

SOSC 4280: China in the Global Political Economy

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Spring Semester, 2025–2026

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Office Hours: Tuesday 14:00–15:00
Class Hours: Friday 10:30–13:20
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Course Description

China's economic integration with the world has profoundly transformed the country's domestic political economy. Meanwhile, China's economic ascendancy has reshaped the global geopolitical landscape. This undergraduate seminar is designed to understand China from the global political economy perspective. This course provides a general survey of research in the field of International Political Economy (IPE). IPE involves the study of how domestic and international politics (power, material interests, ideas, norms) influence and are influenced by economic relations between states. We study international trade, international finance, international production, and international development by exploring the cross-border flow of goods, production, capital, and labor from a political perspective. The goal of this seminar is to introduce advanced undergraduates to the major debates of IPE and help students develop an analytical toolkit to study China's economic engagement with the world.

Enrollment Requirement

To enroll in this course, students must have completed at least ONE of the following courses:

- HUMA 2590: The Making of the Modern World: Renaissance to the Present
- SOSC 1350: Contemporary China: Continuity and Change
- SOSC 2290: Understanding Globalization

Teaching and Learning Activities

This course consists of short lectures, classroom discussions, presentations, research, and writing.

Required Texts and Materials

There are no required text books for this course. All readings will be made available in electronic form through the course website.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of the course, the aim is that students will have improved the ability to:

1. Use key concepts and theoretical frameworks from economics and political science to deepen understanding of China's global engagement;
2. Apply critical thinking and analytical writing skills to examine the dynamics of the global political economy;
3. Assess the validity of existing arguments based on empirical evidence;
4. Develop a logical argument or theory that can be evaluated using evidence.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below.

Assessment Task	Details	Weight (%)	Deadline
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete all readings before class.• Submit 1-2 discussion questions via Canvas.• Actively contribute to class discussions.	20%	Weekly, submit discussion questions by 8 PM Thursday
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver one group presentation (2-3 students) on weekly readings.• Summarize arguments, critically evaluate evidence, and propose discussion questions.• Submit slides via Canvas.	20%	Week of presentation, submit slides by 8 PM Thursday
Response Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask an AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude) to write a response paper on a weekly reading (excluding your presentation topic).• Copy and paste the full AI response under the heading "AI Output."• Critically evaluate the AI's work (6-8 pages, double-spaced).	20%	Friday, May 15, 23:59 PM
Final Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a critical literature review (10-15 pages, double-spaced) on a chosen topic.• Analyze influential works and synthesize multiple perspectives.	40%	Friday, May 15, 23:59 PM

Please note that **ANY late submissions** of the response paper and final paper (due Friday, May 15, 23:59 PM) will incur a one-step grade reduction per day (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+), with each 24-hour period starting from the deadline counting as one day.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Participation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Participation assesses students' ability to use key concepts and theoretical frameworks in discussions (ILO1), apply critical thinking to analyze class readings (ILO2), and assess the validity of arguments raised during class discussions using empirical evidence (ILO3).
Presentation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	The group presentation assesses students' ability to explain and apply theoretical frameworks to specific readings or topics (ILO1), critically evaluate the dynamics of the global political economy (ILO2), and assess arguments based on evidence (ILO3).
Response Paper	ILO2, ILO3	The response paper evaluates students' ability to apply critical thinking and analytical writing skills to examine the global political economy (ILO2), assess the validity of existing arguments using empirical evidence (ILO3).
Final Paper	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	The final paper assesses students' ability to use key concepts and frameworks to analyze global political economy (ILO1), apply critical thinking (ILO2) to assess arguments using empirical evidence (ILO3), and develop and evaluate a logical, evidence-based argument or theory (ILO4).

