Syllabus – China and the World: policies and development strategies
PPOL5340
Tuesday – 15:00 – 17:50

Venue – Room 4502

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Teaching Assistant: Xiaohui, xjiangat@connect.ust.hk

Course description
Over the past forty years, China’s astounding growth culminated in its rise as the second largest economy in the world. With its “Going Out” policy and the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, China’s presence and influence in the rest of the world has led to polarized reactions, diverging narratives, and shifting equilibriums of power. As Szonyi wrote: “China matters. […] It 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 – 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 increasingly important for policymakers, leaders of think tanks, and NGOs to be acquainted with the uniqueness of the Chinese development model.

Course objectives
This course is designed to equip students with fundamental knowledge about China, but also with important theoretical foundations on international relations, political economy, and development to be able to think critically about China’s role in the world and in specific countries. The different tasks in the course will enable students to come up with detailed examinations and policy recommendations on China but also to critically evaluate analysis and policy briefs on China. Hence, it is designed specifically for public policy students that aim to work in governmental and non-governmental organizations, think tanks, or consultancies. It will provide students with a broad coverage of issues in different countries around the world.
Course learning outcomes

On successful completion of the proposed course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and evaluate the policy process and implications of China opening its door to the world
2. Utilize multidisciplinary theories to examine China’s unique development model and its implications
3. Critically analyze the political and economic relations between China and other countries
4. Be able to critically assess development strategies and policy agendas
5. Understand the relationship between China and other countries, and with international organizations
6. Convey analysis, in writing and orally, of their critical assessments and recommendations

Course structure and key deadlines

The course will be carried out in a “role play” mode: for the first assignment, you will have to impersonate a policy analyst (working for the government or for an NGO or think tank), writing a policy brief to inform a certain government about a policy issue. You will then present this in class during the relevant session according to the geographical area.

Then, we will assign you another role of leadership in a certain government, and you will be required to take or not take action on a specific policy brief, to assess critically its content and decide a possible course of action based on the recommendation in it.

If you have a specific country you would like to work on, please let me know by 1 March. Depending on the number of students, there might be certain limitations on how many students can work on the same country / topic. If too many students ask to work on similar issues, the selection will be based who puts in the request first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>What to do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 March</td>
<td>Select country for policy brief and presentation</td>
<td>Input your preference in the link below*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Submit your policy brief</td>
<td>Send via Canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depending on country, one day before lecture</td>
<td>Send your presentation</td>
<td>Upload on Canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depending on your country</td>
<td>Send your assessment note</td>
<td>Send via Canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May</td>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>Send via Canvas</td>
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* [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AyK4R8ZyRKUsKvJaX5eK4Qqa-4HTstgf/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112458941650101272434&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AyK4R8ZyRKUsKvJaX5eK4Qqa-4HTstgf/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112458941650101272434&rtpof=true&sd=true)
Planned Assessment & Weightings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Proportion of Final Grade (%)</th>
<th>ILO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy brief</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>ILO 1, 3, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>ILO 1, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical assessment of the presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>ILO 1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>ILO 1 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class and online</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>ILO 1 - 6</td>
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Attendance is mandatory: more than three unjustified absences will result in a reduction of your grades.

Course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the course: China and the World</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/02</td>
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</table>

In this class:

- I will introduce the course and we will review the structure and the syllabus
- I will explain the key means of examination for the class and how to succeed in writing a great policy brief
- We will talk to a former deputy minister to explore what he reads about China!
- We will have a chat about any questions you might have about the course

Activity:

- Pick a policy brief of your choice and critically examine it in groups

Required actions:

- Read a policy brief on China of your choice and examine the way it’s structured

Suggested readings:


See at the end of the Syllabus the Resources for Policy Briefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Will China rule the world? Theories and narratives about China’s rise and China’s development model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15/02</td>
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</table>

In this class:

- We will review key milestones in Chinese history that led to modern times
- We will look at key theories to explain China’s growth miracle and the “Capitalism with Chinese characteristics”

See at the end of the Syllabus the Resources for Policy Briefs.
Explain the Washington vs the Beijing Consensus and the “China model”

Explain the theory of the clash of civilization and the concept of “Chineseness” and embeddedness

Activity:

- We will have an in-class debate on the topics covered by the video – namely, your take on whether there’s “clash of civilizations”

Required actions:

- Watch “A clash of civilisations” played out at SCMP’s annual China Conference: the full debate. https://youtu.be/e4grWwFxhe0

Suggested readings:


Week 3 Geoeconomics, geopolitics, and soft power: what are they?

22/02

In this class we will:

- Introduce the concepts of geoeconomics and geopolitics
- Outline the 7 economic tools with geopolitical applications
- Examine some key cases of the usage of these tools by countries in general and by China

Activity:

- You will work in groups to come up with as many examples of economics tools with geopolitical applications – you can / should come prepared
- You will have a final competition among groups to check/review your examples – may the smartest win!

Required actions:

- Do a bit of research to understand what these economic tools are and find some examples

Suggested readings:
Week 4  China, aid influence, and the Covid19 pandemic

In this class, we will:
- Introduce key theories and empirical studies on the influence of foreign aid programs
- Review the history of China’s aid program
- Review the more recent efforts by China to restructure its aid governance
- Examine the narratives pertaining China’s medical assistance under the Covid19 pandemic

Required actions:
- Do a bit of research about China’s aid programs across the world and find data about it!

