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# International Relations of East Asia

Haonan Dong

W. Allen Wallis Institute of Political Economy, University of Rochester

Classroom: Hylan room 105

Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, 9 am – 10:15 am

Email: hdong10@UR.rochester.edu

Office Hour: Tuesday, 1 pm – 3 pm, Harkness Hall, 109D

## Overview

East Asia is a main center of focus for global issues. As home to two of the three largest economies and a significant percentage of the world population, East Asia presents the world with significant opportunities for economic engagement and cooperation on pressing international problems. At the same time, the complex political environment gives rise to many security challenges including territorial and sovereignty disputes, nuclear proliferation, and historical rivalries. China has emerged as a dominant world economic power, East Asian countries are becoming economically interdependent, and a significant percentage of US trade and investment is tied to the region. On the security front, China's rise challenges the US position of primacy in the region, and nuclear proliferation and military modernization shifts the distribution of power in ways that create ongoing security risks. In addition, unresolved territorial and sovereignty disputes, historical rivalries, and competition for natural resources threaten to destabilize the region.

This course explores the politics and international relations of East Asia. We will examine several contemporary issues including the rise of China and shifts in the balance of power, US engagement and military alliances, nuclear weapons development in North Korea, Taiwan sovereignty, and maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas. We will also analyze several current economic trends and problems including the political implications of economic integration, ongoing trade wars, and China's domestic politics. In examining contemporary issues in East Asia, we will look to international relations theory to gain insight into the root causes and potential solutions to these problems.

**Textbook: No required text. Readings will be provided on BlackBoard.**

## Grading

Your grade will be based on:

- Class participation (15%): Students are expected to attend class and be prepared to discuss the assigned reading for each given class period. Randomly attendance will be taken throughout the semester. Students will be assessed based on in-class discussions that they exchange ideas between each other and communicate their discussion results to the instructor and the rest of the class.

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• Reading critique (15%): Students will write max 4 page, double-spaced critique of the following article: James Fearon (1995), “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, 49(3): 379-414. The critique will include the following:

—Tight analytical summary of the author’s main argument and main conclusions (theory)  
—Critique of the theory including evaluation of the contributions as well as identification of any logical inconsistencies, contradictions, omissions, and/or factual errors

—Description of an application or applications from current or historical East Asia context.

• Group Presentation (15%): Students will select one of four topics on the syllabus and, together with teammates, give a presentation that thoroughly answers the question.

• Research presentation (15%): Students will present the results of their case study research in class.

• Final essay (40%): Students will write a thorough case study analysis that applies one of the theoretical concepts introduced in class. In each essay, students will develop a 10-12 page case study from contemporary or historical East Asia on one of the course topics. Each case study should be a tightly argued illustration of a theoretical concept from the international politics theories read in class. The case study should summarize the logic of the theory being applied and the empirical expectations. It should then provide empirical evidence from the case illustrating the empirical expectations.

### **Letter Grading Scale:**

- $x \geq 93$ : A;  $90 \leq x < 93$ : A-
- $86 \leq x < 90$ : B+;  $82 \leq x < 86$ : B;  $80 \leq x < 82$ : B-
- $76 \leq x < 80$ : C+;  $72 \leq x < 76$ : C;  $70 \leq x < 72$ : C-
- $66 \leq x < 70$ : D+;  $62 \leq x < 66$ : D;  $60 \leq x < 62$ : D-
- $x < 60$ : F

### **Lectures**

Lecture slides will be available online prior to class. You may find it convenient to download the slides prior to the lecture so that you can take notes. The slides do not substitute for lecture and weekly readings.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Academic Integrity**

I encourage to discuss course material and assignments with your peers, but the written work you turn in must be solely your own.

I have no tolerance for plagiarism. If you turn in plagiarized work, you will receive a failing grade for the course and be reported to the Department. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an excuse or a defense. Plagiarism is not just verbatim copying and pasting—

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representing someone else's arguments or ideas as your own without citing the source is also a form of plagiarism.

### **Late Assignment**

Late assignments will be docked one full letter grade (-10%) and may be accepted up to one full week after the exact due date and time. After one week, no credit will be given.

### **Accommodations**

Assignments should not be turned in late. If students are aware of upcoming travel or other factors that conflict with course deadlines, then students should anticipate these conflicts in advance and turn in assignments early.

In the event that turning in the assignment early is not a reasonable solution, then students should discuss the conflict with me well in advance of the deadline to make me determine if the circumstance justifies making alternative arrangements. If assignments cannot be turned in on time because of unexpected and legitimate emergencies, then appropriate documentation of the cause of the late assignment should be provided. I only grant exceptions to deadlines in the event of documented medical or other emergency situations.

### **Office Hours: Tuesday, 1 pm – 3 pm, Harkness Hall, 107D**

Office hours are designed to address students' questions and concerns. Therefore, students should use office hours to communicate questions to me. If an emergency arises, you are welcome to email, and I will do my best to respond promptly. Please understand that making immediate response sometimes practically impossible. Depending on circumstances, it could take a day or two to respond to emails.