Final Grade Rubric

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
A	Excellent	<p>Participation: Actively and consistently contributes to discussions with insightful, well-prepared comments and questions that demonstrate a deep understanding of the readings. Engages constructively with peers and fosters meaningful dialogue.</p> <p>Presentation: Demonstrates exceptional clarity, critical evaluation, and synthesis of arguments. Slides are well-structured and delivery is confident and professional.</p> <p>Response Paper: Identifies specific nuances, gaps, or inaccuracies in the AI output. Arguments are compelling and well-supported. Writing is polished and demonstrates mastery.</p> <p>Final Paper: Presents an evidence-based argument, demonstrating comprehensive research, analytical rigor, and critical thinking. Writing is clear, well-structured, and engaging.</p>

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
B	Good	<p>Participation: Regularly contributes to discussions with thoughtful comments and questions, showing good preparation and understanding of the readings. Occasionally engages with peers' ideas but may lack depth in contributions.</p> <p>Presentation: Provides a clear summary and critical evaluation of key arguments, with logical structure and effective use of slides. Delivery is clear and mostly confident, though it may lack deeper engagement.</p> <p>Response Paper: Critique is clear but general rather than specific. Demonstrates solid understanding and good writing, but lacks deep insights.</p> <p>Final Paper: Develops a strong argument supported by evidence, with good research and analysis. Writing is clear and well-organized, though the critical analysis could be further developed.</p>
C	Satisfactory	<p>Participation: Participates occasionally, offering basic comments or questions that show a basic understanding of the readings. Contributions are minimal and lack depth or critical engagement.</p> <p>Presentation: Covers key points but lacks critical engagement or depth. Slides are adequate but may lack clarity or organization. Delivery is basic, with limited confidence or engagement with the audience.</p> <p>Response Paper: Summarizes the AI's response rather than evaluating its accuracy or logic. Writing lacks focus; arguments are underdeveloped.</p> <p>Final Paper: Addresses the topic with basic evidence and argumentation but lacks significant depth or critical analysis. Writing may lack clarity or focus.</p>
D	Marginal Pass	<p>Participation: Rarely contributes to discussions and shows minimal preparation for class. Comments are often superficial or off-topic, with little evidence of critical engagement.</p> <p>Presentation: Provides a basic summary of the material without critical analysis or synthesis. Slides may be disorganized or unclear. Delivery lacks structure or engagement.</p> <p>Response Paper: Lacks critical interaction with the AI output. Arguments are unsupported or irrelevant. Writing is unclear, disorganized, or overly simplistic.</p> <p>Final Paper: Presents a minimal argument with insufficient evidence or analysis. Writing is unclear or disorganized, and the paper fails to fully address the assignment requirements.</p>

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
F	Fail	<p>Participation: Does not participate meaningfully in discussions. Shows no preparation for class and fails to engage with the material or peers.</p> <p>Presentation: Fails to engage with the material or communicate ideas effectively. Slides are poorly prepared, and delivery is unclear or disorganized, showing minimal effort.</p> <p>Response Paper: Little to no understanding of the AI output or the text. Arguments are missing. Writing fails to meet basic standards.</p> <p>Final Paper: Fails to meet the basic requirements of the assignment. Shows minimal effort, lack of research, and unclear or unsupported arguments. Writing is poorly organized and lacks coherence.</p>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry (<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Course AI Policy

- AI tools in this course are restricted to basic editing functions (grammar checking and proofreading). Any content beyond basic editing must be entirely your own work. Using AI-generated content without attribution constitutes academic misconduct.
- Each submission must include a disclosure statement if AI tools were used, detailing which tools were used and how. Failure to provide this disclosure will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.
- If you're uncertain about appropriate AI use for any assignment, consult with the instructor before proceeding.

Course Schedule and Reading List

Week 1: Introduction

Friday, February 6

- Thomas Oatley, *International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy* (Pearson Longman, 2012).
 - Chapter 1

Recommended:

- David Lake, "Open Economy Politics: A Critical Review," *Review of International Organizations* 4, (3) 2009: 219–244.
- Thomas Oatley, "The Reductionist Gamble: Open Economy Politics in the Global Economy," *International Organization* 65, (2) 2011: 311–341.
- Kathleen McNamara, "Of Intellectual Monocultures and the Study of IPE," *Review of International Political Economy* 16, (1) 2009: 72–84.
- Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Stephan Haggard, David A. Lake, and David G. Victor, "The Behavioral Revolution and International Relations." *International Organization* 71, (S1) 2017: S1–S31.