Suggested readings:

Activity:
- We will first review your choices for presentations and share any feedback/questions
- Quick test on what you have learned
- Then, you will work in pre-assigned groups to come up with quick outlines about China’s aid programs in different regions of the world: these are Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Eastern Europe

Week 5  China and global economic governance – WTO, FDI and BRI (Part I, legal)
Guest lecture by Dr. Dini Sejko
In this class we will:

- Talk about the legal aspect of China’s economic governance, starting from the WTO access
- Examine the various international treaties that are relevant for Chinese investments
- Delve into some of the cases involving China’s sovereign wealth funds
- Look at the security aspect of China’s BRI

Required actions:

- Read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

Suggested readings:


Activity:

- Students’ presentations plus questions

**Week 6**  
**China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Chinese foreign direct investments (Part II, economic, environment & society)**

15/03

In this class we will:

- Introduce China’s Belt and Road Initiative, its different dimensions, and mechanisms
- Introduce the literature on FDI impact on host countries
- Review key literature on the BRI, its narratives, and the facts!
- Review key empirical studies on how Chinese FDI has changed after the BRI
- Introduce the movement to Green the BRI & the BRI’s potential impact on sustainability
- Introduce the BRI ever expanding reach: to the Artic, to the moon, to the deep-sea, and in the digital & health sector

Required actions:

- Read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

Suggested readings:

Videos:
- Al Jazeera, 2017. Reviving the 'silk road' - Inside Story. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHX8vVv2rGk&list=PLzGHKb8i9vTxIh-qFarsB6bryjWq0nLwF&index=14

Activity:
- Students’ presentations plus questions

**Week 7**  
**China, energy, and the environment: the ins and outs**  
22/03

In this class we will:
- Talk about the environmental consequences of China’s development
- Examine China’s profile and influence in the world market of minerals and metals and the implications of this
- Trace the increasing Chinese presence in mineral and resource-rich countries and territories
- Examine the role of China in global environmental governance

Required actions:
- Read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

Suggested readings:

**Activity:**

- Students’ presentations plus questions

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### Week 8  
29/03  
**Guest lecture by Alice Hughes: BRI and biodiversity**

In this lecture, Associate Professor Alice Hughes will introduce us to the key issues pertaining biodiversity governance in China and how they affect the outside world, playing particular attention to China’s BRI and its effect on biodiversity and landscape planning, and generally governance of the world’s resources.

**Required actions:**

- Read the paper by Prof. Hughes to be able to ask her some interesting questions (this will be marked!) and read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

**Suggested readings:**


**Activity:**

- Students’ presentations plus questions

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### Happy Ching Ming festival!

5/04

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### Week 9  
12/04  
**Guest lecture by Roberta Rabellotti: Green Windows of Opportunity for Sustainability Transitions**

In this class:
We will hear about the novel concept of GWO: green windows of opportunity and how they are related to China.

Required actions:

- Read the paper and prepare some questions for the guest lecture. Also read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

Mandatory reading:


Activity:

- Students’ presentations plus questions

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**Week 10**  
**19/04**  
**China, bilateral relations, and multilateral institutions: the European Union**

In this class:

- I will provide you with an overview of the China–EU relations and key insights from different countries
- We will talk about key events related to China’s relations with the EU
- We will talk about patterns of Chinese FDI in the EU
- Your classmates will present on one or two European countries’ relations with China

Required actions:

- Read about the countries on which your classmates are presenting and prepare some questions for them!

Suggested readings:


Videos:

- DW Documentary, 2019. The New Silk Road, Part 2: From Kyrgyzstan to Duisburg.  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyeBxcvUJIU
- Al Jazeera, 2018. Greece’s revamped railways expected to boost economy. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE2rmakCHs0&list=PLzGHKb8i9vTxh-qFarsB6bryjWq0nLwF&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE2rmakCHs0&list=PLzGHKb8i9vTxh-qFarsB6bryjWq0nLwF&index=4)

- Al Jazeera, 2018. Building bridges between China and France. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2aVb9X8V5g&list=PLzGHKb8i9vTxh-qFarsB6bryjWq0nLwF&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2aVb9X8V5g&list=PLzGHKb8i9vTxh-qFarsB6bryjWq0nLwF&index=7)

### Activity:
- Students’ presentations plus questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>China and Southeast Asia</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26/04</td>
<td>In this class:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I will provide you with an overview of the Chinese presence in Southeast Asia and key insights from different countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I will tell you about the case of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Suggested readings:**


### Activity:
- Students’ presentations plus questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>China and Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/05</td>
<td>In this class:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- We will have a guest lecture from Prof Barry Sautman, who will provide you with an overview of the Chinese presence in Africa and key insights from different countries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Your classmates will present on one or two African countries’ relations with China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Suggested readings:**

Breuer, J., 2017. Two Belts, One Road? - The role of Africa in China's Belt & Road initiative. [Link]


Videos:

Al Jazeera, 2020. China's New Silk Road | 101 East. [Link]

Activity:

Students’ presentations plus questions

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Week 13 China and Latin America, wrap up of the course

10/05 In this class:

- We will examine Chinese investments and influence in Latin American countries
- We will review some of your work and some of my work
- I will provide you with some tips for your final essay and will take any questions you may have


Activity:

Students’ presentations plus questions + end of class activity

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RESOURCES FOR POLICY BRIEFS:


EXAMPLES: