

# US-China Rivalry: The New Cold War?

MW 12:30PM, F 1:10PM, Hasenstab 105

Professor Huan Gao

Office: Hasenstab 317

Office hour: MW 2:30-5PM or by appointment

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## Course Description

In this course, we will investigate the key players, issues, and events that shape international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on the dynamics among powerful players like the United States and China. We focus on the most pressing contemporary issues—from the potential conflict across the Taiwan Strait, to a nuclear North Korea, to water conflicts along the great rivers of the region—and think about both explanations and potential solutions. In order to understand these crucial issues of our times, we will discuss the most prominent theories of international relations and how well these theories explain (or not) peace and war in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Class Requirements

This course is about reading, analyzing, and criticizing the latest research in international relations as well as leveraging existing knowledge to pursue new inquiries. Therefore, it is crucial that students keep up with their readings assignments and always arrive in class having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss. This course does not require any book purchase; all readings will be made available electronically. You are encouraged to mark up questions, reflections, and points of interest as you read, and you should bring these responses to the class discussion.

## Classroom Policy

Active participation in class discussion is a crucial part of this course. It will also form a part of your grade. Participation means actively analyzing, questioning, and otherwise engaging with readings as well as comments from your classmates in discussions. You are expected to participate often and demonstrate that you consistently complete reading assignments. Participation also means contributing to a positive classroom environment. It means being punctual in class, showing courtesy and supporting your peers in discussions, and taking responsibility in group projects and peer support activities.

Laptops and other electronic devices can be used in class; please use them as productive tools instead of distractions.

## Office Hours

Office hours are Monday and Wednesday afternoon, from 2:30 to 5PM. You should also feel welcome to come to office hours with any question or concern. Please use the sign-up sheet on my office door to plan for a timeslot and avoid line-ups. You can also email me for appointment time outside of usual office hour should you be busy during regular office hour.

## Student Evaluations

Student evaluations will be based on five components:

- 1) Class participation 20%
- 2) National history and strategy assignment 15%
- 3) Local perspective report 25%
- 4) Debate (group) 10%
- 5) Final paper 30%

Translation of percentages to letter grades is as follows:

A: 94+	A-: 90-93	
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86	B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79	C: 74-76	C-: 70-73
D: 60-69	F: under 60	

## Summary of Assignments

### Participation (20%)

Participation means actively analyzing, questioning, and otherwise engaging with readings as well as comments from your classmates in discussions. You are expected to participate often and demonstrate that you consistently complete reading assignments. To earn a full participation grade, you must contribute meaningfully to class discussions or Moodle discussions every class.

### Debate (group) (10%)

For this assignment, the class will be randomly split into two groups and assigned positions on a debate topic statement. A day will be dedicated to debate preparation, and the debate will take place in the following class.

### Research paper (30%)

This course requires a final 10–12-page research paper due on the last day of the exam period. Your goal for this paper is to produce an in-depth case study of one contemporary and currently relevant international relations issue in the Asia-Pacific region. You can choose any subject that can be broadly defined as an international relations issue. Your case study will provide a comprehensive overview of the issue, apply theories to explain its origin and development, and offer policy suggestions and outlook. You are encouraged (but not required) to research primary sources.

### National history and strategy assignment (15%)

For this assignment, you will create a timeline of one country's important foreign affairs events. You will also write a 3-5-page report explaining the timeline and analyzing this country's foreign policy development. You should identify different periods for this country's foreign policy and describe the main foreign relations goals and strategies during each period. You will also present your findings in class. Please sign up for a country/presentation date at your earliest convenience, as choices are first-come first-serve.

### Local perspective assignment (25%)

This assignment is an opportunity for you to investigate in-depth how a non-US actor interprets and discusses an important international relations issue. You will first choose one of the issues discussed in this course and one country involved with this issue. You will then curate a selection of 6 (minimum) news articles from 2-3 prominent news media sources from this country about the issue at hand (you may choose both English and foreign-language material). Write a 5-6-page report summarizing and analyzing your selection of local news reporting. As with the national history and strategy assignment, you will present your findings in class. Please sign up for a country-issue/presentation date at your earliest convenience.

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

<i>Introducing the Asia-Pacific Region</i>		
September 11	Introduction	
September 13	The Asia-Pacific Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yahuda, Michael. <i>The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific</i>. London: Routledge, 1996. pp. 1-20</li> <li>• Green, Michael. "Never Say Never to an Asian NATO A collective security bloc suddenly looks more plausible—never mind the denials." <i>Foreign Policy</i>, September 6, 2023.</li> </ul>
September 15	History and themes of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yahuda, Michael. <i>The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific</i>. London: Routledge, 1996. pp. 43-95.</li> </ul>
<i>Theories of International Relations and Security Studies</i>		
September 18	Structural realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mearsheimer, John J. "Structural realism." <i>International relations theories: Discipline and diversity</i> 83 (2007): 77-94.</li> <li>• Allison, Graham. "The Thucydides trap: are the US and China headed for war?." <i>The Atlantic</i> 24, no. 9 (2015): 2015.</li> </ul>
September 20	The liberal alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keohane, Robert O. "International liberalism reconsidered." In <i>Power and governance in a partially globalized world</i>, pp. 39-62. Routledge, 2003.</li> </ul>
September 22	Human security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newman, Edward. "Critical human security studies." <i>Review of International Studies</i> 36, no. 1 (2010): 77-94.</li> </ul>
September 25	Constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berger, Thomas U. "Power and purpose in Pacific East Asia: a constructivist interpretation." <i>International relations theory and the Asia-Pacific</i> (2003): 387-419.</li> </ul>
September 27	Local perspective: cultural realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnston, Alastair Iain. <i>Cultural realism: Strategic culture and grand strategy in Chinese history</i>. Vol. 60. Princeton University Press, 1998. Chapter 1.</li> </ul>
September 29	Local perspective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acharya, Amitav, and Barry Buzan. "Why is there no non-western international relations theory? Ten years</li> </ul>