### **Student Questions about Grades**

There is a mandatory 24-hour reflection period after assignments are returned to students. During this time, students should consider what was expected on the assignment and how well their performance met those expectations. If students have questions about the grading at the end of the reflection period, they are welcome to discuss their questions with me during office hours. Students wishing to discuss their assignments should come prepared with specific questions.

### **Course Adjustments**

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and course schedule as necessary.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

For this course, all use of generative AI must be cited/explained at the end of each assignment. Specifically, generative AI may be used:

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—To get editing help on your original writing.

—To gather and format references.

—Probably others, but you must consult with me before using for those other purposes.

Generative AI may NOT be used to generate drafts of original text or to create your original arguments. Your voice and arguments must be your own. Abuse of AI will be considered a violation of the honor code. If generative AI is used as part of work that will be submitted, its use should be briefly but accurately explained in a submission statement for each assignment.

## Readings

### Prospects for Conflict

#### Week 1.

- Wed, Jan 22. Course intro and syllabus review.

- Fri, Jan 24. Crisis Bargaining and War

—James Fearon. 1995. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.

Recommended: Wagner, R.H., 2007. *War and the state: The theory of international politics*. University of Michigan Press, Chapter 1.

#### Week 2.

- Mon, Jan 27. The Evolution of China’s Foreign Policy

—Garver, J.W., 2015. *China’s quest: the history of the foreign relations of the people’s Republic of China*. Oxford University Press, Chapter 5, 11

- Wed, Jan 29. Power Transition Theory and the Commitment Problem

—John Mearsheimer, “**Can China Rise Peacefully?**” *National Interest*, 25 October 2014

—Woosang Kim and Scott Gates, ed. “Special Issue: Power transition theory and the rise of China,” *International Area Studies Review* 18(3, 2015): 219–226.

—Graham Allison, “**The Thucydides Trap: Are the US and China Headed for War.**” *The Atlantic*, Thursday, September 24, 2015.

#### Week 3.

- Mon, Feb 3. Rise of China and Thucydides Trap

—David C. Kang & Xinru Ma, “Power Transitions: Thucydides Didn’t Live in East Asia,” *The Washington Quarterly* 41:1 (2018): 137-154.

—Steve Chan, "Exploring Puzzles in Power-Transition Theory: Implications for Sino-American Relations," *Security Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Spring 2004), pp. 103-141.

—Xiaoyu Pu, “Controversial Identity of a Rising China,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Summer 2017), pp. 131-149.

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- Wed, Feb 5. U.S.–China Relations: Cooperation and Competition  
—Jisi, W. and Ran, H., 2019. From cooperative partnership to strategic competition: a review of China–US relations 2009–2019. *China International Strategy Review*, 1, pp.1-10.  
—Medeiros, E.S., 2019. The changing fundamentals of US-China relations. *The Washington Quarterly*, 42(3), pp.93-119.

#### **Week 4:**

- Feb 10. Bargaining Delay  
—Homeyard, I., 1992. Another Look at the Marshall Mission to China. *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, pp.191-217.  
—Gent, S.E. and Crescenzi, M.J., 2021. Market power politics: War, institutions, and strategic delay in world politics. Oxford University Press, Chapter 3 & 7
- Feb 12. *Presentation Topic 1: Shifting Power in East Asia*  
—Explain China’s rise in power in terms of its military strength, technological advancements, global economic influence, and diplomatic strategy.

#### **Week 5.**

- Feb 17. Nuclear Politics and Challenges  
—Muhammet A. Bas and Andrew J. Coe. 2016. "A Dynamic Theory of Nuclear Proliferation and Preventive War." *International Organization* 70(4): 655-685.  
—Fiona S. Cunningham and M. Taylor Fravel. 2019. "Dangerous Confidence? Chinese Views on Nuclear Escalation," *International Security* 44:2, pp. 61-109.
- Feb 19. Nuclear Weapons in East Asia—Jigsaw 1  
—Mastro, O.S., 2018. Why China won’t rescue North Korea: What to expect if things fall apart. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(1), pp.58-66.  
—Anderson, N.D., 2017. America’s North Korean nuclear trilemma. *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(4), pp.153-164  
—Yun Sun, "The (Upcoming) Changes to China’s North Korea Policy?" *China-US Focus*, September 21, 2017. Online at [here](#).

#### **Week 6.**

- Feb 24. China and US Strategies  
—Victor D. Cha, "North Korea’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?" *Political Science Quarterly* 117, 2 (Summer 2002), pp. 209-230.  
—Fiona S. Cunningham and M. Taylor Fravel, "Assuring Assured Retaliation: China’s Nuclear Strategy and U.S.-China Strategic Stability," *International Security*, vol. 40, no. 2 (Fall 2015), pp. 7– 50
- Feb 26. *Presentation Topic 2: Nuclear Policy*  
—What are the nuclear doctrines and postures of China, Japan, North and South Korea, and the US with respect to East Asia?

