



<https://hsp.arizona.edu/>

U.S.-China Relations in the Modern Era Competitors or Enemies?

There is no more critical issue facing the U.S. and its allies in 2022 than the U.S. relationship with China. On May 26, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said as much in a speech at George Washington University: ***"Even as President Putin's war continues, we will remain focused on the most serious long-term challenge to the international order – and the People's Republic of China poses that."*** How this relationship evolves is so vital to America's wellbeing that it is fair to say it eclipses or goes hand-in-hand with other political, economic, and social issues of the day. In and of itself, the future of Taiwan is a critical issue polarizing the world and, worse, has the potential to bring the U.S. and its allies into conflict with China. However, that is to skim or merely pay attention to the headlines. Many latent issues – political, military, environmental, and social – may set the world's agenda for centuries. ***"The U.S. and China in the Modern Era"*** follows official U.S.-China relations dating back to 1972 when President Nixon visited China and established the One China Policy, which significantly included the status of Taiwan as either a "part" or "province" of China. We will delve into this hot issue throughout the course.

This class will provide just the historical context to keep us from getting lost in the past, but not ignoring the vital goings-on in the last 200 years that provide the framework for today's discussions. Here is a capsule:

In 1842, Britain defeated China in the First Opium War (1839-42). China then ceded Hong Kong to Britain "in perpetuity." The U.S. took advantage of China's weakness by forging a treaty in 1844 that gave the U.S. entry into China's lucrative trade market and the reinforcement of Christianity in China. However, historically more important, the Treaty of Wangxia marked the beginning of official diplomatic relations with China. Since then, the U.S. and China have experienced a roller-coaster relationship. The U.S. and China signed the Treaty during a period China now labels the "Century of Humiliation," dated from 1839 to 1949. China now uses this period to rationalize taking back Hong Kong by force in 2020 and, someday, Taiwan, a Chinese province ceded to Japan as a wartime indemnity in 1895. On the other hand, the U.S., according to Secretary Blinken, now considers Taiwan ***"a leading democracy and a technological powerhouse [and] is a key U.S. partner in the Indo-Pacific."*** As a result, Taiwan may well become the Ukraine of Asia. Or will it if the U.S. has anything to do about it? Today, the U.S. finds itself in one heck of a conundrum. So will you when I ask you for your take on the U.S., China, and Taiwan relationship, the thrust of this course.¹

¹ My thanks to Keith Rosenblum for proofreading the syllabus and for offering solid suggestions to better the subject-matter.

Briefly

- America was part of the "Century of Humiliation (COH)," when foreign powers created an opium-addicted country against China's wishes, carved out exclusive foreign zones ("no Chinese or dogs allowed"), and collected large indemnities from such domestic rebellions as the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. In the Boxer Protocol, China paid a \$333 million indemnity to the allied forces (\$1,000,000 in 1900 = \$34,000,000 today). The U.S. remitted its share of the indemnity to China. Qinghua University, one of China's most prestigious universities today, was founded with part of the returned indemnity. In addition, the agreement permitted China to send its first batch of students to Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Michigan. In the meantime, international troops, including U.S. troops, continued to loot Beijing's Forbidden City.
- In the COH, Britain claimed Hong Kong, and Japan claimed Taiwan as wartime indemnities. China has now forcibly recovered Hong Kong in violation of its Treaty with Britain, which established 2047 as the date for Hong Kong's return. So is Taiwan next, with only the U.S. standing up for it but without a legal reason to do it?
- The U.S. was the first country to officially recognize the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan today) on May 2, 1913, after the fall of the last Chinese dynasty in 1911.
- The U.S. failed to prevent Japan from occupying Chinese territory after WWI, a setback to the Treaty of Versailles (1919), China in particular. The Treaty ended WWI but set off the first anti-Western movement in Chinese history, including the rise of communism and nationalism.
- The U.S. and the ROC were allies during WWII, 1944-49; the U.S. assisted the Nationalist government, then still in control of the mainland, until the communist victory in 1949, a development that still haunts the three-way relationship today
- The U.S. and China were enemies during the Korean War, 1950-53
- The U.S. and China were adversaries until the Nixon visit in 1972, which led to the introduction of the One China Policy affecting Taiwan's status, a significant issue in this class
- The Trump administration labeled China as an "enemy in a new Cold War," which started the erosion of the non-adversarial relationship, 2016-20
- On May 26, 2022, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the new Biden administration policy toward China (see quote above). China watchers have been waiting for a China policy since the Biden administration assumed office in January 2021. Secretary Blinken continues:
 - To succeed in this decisive decade, the Biden administration's strategy can be summed up in three words – "invest, align, compete."
 - *And harnessing the first two key assets, we'll compete with China to defend our interests and build our vision for the future.*
 - We take on this challenge with confidence.
- So, is China an adversarial competitor or an enemy? Let us find out in the next ten weeks.

Syllabus Spring 2023

Andres D. Onate, Ph.D.
520-342-9282
adonate@email.arizona.edu

COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursdays from 10 AM - 12 PM on February 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2, 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 2023
(skipping March 9 for spring break)

TEXTS, VIDEO CLIPS, DOCUMENTARIES

There are no assigned textbooks for this course. Instead, I put together ten Readers designed explicitly for each topic in this course. The Readers, video clips, and documentaries are uploaded to the Learning Portal in clearly designated modules.

CLASS PROCEDURE

PowerPoint presentations anchor the class. However, as you know, the devil is in the details or, in this class, the Readers. So, please read them before each weekly class topic. In addition, short video clips and documentaries enhance the week's theme from time to time.

CALENDAR/CLASS SCHEDULE

**US-CHINA RELATIONS IN THE MODERN ERA
IN-PERSON/ONLINE WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE
FEBRUARY 2-APRIL 13, 2023
THURSDAYS, 10 AM-12 PM**

Week/Date	Assignment	D2I/Notes
1. Thursday, February 2	Reader One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to US-China relations • Indo-Pacific Theater: Containment II? • "Destined to War?" Video Clip (18-minutes)
2. Thursday, February 9	Reader Two,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taiwan: How sovereign really? • Comparing China-Taiwan militaries (not pretty)
3. Thursday, February 16	Reader Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One China Policy (Nixon's Trip to China, 1972 - documentary) • Strategic ambiguity debate (Ukraine and Hong Kong on the mind)
4. Thursday, February 23	Reader Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 DOD Report on China's Military • Comparing U.S./China militaries (not pretty)

5. Thursday, March 2	Reader Five Vols. 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China 2049 • China's ongoing quest for global STEM dominance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPR Theft • Kowtowing to China
Thursday, March 9	Spring Break	No Class
6. March 16	Reader Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Censorship • Class challenge (can you crack China's Great Firewall?)
7. Thursday, March 23	Reader Seven, Vol. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 U.S. Annual Report on human rights abuses in China (does the US have a case?)
8. Thursday, March 30	1 st HR: Reader Seven, Vol. 2 2 nd HR: Reader Seven, Vol. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st HR: 2021 Chinese Report on human rights abuses in the U.S.: • Class: does China have a case? • 2nd HR: Religion in China
9. Thursday, April 6	Readers Eight, Nine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tibet/Xinjiang • Cultural Genocide?
10. Thursday, April 13	Reader Ten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiananmen, June 4, 1989: • The Day Democracy Died in China