the class discussions and the regular Open Discussion Boards on Canvas to demonstrate that they have done so. Only students that actively participate on a regular basis through clear, concise, and insightful comments, and by asking pertinent questions that enhance the discourse will be able to receive full credit for this part of the assessment. The quantity of engagement matters, but so does its quality, so while any and all eligible participation is welcome and will be counted, not all of it will necessarily be of equal worth.

(2) POLICY BRIEF (20%)

By 23:59 on 17 November 2024, every student is required to write and submit to Canvas a 1,400–1,600-word (not inclusive of references) Policy Brief. There is a significant role play element to this assignment, so the Policy Brief has to be written from the point of view of an analyst working for a government ministry, a government think tank, a civil society organization, or another similar body from a country of your choice on a topic of your choice, as long as the topic is directly related to China, and carries contemporary relevance in the chosen country (which naturally cannot be China itself).

The Policy Brief should be addressed to a specific policymaker or a specific policymaking/influencing body. A few samples of China-related policy briefs are available on Canvas, and more can be found on a wide variety of academic and foreign policy think tank portals such as (but by far not limited to) the Wilson Center, the China Africa Research Initiative, China Matters, the China in Europe Research Network, the German Council on Foreign Relations, the Boston University Global Development Policy Center, the Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions, and the Mercator Institute for China Studies, among numerous others.

Given the importance of showcasing one's research, students should mostly use academic sources. Reputable institutional, policy, think tank, and media sources are permitted as well, but they should not constitute a majority of the sources used. Overall, students must meaningfully use at least 20 English language sources (including a minimum of 12 academic sources). **The use of non-English language sources is strictly prohibited.**

(3) PEER REVIEW OF A POLICY BRIEF (20%)

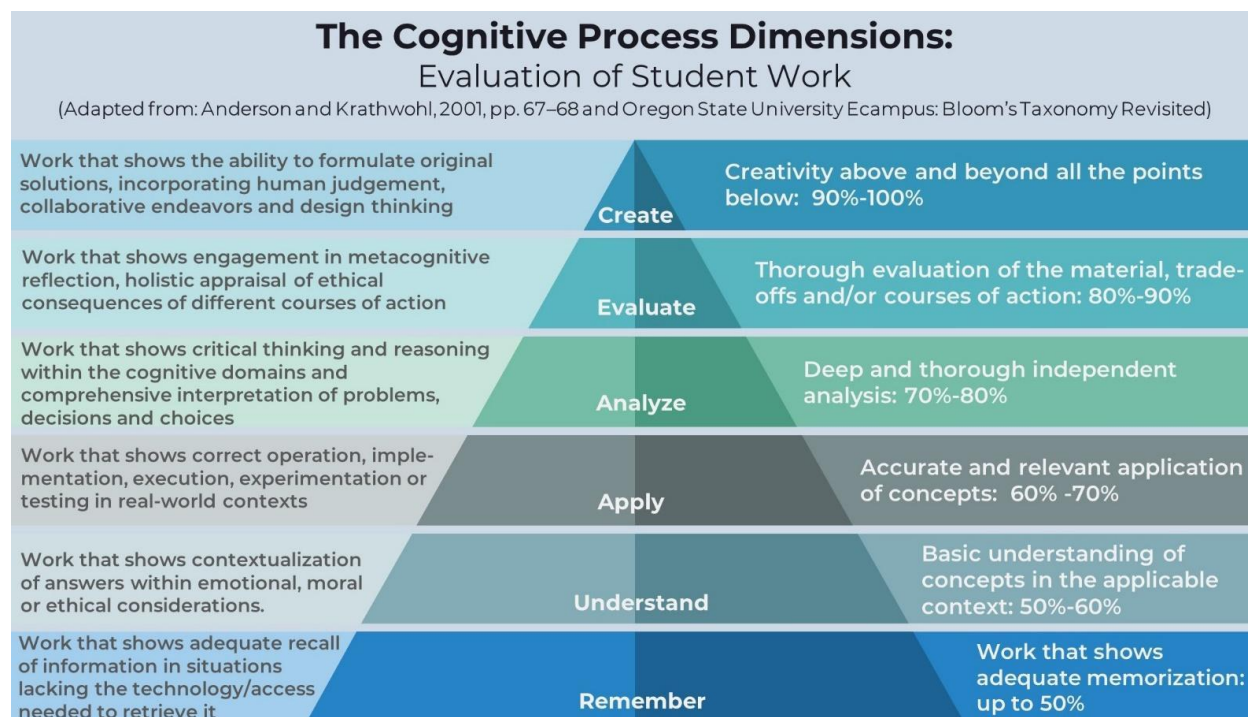
By 23:59 on 26 November 2024, every student is required to write and submit to Canvas a 1,400–1,600-word (not inclusive of references) Peer Review of a Policy Brief that was written by one of your classmates and that I will assign to you. Once again, there is a significant role play element to this assignment, so the peer review must be written from the point of view of the policymaker or policymaking/influencing body to which the assigned Policy Brief was addressed. The peer reviewer will not only be tasked with assessing the Policy Brief's quality (e.g., is it well researched and argued, or do the sources lack credibility while key aspects of the analysis have not been considered?), but also with actively addressing whatever important shortcomings they identified. After that, the peer reviewer will decide whether any of the offered policy options or recommendations would be accepted or not, justifying why or why not. Overall, students must meaningfully use at least 10 English language sources. **The use of non-English language sources is strictly prohibited.**