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## Week 7.

- March 3. Alliance and Deterrence I

—Benson, B.V. and Smith, B.C., 2023. Commitment problems in alliance formation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(4), pp.1012-1025.

—Leeds, Brett Ashley. 2003. Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes. *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 427-439.

- March 5. Alliance and Deterrence II—Jigsaw 2

—Victor D. Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia”, *International Security*, 34:3, Winter 2009/10, p. 158-196

—Michael Beckley, “The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the security risks of U.S. defense pacts,” *International Security*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Spring 2015), pp. 7–48.

—Audrye Y. Wong, “Comparing Japanese and South Korean Strategies toward China and the United States: All Politics is Local,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 55 no. 6 (November/December 2015), pp. 1241-1269.

—Adam P. Liff, “China and the US Alliance System,” *The China Quarterly* 233 (Mar 2018): 137–165.

## Reading Critique due Friday, March 7 before 11:59 pm

## Week 8.

- March 17. Sovereignty Issues in East Asia

—Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington DC: Brookings, 2013), chapter 2.

—Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, “Should the United States Abandon Taiwan?” *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2011), pp. 23- 37.

—Wiegand, K.E., 2009. China’s strategy in the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands dispute: Issue linkage and coercive diplomacy. *Asian Security*, 5(2), pp.170-193.

- March 19. China–Taiwan Relations

—Jessica Chen Weiss, “Taiwan and the True Sources of Deterrence - Why America Must Reassure, Not Just Threaten China,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2024 (with Bonnie Glaser and Thomas J. Christensen).

—Brett V. Benson. 2022. “Why it makes sense for the U.S. to not commit to defending Taiwan,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 2022.

## Week 9.

- March 24. China–Taiwan Relations (continued)

—John J. Mearsheimer, “Say Goodbye to Taiwan,” *The National Interest*, March/April 2014, online at [here](#).

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—Patricia Kim, “**History Shows Beijing Won’t Budge an Inch on Taiwan,**” *Foreign Policy*, 3 January 2017.

—Denny Roy, “Prospects for Taiwan Maintaining its Autonomy under Chinese Pressure,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 57, no. 6 (November/December 2017), pp. 1135-1158.

- March 26. Limited Conflict, Domestic Audiences, Salami Tactics and Gray Zone—Jigsaw 3

—Thomas Schelling on Salami Tactics

—Jessica Chen Weiss, Allan Dafoe, Samuel Liu, and Brian O’Keefe. 2022 “Provocation, Public Opinion, and International Disputes.” *International Studies Quarterly* 66:2.

—Peter Schram, 2021. “Hassling: How States Prevent a Preventive War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65:2, pp. 294-308.

## Week 10.

- March 31. *Presentation Topic 3: Limited and Gray Zone Conflict*

—Describe the key features and characteristics of gray zone conflict in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea and explain why these actions constitute “gray zone conflict” rather than some other category of diplomacy or limited war.

- Apr 2. **No Class. Haonan travels to a conference**

## Week 11.

- Apr 7. Economic Dependence and Conflict I

—Wagner, R.H., 1988. Economic interdependence, bargaining power, and political influence. *International Organization*, 42(3), pp.461-483.

—Monteiro, N.P. and Debs, A., 2020. An economic theory of war. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(1), pp.255-268.

Recommended: Slantchev, B.L., 2012. Borrowed power: Debt finance and the resort to arms. *American Political Science Review*, 106(4), pp.787-809.

- Apr 9. Economic Dependence and Conflict II

—Gent, S.E. and Crescenzi, M.J., 2021. *Market Power Politics: War, Institutions, and Strategic Delay in World Politics*. Oxford University Press, chapter 5

—Miller, C., 2022. Chip war: the fight for the world’s most critical technology. Simon and Schuster, Chapter 7

## Week 12.

- Apr 14. Economic Dependence and Conflict III

—Brett V. Benson, Dong Haonan, and Bradley C. Smith. 2024. “Economic Interdependence, Political Leverage, and War.” typescript.

—Copeland, D.C., 2014. Economic interdependence and war. Princeton University Press, chapter 5

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—Farrell, H. and Newman, A.L., 2019. Weaponized interdependence: How global economic networks shape state coercion. *International security*, 44(1), pp.42-79.

Recommended: Grinberg, M., 2021. Wartime commercial policy and trade between enemies. *International Security*, 46(1), pp.9-52

- Apr 16. *Presentation Topic 4: Economic Dependence*

—What countries are concerned with economic dependence as a result of the economic strength of East Asian countries and what are countries' policy responses?

**Week 13.**

- Apr 21-23 Reading Topics TBD or Student Presentations

**Week 14.**

- Apr 28-30 Student Presentations

**Week 15.**

- May 7 Final Essay due on BlackBoard