	Asian IR theories	on." <i>International Relations of the Asia-Pacific</i> 17, no. 3 (2017): 341-370.
<i>Regional Players</i>		
October 2	Shifting American strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National history and strategy assignment due</b></li> <li>• White House. "The Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States". 2022.</li> <li>• Mandelbaum, Michael. "The new containment: handling Russia, China, and Iran." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 98 (2019): 123.</li> </ul>
October 4	China's "peaceful rise"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buzan, Barry. "China in international society: Is 'peaceful rise' possible?." <i>Chinese Journal of International Politics</i> 3, no. 1 (2010): 5-36.</li> </ul>
October 6	Russia's influence and alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeLisle, Jacques. "China's Russia/Ukraine problem, and why it's bad for almost everyone else too." <i>Orbis</i> 66, no. 3 (2022): 402-423.</li> </ul>
October 9	Japan and East Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rozman, Gilbert. "Japanese strategic thinking on regionalism." In <i>Japanese strategic thought toward Asia</i>, pp. 243-268. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007.</li> </ul>
October 11	ASEAN as a regional order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acharya, Amitav. <i>Constructing a security community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order</i>. Routledge, 2009. Chapter 3.</li> <li>• Khoo, Nicholas. "Deconstructing the ASEAN security community: a review essay." <i>International Relations of the Asia-Pacific</i> 4, no. 1 (2004): 35-46.</li> </ul>
October 13	<i>Final paper preliminary discussions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final paper proposal due</b></li> </ul>
<i>Security Issues</i>		
October 18	Taiwan Strait: the next conflict?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kastner, Scott L. "Is the Taiwan strait still a flash point? Rethinking the prospects for armed conflict between China and Taiwan." <i>International Security</i> 40, no. 3 (2015): 54-92.</li> </ul>
October 20	North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cha, Victor, and David Kang. <i>Nuclear North Korea: A debate on engagement strategies</i>. Columbia University Press, 2018. Chapter 7.</li> </ul>
October 23	Maritime territorial disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fravel, M. Taylor. "China's strategy in the South China Sea." <i>Contemporary Southeast Asia</i> (2011): 292-319.</li> </ul>
October 25	Navigating US-China Rivalry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shambaugh, David. "US-China rivalry in Southeast Asia: power shift or competitive coexistence?." <i>International Security</i> 42, no. 4 (2018): 85-127.</li> </ul>
October 27	Debate preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local perspective assignment due</b></li> </ul>
October 30	Debate	
November 1	The political economy of Asian regionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ravenhill, John. "The 'new East Asian regionalism': A political domino effect." <i>Review of International Political Economy</i> 17, no. 2 (2010): 178-208.</li> </ul>
November 3	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kittikhoun, Anoulak, and Denise Michèle Staubli. "Water</li> </ul>

	change and human security	diplomacy and conflict management in the Mekong: From rivalries to cooperation." <i>Journal of Hydrology</i> 567 (2018): 654-667.
November 6	Emergency management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kliem, Frederick. "ASEAN and the EU amidst COVID-19: overcoming the self-fulfilling prophecy of realism." <i>Asia Europe Journal</i> 19 (2021): 371-389.</li> </ul>
November 8	Future of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medeiros, Evan S. "The changing fundamentals of US-China relations." <i>The Washington Quarterly</i> 42, no. 3 (2019): 93-119.</li> </ul>
November 10	Final paper presentations	
November 13	Final paper presentations	
November 15	Final paper free work time	
November 20	End of exam days	

## Resources for Students

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact [OAR@carleton.edu](mailto:OAR@carleton.edu) or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

### Assistive Technologies: Technological Resources for Students

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact [aztechs@carleton.edu](mailto:aztechs@carleton.edu) or visit [go.carleton.edu/aztech](http://go.carleton.edu/aztech).

## Library

Library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an appointment with a librarian](#), get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, [email](#), or [call](#). The Library building has lots of great study spaces, and we'd love for you to visit! For more information and our hours, visit the Gould Library website at [carleton.edu/library](http://carleton.edu/library).

## Writing

### The Writing Center

The Writing Center a space with peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences by using their [online appointment system](#).

### The Term-Long Program for Multilingual Writers

If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at [mcashin@carleton.edu](mailto:mcashin@carleton.edu). She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.