(4) FINAL QUIZ (40%)

On 12 December 2024 (Week 15), a 3-hour open book Final Quiz will be administered in class. It will consist of 8 multiple-choice questions (4 choices and 1 correct answer each), 4 short-answer questions (around 200-word answers each), and 2 long-answer questions (around 600-word answers each), all based on material from the lectures and the required workload from the whole course.

Grading:

The course is based on **criteria-referenced assessment (CRA)**. It also utilizes Bloom's Taxonomy, a widely used educational framework which categorizes thinking skills into six levels, from basic recall to complex creativity. While it does not apply to all of the assessment tasks, students would do well to keep it in mind whenever they are working on anything that requires research, analysis, evaluation, or creativity.



Grade	Level of Student Achievement
A+/A	Students who are exceptionally active and engaged throughout the entirety of the course, who demonstrate an excellent level of comprehension of the course material, and who are able to apply it with a very high degree of sophistication and professionalism.
A-/B+	Students who are very active and engaged throughout most of the course, who demonstrate a good level of comprehension of the course material, and who are able to apply it with an above average degree of sophistication and professionalism.
B/B-	Students who are somewhat active and engaged throughout at least some parts of the course, who demonstrate a satisfactory level of comprehension of the course material, and who are able to apply it with an average degree of sophistication and professionalism.
C+/C	Students who are not very active and engaged throughout most of the course, who demonstrate only a marginal level of comprehension of the course material, and who are able to apply it with only a low degree of sophistication and professionalism.
F	Students who are not active and engaged in the course at all or nearly at all, who demonstrate an insufficient level of comprehension of the course material, and who are thus not able to apply it with a sufficient degree of sophistication and professionalism.

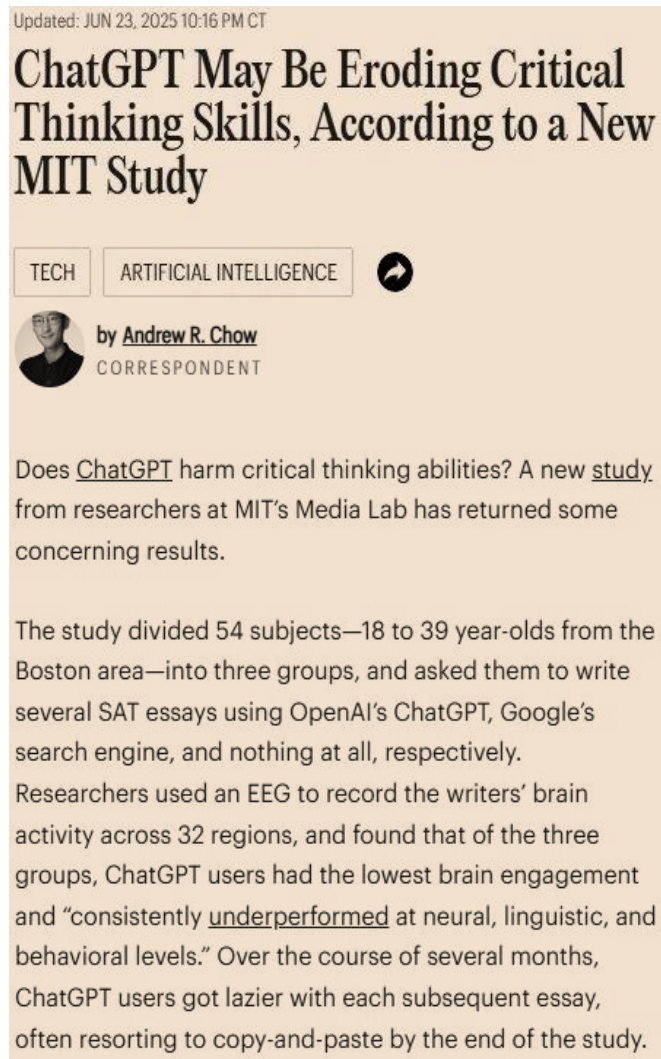
Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

In this course, the policy on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) depends on the specific assessment task in question.

(1) ACTIVE PARTICIPATION – The use of AI of any kind whatsoever is **strictly prohibited**.

(2) POLICY BRIEF – The use of AI is permitted, but only for certain tasks and with certain restrictions, and only provided that it is used responsibly and with an abundance of caution. To be specific, the use of AI is permitted and even encouraged for: (a) planning (e.g., brainstorming topics and ideas, searching for basic background information, clarifying challenging material, drafting initial outlines); (b) polishing and editing (e.g., spelling and grammar checking, improving structure and logical flow, fine tuning style); and (c) self-testing and feedback (e.g., asking for critical feedback on the student's work). However, due to its inherent biases, the relatively high degree of inaccuracy and outright hallucination, and the importance of learning how to conduct rigorous research independently, **the use of AI is strictly prohibited for: (d) research (e.g., using AI as a search engine for literature, summarizing literature, etc.); and (e) content creation and analysis (e.g., creating the first draft of the output, generating significant chunks of the output or supplanting your own analysis with generated content, generating data, generating references, or any tampering with properly identified and gathered data and references without rigorous verification of the output, etc.).**

(3) PEER REVIEW OF A POLICY BRIEF – The use of AI is permitted, but only for certain tasks and with certain restrictions, and only provided that it is used responsibly and with an abundance of caution. To be specific, the use of AI is permitted and even encouraged for: (a) planning (e.g., brainstorming topics and ideas, searching for basic background information, clarifying challenging material, drafting initial outlines); (b) polishing and editing (e.g., spelling and grammar checking, improving structure and logical flow, fine tuning style); and (c) self-testing and feedback (e.g., asking for critical feedback on the student's work). However, due to its inherent biases, the relatively high degree of inaccuracy and outright hallucination, and the importance of learning how to conduct rigorous research independently, **the use of AI is strictly prohibited for: (d) research (e.g., using AI as a search engine for literature, summarizing literature, etc.); and (e) content creation and analysis (e.g., creating the first draft of the**



output, generating significant chunks of the output or supplanting your own analysis with generated content, generating data, generating references, or any tampering with properly identified and gathered data and references without rigorous verification of the output, etc.).

(4) FINAL QUIZ – The use of AI of any kind whatsoever is **strictly prohibited**.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct pertains to a variety of both intentional and unintentional breaches of academic integrity that can haunt a student or professional long after it has been committed. For students, it frequently results in disciplinary proceedings and severe penalties impacting their assignments, their grades, their ability to continue their studies and finishing on time, and even the awarding of their degrees as such. For professionals in the real world, the consequences can be even more serious, including but not limited to journal article retractions, job losses, reputational losses, and in extreme cases even lawsuits.

On their website (<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/what-academic-misconduct>), the Academic Registry (ARO) of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) lists the following as prominent examples of academic misconduct:

- **Getting hold of examination or test questions without the instructor's permission, or giving other students questions without permission;**
- **Giving or receiving unauthorized information or help to answer questions during examinations or tests;**
- **Having someone else take a test or examination for you, or taking an examination or test for someone else;**
- **Handing in assignments on which you received help from fellow students or others that went beyond what was approved by the instructor, or giving such help;**
- **Making up facts or references and using them in assignments;**
- **Using other people's work in an assignment and presenting it as your own;**
- **Helping a fellow student to cheat; and**

University of Hong Kong professor steps down from associate deanship after AI-generated references scandal

An internal probe by the University of Hong Kong confirmed that a paper – which listed Professor Paul Yip as corresponding author and was published in an academic journal – used non-existent publications generated by AI in its references.



by KELLY HO

14:44, 18 DECEMBER 2025



Why you can trust Hong Kong Free Press

A University of Hong Kong (HKU) professor has stepped down from his position as associate dean after a paper that listed him as a corresponding author was found to contain non-existent references generated by artificial intelligence (AI).

