

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Prague

Course Code / Title: (PR/INTR 346) New Geopolitics Between Europe, China, and the US

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Political Science, History, Central European Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: Prior coursework in International Relations recommended

Description

In a world of renewed geopolitical competition, and with new challenges emerging in climate change, artificial intelligence and other new technologies, a new triangle of global actors is emerging between the United States, China and Europe. These actors strive to develop their economies, protect their interests, and expand their influence on various parts of the world. This course enables students to learn about this new international dynamic, often seen as a bipolar competition between the United States and China, with an added perspective of Europe – and, specifically, the Czech Republic. Topics include the long-term differences in the visions of the global order between these actors, recent developments (the Russian war against Ukraine, renewed Chinese threats to Taiwan, and their implications for the relationship between these actors), as well as the perspectives of green transition, competition for relevant resources, and potential new security flashpoints between these international actors.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students:

- learn about the differences between the U.S., European, and Chinese visions of the international order
- grasp the internal and foreign policy developments in the EU and China from the past few decades into the current era
- understand the challenges these actors face, based on their individual histories and their economic advantages and disadvantages
- discuss the current topics of contention between these actors in the areas of climate change, technological developments, and competition for resources
- identify the geographical and topical flashpoints between these three actors
- examine whether and how conflicts between these actors can be resolved peacefully

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Course Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments are generally 20-30 pages per class session.

Graded assignments include:

- Reading and active class participation (evaluated twice during term)
- Midterm test (in-class, closed-book, paper-based test combining multiple-choice and essay-style questions, reviewing the introductory topics of the first 5-6 weeks of the course)
- Current affairs mini-presentations (students present news items from US-EU-Chinese relations in an informal 3-5-minute presentation, twice per term)
- Reflection essays (two essays during the semester: one on a guest talk and another on a topic of choice)
- Final project (research paper of 8-10 pages, on topic of student's choice pre-approved by instructor, plus 15-20 minutes in-class presentation in the final week or two of the term)

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

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| • Reading and active class participation | 20% |
| • Midterm test | 15% |
| • Current affairs mini-presentations (2 at 10%) | 20% |
| • Reflection essays (2 at 10%) | 20% |
| • Final project (15% paper & 10% presentation) | 25% |

Participation Grading Rubric:

Grade	Discussion	Reading
A	Excellent: consistent contributor; offers original analysis and comments; always has ideas on class topics and readings and easily connects them. Takes care not to dominate the discussion and thoughtfully responds to other contributions.	Demonstrates close familiarity with nearly all readings; thoughtfully and critically uses resultant understanding to formulate ideas, offers insights, and advance learning in class.
B	Good: frequent contributions to discussion; offers thoughtful comments and makes connections between class themes and readings.	Demonstrates knowledge of most readings; provides somewhat competent analysis of the readings and applies insights to appropriately promote class discussion.

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C	Can Improve: sporadic contributor; comments and questions often show a lack of understanding of key concepts; digresses or contributes in ways that are unhelpful or unsupportive of discussion.	Displays familiarity with some readings; rarely demonstrates analytical application.
D	Subpar: rarely speaks in class, or merely quotes text and repeats own comments or those of others. Classroom comments are disconnected from topics and do not advance class learning.	Little apparent familiarity with assigned material. Limited application to relevant topics.
F	Failing: did not effectively participate in the class discussion. Was online using a smartphone/other devices during class.	No familiarity with readings or relevant application.

Readings

Altun, Sirma, and Ceren Ergenc. "The EU and China in the global climate regime: a dialectical collaboration-competition relationship." *Asia Europe Journal* 21, no. 3 (2023): 437-457.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-023-00664-y>.

Aukia, Jukka. *China's hybrid influence in Taiwan: Non-state actors and policy responses*. Helsinki: The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, 2023.
<https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/20230406-Hybrid-CoE-Research-Report-9-Chinas-hybrid-influence-in-Taiwan-WEB.pdf>.

Bachulska, Alicja and Mark Leonard. "China and Ukraine: The Chinese debate about Russia's war and its meaning for the world." European Council on Foreign Relations. July 11, 2023.
<https://ecfr.eu/publication/china-and-ukraine-the-chinese-debate-about-russias-war-and-its-meaning-for-the-world/>.

Benabdallah, Lina. *Shaping the Future of Power: Knowledge Production and Network-Building in China-Africa Relations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020.

Biba, Sebastian, ed. *Europe in an Era of US-China Strategic Rivalry Challenges and Opportunities from an Outside-in Perspective*. Switzerland: Springer, 2024.
 Bradford, Anu. *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

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Cancian, Mark F., Matthew Cancian, and Eric Heginbotham. "The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan." January 9, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/first-battle-next-war-wargaming-chinese-invasion-taiwan>.

Cooper, Andrew F. "China, India and the pattern of G20/BRICS engagement: differentiated ambivalence between 'rising' power status and solidarity with the Global South." *Third World Quarterly* 42, no.9 (2020): 1945–1962. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1829464>.

"China's Position on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine." United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission. March 31, 2024, <https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-position-russias-invasion-ukraine>.

Economy, Elizabeth. *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Ferenczy, Zsuzsa Anna. *Europe, China, and the Limits of Normative Power*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, 2019.

García-Herrero, Alicia, Heather Grabbe and Axel Källenius, "De-risking and decarbonising: a green tech partnership to reduce reliance on China," Bruegel. October 26, 2023. <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/de-risking-and-decarbonising-green-tech-partnership-reduce-reliance-china>.

Garnaut, John. "Engineers of the Soul: Ideology in Xi Jinping's China." *Sinocism*. January 17, 2019. <https://sinocism.com/p/engineers-of-the-soul-ideology-in>.

