China, the United States, and the Cold War Confrontation

BLS 412 01

Dr. Edward J. Marolda

Daytime Phone: (703) 670-3001
Meeting: By Appointment
Class: Thurs, 5:20-7:45PM
Place: Georgetown Downtown Campus

Email: edwardmarolda@yahoo.com

Overview:

2014 finds China a global power on the rise. At times the People’s Republic of China (PRC) acts as a responsible member of the international community, taking part in anti-piracy, peacekeeping, and humanitarian missions around the globe. China and the United States are closely linked through trade, cultural exchanges, diplomacy, and military-to-military contacts. Every year, thousands of Chinese students graduate from American institutions of higher learning and American tourists crowd the Great Wall of China and other historic sites in this cradle of civilization.

But China increasingly concerns the U.S. government and America’s allies and friends throughout Asia. Beijing has refused to condemn acts of aggression by the warlike and repressive government of North Korea, continued to weaken sanctions against Iran for its development of nuclear weapons, and built a powerful and potentially destabilizing military establishment. China has asserted sovereignty over the entire South China Sea and islands mutually claimed by Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Brunei. Americans have witnessed the government of the PRC suppress the desires of many Chinese citizens for political and religious expression, representative government, cultural and ethnic diversity, and individual privacy.

The same government and party—the Communist Party—has ruled the country since 1949. The intellectual and ideological links between Chairman Mao Zedong’s bellicose and deterministic Cold War regime remain strong with contemporary members of China’s ruling class. Understanding China’s recent past and its interaction with the U.S. can provide insight on the Asian nation’s goals and how its current civilian and military leaders intend to accomplish them.

The purpose of this course is to provide understanding of the interaction—primarily confrontation—between the United States and the PRC since 1949 with emphasis on the last 20 years. In particular, the course will explore how the two countries have dealt with each other in diplomatic, military, and ideological terms. Individual cases will include the wars in Korea and Vietnam, China’s development of nuclear weapons, the policies of the Nixon, Clinton, Obama, and other U.S. administrations, Taiwan Strait crises, and China’s expansive claims to the South China Sea and other disputed maritime areas.

Class Requirements: This class will consist primarily of lectures but with time set aside for in-class discussion of the issues and readings (20% of overall grade). In addition to assigned readings, students are expected to maintain awareness of current major developments affecting
the U.S. and China through daily reference to a domestic news source such as the *Washington Post* and a foreign news source such as the BBC or on-line news information source. Students are encouraged to invest in up-to-date maps in order to familiarize themselves with the locations and geography related to the United States and Asia. Students with two or more absences may receive a failing grade for the course. Students must also complete class requirements within the stated time limits. Requests for extensions will be considered for emergency situations only.

**Examinations:** There will be a mid-term and a final exam. The exams will consist primarily of essay responses to questions designed for you to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject matter. These exams are closed-book. (25% each)

**Papers:** Each student will be required to write a 10-page paper (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 pt) that describes and analyses a particular episode or event, diplomatic negotiation, armed forces, economic interaction, or similar topic relating to the U.S.-PRC confrontation and related subjects. Each student will also be required to write a 5-page paper (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 pt) focused on a key person, American or otherwise, relating to the U.S.-PRC confrontation. Lists of acceptable topics from which the student may choose will be made available. The 10-page paper will be (20%) and the 5-page paper (10%) of the grade.

**Late Submissions:** The late submission of a student’s paper, unless approved by the professor, will impact unfavorably on the grading of the paper.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes will not be allowed.

**Grading Conversion:**

- 93 to 100 = A
- 90 to 92 = A minus
- 87 to 89 = B plus
- 83 to 86 = B
- 80 to 82 = B minus
- 77 to 79 = C plus
- 73 to 76 = C
- 70 to 72 = C minus
- 67 to 69 = D plus
- 64 to 66 = D
- 0 to 63 = F

**Learning Objectives:** After completing this course a student should be able to:

1. Compare/evaluate historical research relating to the U.S.-China confrontation
2. Explain the limits/weaknesses of research approaches to knowledge of that conflict
3. Identify various types of historical research (documentary; oral history; secondary materials) and describe their strengths/weaknesses
4. Describe the process of historical research as it relates to study of the U.S.-China confrontation
5. Describe how theory and research complement one another to produce a written work
6. Able to recognize ethical issues in historical research, for example the morality of the U.S.-China confrontation
7. Recognize the purpose of a literature review to identify the most useful works
8. Compare quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation
9. Propose a research project on the U.S.-China confrontation using historical-comparative methods

Disabilities: If you believe you have a disability, contact the Academic Resource Center at 202 687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by the students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and university policies.

Georgetown Honor System: All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. I will assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, “What is Plagiarism?”, “Sanctioning Guidelines,” and “Expedited Sanctioning Process.” Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge: “In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic live, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.” A confirmed case of academic misconduct will result in a grade of F for the course.

Readings: The required texts are available at the University bookstore and also at major online book retailers. Some reserve readings will be made available by the instructor.


**Class Schedule:**

1) **The Early Years of American Contact with China**  (28Aug)
   
   Sutter, pp. 1-38  
   Westad, pp. 1-17; 87-122

2) **Nationalism and Communism in Early 20th Century China**  (4 Sep)
   
   Chang and Halliday, pp. 118-54

3) **China, America, and World War II**  (11 Sep)
   
   Sutter, pp. 39-47  
   Westad, pp. 247-84

4) **The Chinese Civil War**  (18 Sep)
   
   Sutter, pp. 48-54  
   Westad, pp. 285-304

5) **The U.S. and China in the Korean War, 1950-1953**  (25 Sep)
   
   Shen and Li, pp. 3-50

6) **The Indochina War**  (2 Oct)
   
   Zhai, pp. 1-64

7) **Crises in the Strait of Taiwan**  (9 Oct)
   
   Westad, pp. 304-32  
   Marolda, pp. 37-52

8) **Mid-Term Exam**  (16 Oct)

9) **Upheaval in China and Southeast Asia, 1959-1975**  (23 Oct)
   
   Chang and Halliday, pp. 493-516  
   Westad, pp. 333-63  
   Shen and Li, pp. 119-46

10) **Post-Vietnam Conflicts and Changing Allegiances**  (30 Oct) *5-page paper due 30 Oct*

Sutter 76-94
Westad, pp. 365-86

12) U.S.-Chinese Relations during the Bush and Clinton Years (13 Nov)

Sutter pp. 95-122
Westad, pp. 386-400
Marolda, 113-23

13) 21st Century Challenges (20 Nov) *10-page pager due 20 Nov

Sutter, pp. 123-89; 267-77
Marolda, pp. 123-26; 150-66

- Thanksgiving Break Begins (26 Nov)

14) Review for Final (4 Dec)

15) Final Exam

*Note: Make up classes related to inclement weather cancellations will be held on the Monday evening (5:20-7:45PM) following the cancelled class. The classroom for this makeup TBD.