- **Incomplete or no referencing of the work of others, which can result in plagiarism.**

However, as the Academic Registry itself rightly points out, “this list is by no means exhaustive”. Indeed, with the advent and now widespread use of AI, several of the examples above have evolved in a particularly worrisome way, giving rise to the following new forms of academic misconduct:

- **Using AI to produce the entire submitted output, the entire first draft of the output, or significant chunks of the output** – this constitutes plagiarism and is thus unacceptable (in this course for certain, in other courses it may depend on the specific assignment and the applicable policy on the use of AI, but please note that even when the applicable policy explicitly allows the use of AI in this way, AI frequently makes mistakes or outright hallucinates when generating facts, data, and references, so the submitted output may still end up constituting misrepresentation and other forms of plagiarism);
- **Using AI to populate the output with references you are not personally familiar with** – this subverts the entirety of the research process and by itself constitutes deception and fraud but it may easily also result in misrepresentation and other forms of plagiarism if AI fails to place the references where they belong in the text, or simply generates non-existent references or mashups of existing references (as it frequently does); and
- **Using AI to populate the output with references that you genuinely did read and did use to produce your output, or to simply produce the final list of references in the requested referencing format** – this may seem benign and if done diligently, it may not constitute academic misconduct, but please note that if not done diligently, same as above, it may easily result in misrepresentation and other forms of plagiarism if AI fails to place the references where they belong in the text, or simply generates non-existent references or mashups of existing references (as it frequently does).

Remember that academic misconduct need not be intentional for it to qualify as academic misconduct. As such, especially when using AI, be exceptionally vigilant, and keep in mind that ultimately, it is you and not AI that will be held accountable should your unsanctioned or irresponsible use of it result in any form of academic misconduct, such as but not limited to the examples listed above. **Unfortunately, the incidence of improper placement of references in the text, non-existent references, or mashups of existing references have become such commonplace forms of academic misconduct in the written assignments of students, that as of Spring Term 2025-2026, it is now the official policy of the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) that the use of AI for any task having to do with referencing is now strictly prohibited, with all instructors and all teaching assistants in all PPOL courses explicitly charged with verifying that all of the references used by students in their written assignments are real and used properly.** To avoid these serious forms of academic misconduct, make sure to approach your research in a responsible and organized way, and familiarize yourself with at least the simplest of proper referencing tools like **ZoteroBib** (<https://zbib.org/>), which are nearly as fast as AI and far more reliable. You can find more sophisticated referencing tools on the website of the HKUST Library as well (<https://libguides.hkust.edu.hk/referencing/tools>).

As students, it is your duty to observe and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty, and as instructors and teaching assistants, it is our duty to not only observe and uphold them but also to enforce them. As such, in what is the most unpleasant part of our work, we are obligated to report any form of academic misconduct to the PPOL Disciplinary Committee, which upon meeting and considering all of

the relevant facts may choose to impose penalties on the offending student, including severe ones such as the possibility of zero points for the affected assignment, a grade of “F” for the course, or a permanent note about the incident on the student’s Transcript of Records, with repeat offenses possibly even resulting in expulsion from the whole program.

Importance of Maintaining Proper Communication:

All too often, when students encounter any difficulties with the course or outside circumstances that are out of their control but undermine their ability to perform as well as they could, for one reason or another, they keep it to themselves and try to handle the matter on their own. The result is often a combination of avoidable underperformance, unexcused absences, missed assignments, late or no submission of assignments, and in the worst cases assignments involving some form of academic misconduct. If students do eventually reach out at all, it is often only after a significant amount of time has passed, which usually means that many of the better ways of addressing whatever the situation may be are already out of my hands or no longer on the table at all, leaving only a more limited set of bad and worse options.

To avoid this, **I encourage you to maintain proper communication throughout the course.** If you need additional support with understanding some of the course content, do let me know. I am always happy to stay behind after class for as long as you need, and should some scheduling conflict emerge, or you have another class right after, we can always arrange a Zoom meeting. If you cannot avoid missing a class, do let me know as soon as you can. If there is a very good and ideally a properly documented reason for it, such as a medical issue (with a doctor’s note or other proof) or an important job interview that overlaps with the class (with an e-mail invitation or other proof), and such cases remain reasonably exceptional, excusing an absence is not a problem. If you need a deadline extension because you are facing some extenuating circumstances, do let me know. I cannot promise that properly communicating your issues or needs will ALWAYS result in you getting what you want when you want it, but it is ALWAYS worth a try. On the one hand, due to the task being relatively easy and the time for it quite sufficient, I will usually not entertain submitting Open Discussion Board contributions past their deadline. The four Mini Quizzes likewise have set dates that will not change, and allowing students to make up for the ones they missed is logistically impossible (but only your two best Mini Quizzes count, so quite a bit of leeway is already built into this assignment). As for the Final Quiz, due to it taking place in the classroom and needing 3 hours to invigilate, I am also very set on the date specified in the syllabus, aside from genuinely special cases or emergencies, which, like everything else, should be communicated as far in advance as possible. On the other hand, take-home assignments like papers are generally more flexible and extensions thus quite feasible.