Ghiretti, Francesca, Helena Legarda, Grzegorz Stec and Abigael Vasselier. "Profiling relations of European countries with China." *MERICCS*, October 31, 2023. <https://mericcs.org/en/profiling-relations-european-countries-china>.

Johnston, Alastair Iain. "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations." *International Security* Vol. 44, no. 2 (2019): 9–60. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00360.

Kironska, Kristina, and Richard Q. Turcsanyi, eds. *Contemporary China. A New Superpower?* Routledge, 2024.

Lipke, Alexander, Janka Oertel, and Daniel O'Sullivan. "Trust and trade-offs: How to manage Europe's green technology dependence on China." European Council on Foreign Relations. May 29, 2024. <https://ecfr.eu/publication/trust-and-trade-offs-how-to-manage-europes-green-technology-dependence-on-china/>.

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Mazzocco, Ilaria and Gregor Sebastian. "Electric Shock Interpreting China's Electric Vehicle Export Boom." Center for Strategic and International Studies. September 2023.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/electric-shock-interpreting-chinas-electric-vehicle-export-boom>.

Miller, Chris. *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology*. New York: Scribner, 2022.

Puglierin, Jana, and Pawel Zerka. "Keeping America close, Russia down, and China far away: How Europeans navigate a competitive world." European Council on Foreign Relations. June 7, 2023.

<https://ecfr.eu/publication/keeping-america-close-russia-down-and-china-far-away-how-europeans-navigate-a-competitive-world/>.

Rieker, Pernille, and Marianne Riddervold. "Not so Unique after All? Urgency and Norms in EU Foreign and Security Policy." *Journal of European Integration* Vol. 44, no 4 (2021): 459–73.
doi:10.1080/07036337.2021.1977293.

Rolland, Nadège. *China's Vision for a New World Order*. Seattle, Washington: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2020. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-vision-for-a-new-world-order/>.

Rudd, Kevin. "The World According to Xi Jinping: What China's Ideologue in Chief Really Believes." *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 101, No. 6 (2022): 8-21.

Schuman, Michael, Jonathan Fulton, and Tuvia Gering. "How Beijing's newest global initiatives seek to remake the world order." Atlantic Council. June 21, 2023. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/how-beijings-newest-global-initiatives-seek-to-remake-the-world-order/>.

Turcsányi, Richard Q. "China and the Frustrated Region: Central and Eastern Europe's Repeating Troubles with Great Powers." *China Report* Vol. 56, no. 1 (2020): 60-77.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445519895626>.

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Outline of Course Content

Students cover approximately one topic every 1-2 weeks. Course content includes at least two field study course components / guest lectures focusing on the Czech perspective of European-Chinese relations as told through a senior Czech policymaker's experience.

Topic 1: The U.S., the EU, and China in a Changing World: An Introduction

This module will provide a basic introduction to International Relations theories and describe the key global trends and structural changes in the global system since the end of the Cold War, focusing on the respective positions of the EU, US, and China.

Topic 2: The European Union as a Peace Project

This module will discuss the origins and institutional development of the European Union both internally and as an international actor *sui generis* and what this has meant for its global role, the agenda and type of power it projects, and its relations with the United States and China.

Topic 3: The EU amidst the Polycrisis: From the Great Recession to the War in Ukraine

The module will focus on familiarizing the students with the institutional and policy transformation within the EU over the past 15 years as it has reacted to a succession of internal and external crises.

Topic 4: China Under Xi Jinping: Between Domestic Challenges and Global Ambitions

The module will interpret the key developments in Chinese domestic and foreign policies since the coming to power of Xi Jinping, focusing on the growing rigidity of the PRC authoritarian system, the reactions to economic challenges as well as the departure from the erstwhile "hide your strength, bide your time" strategy on the global stage.

Topic 5: China-EU Ties: From Partnership to Systemic Rivalry

This module will focus on the development of relations between the EU and China across different issue areas, including economic ties, climate cooperation and ideological issues.

Topic 6: Competing Visions of Global Order

The module will focus on different understandings of the global order, including the role of international organizations and regimes, and the nature of China's challenge to the "rule-based order" as embodied by its global governance initiatives.

Topic 7: China, the West, and the Rest

The module will introduce how the US, the EU, and China are navigating an increasingly multipolar world order and how they struggle for political support and economic opportunities specifically in the "Global South."

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Topic 8: Winning the Green Transition: The Geopolitics of Decarbonisation

The module will introduce the students to the geoeconomic impact of the ongoing green transition, focusing on the key trends and policy reactions in Brussels, Washington D.C., and Beijing.

Topic 9: New Cold War? The Security Competition in the Indo-Pacific and the War in Ukraine

This module will tackle the blurring of the border between the Indo-Pacific and European security theaters amid the intensifying Sino-American security competition and Russia's war against Ukraine.

Topic 10: Why Taiwan Matters

The module will analyze the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of Taiwan, focusing on its role in global supply chains and the potential scenarios of Chinese military action against the island, and the views from the United States and Europe.

Topic 11: Punching Above Its Weight? The Czech Case

This module will focus on the Czech Republic as an actor whose experience with a totalitarian regime has shaped a specific response to the rise of China: from an early criticism of China's human rights record and support to democratic Taiwan, through an experimentation with engagement in the hopes of more profound business ties, to recently stronger geopolitical caution and re-alignment with Taiwan again.

Topic 12: The End of History Undone? The Illiberal Turn in the West and the Authoritarian Challenge

The module will focus on the battle of ideas on the global stage for the definition of universal values and democracy amidst the internal unrest in the West and China's quest to seek legitimacy for its authoritarian system.

Topic 13: The Winners and Losers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The module will focus on the global competition in emerging tech, from AI to biotech, looking at the efforts by different actors to attract talent, spur innovation, and gain an upper hand in developing new standards.