

HISTORY 4611F
Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China
Winter 2025-26
Thurs 9:30 – 12:30

Instructor: James Flath

Office Hours: TBA
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This is a draft outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description:

This course will examine the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China from its inception in 1949 through to the present Xi Jinping era. The focus of the course will be on China's political and security relations with global powers, including the Soviet Union/Russian Federation, Japan, India, Iran and the USA. The complexities of international relations will require further attention to spheres of mutual and conflicting influence, including Korea, Vietnam and Pakistan.

Prerequisite(s):

2.0 courses in History at the 2200 level or above.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus:

Living in this world means understanding that China is a part of it, and that China – its people, government, banks, armed forces – have a seat at the proverbial table. Students enrolled in this course will examine international relations from the Chinese perspective. They will be tasked with explaining how world events of the latter part of the 20th and the early 21st century were shaped by Chinese influence, and how China adapted to international challenges.

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Course Materials:

John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2018. (For purchase, \$55.00)

Although the course relies on a single text, the reading is nonetheless substantial. Students will be required to read on average 65 pages per week.

Students may be asked on occasion to listen to podcasts, or to read breaking news items that are of relevance to the course material.

Methods of Evaluation:

Essay Proposal (10%): Due January 29

The essay proposal defines the essay topic, establishes the research question and preliminary thesis, and briefly outlines the draft Research Essay (see below).

Annotated Bibliography (10%): Due February 12

The annotated bibliography will be the second step in writing the capstone term paper for the course. Once the student determines the essay topic in consultation with the professor, they will compile a bibliography of ten to fifteen texts (books and academic articles) that relate to the same topic. Each entry is to be accompanied by a paragraph that briefly outlines the position of the author and describes how the text relates to the essay topic.

Research Essay (50%): Due March 26

As the capstone assignment for the course, the Research Essay develops the Annotated Bibliography into a comprehensive historiographical discussion and develops the Essay Proposal into a fully articulated scholarly discussion of 20 pages in length. Students must receive a passing grade on the essay to pass the course.

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Essay Presentation (10%): April 2

The last class of the term will be treated as a symposium in which students deliver a “3 Minute Thesis” based on their research papers. Students will be graded on both content and delivery.

Professionalism (20%)

This is not a lecture course. Students are expected to arrive in class fully prepared, and ready to make ongoing contributions to the discussion. To reinforce the atmosphere of professionalism, equal portions of the Professionalism grade will be assigned to attendance, preparation (judged on the basis of a short weekly quiz), and participation.

*Late assignments will not be accepted, except on the advice of Academic Advising.

*Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful research tool. However, the student will not receive credit for work written by AI. If the student wishes to involve AI as co-author then the AI must be given credit, and that credit (50%) will be deducted from the student’s share of the grade. Failure to give due credit to the AI will result in a grade of 0%. In case of discrepancy, the student may request an oral thesis defense.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1

Garver, Introduction and Chapter 1

Week 2

Soviet Union, Korea, and the Bandung Era

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Garver, Chapter 2-4

Week 3

Sino-Soviet Split and Sino-Indian Conflict

Garver, Chapter 5-6

Week 4

Vietnam and the Cultural Revolution

Garver, Chapter 9-10

Week 5

Managing the USA and USSR

Garver, Chapter 11-12

Week 6

Opening Up, China VS Vietnam

Garver, Chapter 13-14

Week 7

Modernizing and Normalizing

Garver, Chapter 15-16

Week 8

Surviving the Collapse of Communism

Garver, Chapter 17-19

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Week 9

China and the USA

Garver, Chapter 21-22

[Cai Xia](#). "China-US Relations in the Eyes of the Chinese Communist Party". Hoover Institution

Week 10

China and the USA II

Garver, Chapter 23-24

Week 11

China and its Neighbors

Garver, Chapter 26, 27

Week 12

China as a World Power

Garver, Chapter 25, 28, 29

Week 13

Conference Week

Student Papers

Use of Electronic Devices:

Electronic Devices are encouraged for use in classroom activities, where appropriate.

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Additional Statements:

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,
<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,
for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness

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