None of this is meant as an invitation for you to seek out robust preferential arrangements or to abuse my goodwill. Your studies should remain your absolute number one priority, and you should aim to meet all your deadlines. **However, if you do find yourself overwhelmed, properly communicate your situation, where applicable provide evidence, and I will do my best to help you succeed. I would rather receive good work that only needed a few extra days than extremely rushed work that was submitted on time, or worse yet, work that was submitted on time but only because its completion involved some form of academic misconduct (that is always unacceptable and there is never any excuse for it).**

Course Schedule:

LECTURES	
Time: Thursdays, 18:30-21:20	
Place: Room LG3009, Lift 3	
WEEK 1	(5 September 2024): Course introduction – Syllabus walkthrough and debate screening.
PART I: CONCEPTS, IDEOLOGIES, THEORIES, AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND EXPLAINING CHINA'S EVOLVING POSITION AND CONDUCT IN THE GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL ARENA	
WEEK 2	(12 September 2024): The foundations of global geopolitics I: Basic concepts and major ideological traditions – How do major ideological traditions differ from each other, and how do they explain China's evolving position and conduct in the global geopolitical arena?
WEEK 3	(19 September 2024): The foundations of global geopolitics II: Key theories of political economy and development – How do key theories of political economy and development differ from each other, and how do they explain China's evolving position and conduct in the global geopolitical arena?
WEEK 4	(26 September 2024): The foundations of global geopolitics III: Key theories of international relations, geoeconomics, and power in its different forms – How do key theories of international relations and concepts like geoeconomics, hard power, soft power, and others differ from each other, and how do they explain China's evolving position and conduct in the global geopolitical arena?
WEEK 5	(3 October 2024): The rise of modern China through the lens of its five key paramount leaders – How did modern China achieve its economic growth miracle and great power status, and how did the different governing styles and signature policies of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping contribute to these successes?
STUDY BREAK	(10 October 2024): Study break (NO CLASS)
PART II: CHINA'S EVOLVING ROLE IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON KEY POLICY ISSUES	
WEEK 6	(17 October 2024): China's role in global development, economic, and financial governance – In what ways does China contribute to and challenge the various institutions of global development, economic, and financial governance, and what evidence is there behind the claims that China's lending practices are irresponsible and that it is engaging in debt-trap diplomacy?

WEEK 7	(24 October 2024): China's role in global peace, security, and conflict resolution governance – In what ways does China contribute to and challenge the various institutions of global peace, security, and conflict resolution governance, and why are members of the G7 along with several other countries and economies so worried about China's growing ability to project power and influence global affairs?
WEEK 8	(31 October 2024): China's role in global environmental, climate, and energy governance – In what ways does China contribute to and challenge the various institutions of global environmental, climate, and energy governance, and what are the most notable successes, challenges, and prospects of China's ongoing green transition?
PART III: CHINA'S EVOLVING RELATIONS WITH KEY POWERS, REGIONS, AND ACTORS	
WEEK 9	(7 November 2024): China's relations with the United States of America – How have China's relations with the United States of America evolved over time, how have they been impacted by the recently escalating geopolitical tensions between them, and what other important contemporary issues and areas of interaction affect their relationship?
WEEK 10	(14 November 2024): China's relations with the Russian Federation and the European Union – How have China's relations with the Russian Federation and the European Union evolved over time, how have they been impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and what other important contemporary issues and areas of interaction affect their respective relationships?
WEEK 11	(21 November 2024): China's relations with Asia and the Pacific – How have China's relations with Asia and the Pacific evolved over time, how have they been impacted by China's territorial disputes, and what other important contemporary issues and areas of interaction affect their respective relationships?
WEEK 12	(28 November 2024): China's relations with Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East – How have China's relations with Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East evolved over time, how have they been impacted by China's raw material needs and food and energy security concerns, and what other important contemporary issues and areas of interaction affect their respective relationships?
STUDY BREAK	(5 December 2024): Study break (NO CLASS)
WEEK 13	(12 December 2024): FINAL QUIZ