Week 2: Overview of the Contemporary International Economic Order

Friday, February 13

- Jeffry Frieden, "The Modern Capitalist World Economy: A Historical Overview," in Dennis Mueller, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Capitalism* (Oxford University Press, 2012): Chapter 1.

Recommended:

- Jeffry Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century* (W.W.Norton & Company, 2007).
- Barry Eichengreen, *Globalizing Capital: A History of the International Monetary System* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

Week 3: International Trade I : Domestic Politics

Friday, February 20

- Jieun Lee and Iain Osgood, "Firms Fight Back: Production Networks and Corporate Opposition to the China Trade War," in Etel Solingen, ed., *Geopolitics, Supply Chains, and International Relations in East Asia*. (Cambridge University Press, 2021): Chapter 9.

Recommended:

- Ronald Rogowski, "Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade," *American Political Science Review* 81, 4 (1987): 1121–1137.
- Michael Hiscox, "Class versus Industry Cleavages: Inter-Industry Factor Mobility and the Politics of Trade," *International Organization* 55, (1) 2001: 1–46.
- Kenneth Scheve and Matthew Slaughter, "What Determines Individual Trade-Policy Preferences?" *Journal of International Economics* 54, (3) 2001: 267–92.
- Edward D. Mansfield and Diana C. Mutz, "Support for Free Trade: Self-Interest, Sociotropic Politics, and Out-Group Anxiety," *International Organization* 63, (3) 2009: 425–57.
- In Song Kim, "Political Cleavages within Industry: Firm-Level Lobbying for Trade Liberalization," *American Political Science Review* 111, (1) 2017: 1–20.

Week 4: International Trade II: State Power and International Institutions

Friday, February 27

- Markus Brunnermeier, Rush Doshi, and Harold James, "Beijing's Bismarckian Ghosts: How Great Powers Compete Economically," *The Washington Quarterly* 41, (3) 2018: 161–176.

Recommended:

- Stephen Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," *World Politics* 28, (3) 1976: 317–47.
- Joanne Gowa and Edward Mansfield, "Power Politics and International Trade," *American Political Science Review* 87, (2) 1993: 408–20.
- Christina Davis, "International Institutions and Issue Linkage: Building Support for Agricultural Trade Liberalization," *American Political Science Review* 98, (1) 2004: 153–69.
- Judith Goldstein, Douglas Rivers, and Michael Tomz, "Institutions in International Relations: Understanding the Effects of the GATT and the WTO on World Trade," *International Organization* 61, (1) 2007: 37–67.

Week 5: International Production: Foreign Direct Investment

Friday, March 6

- Min Ye, *The Belt Road and Beyond State-Mobilized Globalization in China: 1998–2018* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).
 - Chapter 4

Recommended:

- Nathan Jensen, "Democratic Governance and Multinational Corporations: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment," *International Organization* 57, (3) 2003: 587–616.
- Tim Büthe and Helen Milner, "The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment into Developing Countries: Increasing FDI through International Trade Agreements?" *American Journal of Political Science* 52, (4) 2008: 741–62.
- Sonal Pandya, "Democratization and FDI Liberalization, 1970-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, (3) 2014: 475–488.
- Leslie Johns and Rachel Wellhausen, "Under One Roof: Supply Chains and the Protection of Foreign Investment," *American Political Science Review* 110, (1) 2016: 31–51.
- Rachel Wellhausen, "International Investment Law and Foreign Direct Reinvestment," *International Organization* 73, (4) 2019: 839–58.

Week 6: Political Economy of Immigration

Friday, March 13

- Remco Zwetsloot, "Winning the Tech Talent Competition: Without STEM Immigration Reforms, the United States Will Not Stay ahead of China," *The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, October 2021.

Recommended:

- Ken Scheve and Matt Slaughter, "Labor Market Competition and Individual Preferences over Immigration Policy," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 83, (1) 2001: 133–145.
- Jens Hainmueller and Michael Hiscox, "Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 104, (1) 2010: 61–84.
- Kirk Bansak, Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, "How Economic, Humanitarian, and Religious Concerns Shape European Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers," *Science* 354, (6309) 2016: 217–222.
- Jennifer Fitzgerald, David Leblang, and Jessica C. Teets, "Defying the Law of Gravity: The Political Economy of International Migration," *World Politics* 66, (3) 2014: 406–445.

Week 7: International Development I: Development Ideas and Models

Friday, March 20

- Margaret Pearson, Meg Rithmire, Kellee S. Tsai, *The State and Capitalism in China* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

- Read pages 16–39

Recommended:

- Dani Rodrik, “Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion?” *Journal of Economic Literature* 44, (4) 2006: 973–87.
- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, “Institutions as a Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth,” in Philippe Aghion and Stephen Durlauf, eds., *Handbook of Economic Growth* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005).
 - Read pages 388–428
- Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of Essays* (Harvard University Press, 1962).
 - Chapter 1
- Richard Doner, Bryan Ritchie, and Dan Slater, “Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *International Organization* 59: (2) 2005: 327–361.

Week 8: International Development II: Foreign Aid

Friday, March 27

- Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2010).
 - Chapters 4 and 5

Recommended:

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, “A Political Economy of Aid,” *International Organization* 63, (2) 2009: 309–40.
- Joseph Wright and Matthew Winters, “The Politics of Effective Foreign Aid,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, 2010: 61–80.
- Ilyana Kuziemko and Eric Werker, “How Much is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations,” *Journal of Political Economy* 114, (5) 2006: 905–930.
- James Raymond Vreeland and Axel Dreher, *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- Michael Faye and Paul Niehaus, “Political Aid Cycles,” *American Economic Review* 102, (7) 2012: 3516–3530.

* * * * * **No Meeting on April 3 (Mid-Term Break)** * * * * *

Week 9: Economic Sanctions

Friday, April 10

- Bruce W. Jentleson, *Economic Sanctions: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2022).
 - Chapter 6

Recommended:

- Robert A. Pape, "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work," *International Security* 22, (2) 1997: 90–136.
- Colin M. Barry and Katja B. Kleinberg, "Profiting from Sanctions: Economic Coercion and US Foreign Direct Investment in Third-Party States," *International Organization* 69, (4) 2015: 881–912.
- Kerim Can Kavaklı, J. Tyson Chatagnier, and Emre Hatipoğlu, "The Power to Hurt and the Effectiveness of International Sanctions," *The Journal of Politics* 82, (3) 2020: 879–894.
- Elena V. McLean and Taehee Whang, "Economic Sanctions and Government Spending Adjustments: the Case of Disaster Preparedness," *British Journal of Political Science* 51, (1) 2021: 394–411.

Week 10: The Backlash against Globalization

Friday, April 17

- Scott Lincicome, "Testing the 'China Shock': Was Normalizing Trade with China a Mistake?" *CATO Institute*, July 2020.

Recommended:

- Italo Colantone and Piero Stanig, "The Trade Origins of Economic Nationalism: Import Competition and Voting Behavior in Western Europe," *American Journal of Political Science* 62, (4) 2018: 936–953.
- Diana C. Mutz, "Status Threat, not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, (19) 2018: 4330–4339.
- J. Lawrence Broz, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth, "Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash," *International Organization* 75, (S2) 2021: 464–494.
- Helen V. Milner, "Voting for Populism in Europe: Globalization, Technological Change, and the Extreme Right," *Comparative Political Studies* 54, (13) 2021: 2286–2320.

- Dani Rodrik, "Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism? Economics, Culture, and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism," *Annual Review of Economics* 13, 2021: 133–170.

Week 11: Technology and Great Power Competition

Wednesday, April 24

- Jeffrey Ding, "The Diffusion Deficit in Scientific and Technological Power: Re-Assessing China's Rise," *Review of International Political Economy* 31: (1) 2024, 173–198.

Recommended:

- Eric Schmidt, "Innovation Power: Why Technology Will Define the Future of Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs* 102, (2) 2023: 38–52.
- Chris Miller, *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology* (Scribner, 2022).

Week 12: Course Wrap-up and Review Session

Friday, May 8