

**CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY:  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND STRATEGY**

17.407 (U) / 17.408 (G)  
Spring 2009

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**Description**

China's rise as a great power raises important questions about how that power might be used in its relations with other states. Nowhere are such questions more salient than in the future trajectory of China's conflict behavior, including its approach to deterrence, crisis management and the use of force. To explore these important questions in China's international relations, this seminar examines the evolution of Chinese strategic thought, in primary sources as well as its reflection in the interactions among Chinese states and between China and other states. To understand the degree of continuity between the past and the present, the majority of the course will explore the evolution of strategic thought in ancient and imperial China, while the role of strategy in modern and contemporary China will be examined in the final sessions. The seminar will focus on a close reading of classic Chinese texts on strategy, such as Sun Zi's *Art of War* and Mao Zedong's writings, along with relevant secondary literature on diplomatic, military and intellectual history.

The course has several goals. The first is to introduce students to the content of Chinese strategic thought in order to understand the degree of continuity and discontinuity reflected in subsequent theory and practice. The second goal is to consider the extent to which China may be described as possessing a unique strategic culture or approach to strategy.

The seminar will raise many questions, but few may be answered decisively. Students will be expected to read widely and wrestle with concepts, not just accumulate facts. The reading load is heavy and students must complete all the assignments for each session. Class meetings will emphasize discussion, not lectures.

**Materials**

The following books are available for purchase at the Coop or online:

- Ames, Roger and Henry Rosemont (trans). *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (Ballantine Books, 1999).
- Ames, Roger (trans). *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (Ballantine Books, 1993)
- Chin, Annping. *The Authentic Confucius: A Life of Thought and Politics* (Scribner, 2007).
- Cleary, Thomas (trans). *Mastering the Art of War: Zhuge Liang's and Liu Ji's Commentaries on the Classic by Sun Tzu* (Sambhala, 1989).
- Goldstein, Avery. *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, 2005)
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, 1996)
- Luo, Guangzhong. *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*. Abridged Edition, Robert Moss (trans). (University of California Press, 1999).
- Sawyer, Ralph. *The Tao of Deception: Unorthodox Warfare in Historic and Modern China* (Basic Books, 2007).

Sawyer Ralph (trans). *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* (Westview, 1993)  
Smith, Kidder (trans). *The Art of War: The Denma Translation* (Shambhala, 2001)

Other readings are available on the Stellar website:  
<http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/sp09/17.407/>

### **Requirements and Grading**

The first requirement is active participation in seminar discussion. A successful seminar requires attendance at every meeting, completion of all readings and active, and engaged participation in the class. To stimulate discussion, students may be assigned to give short presentations on assigned readings or to serve as “resident expert” for that week’s readings. The second requirement is a research paper on the topic of your choice. Grades will be determined as follows: class participation (50%) and research paper (50%).

### **Information for Undergraduates**

Advanced undergraduates may enroll in the course only with the permission of the instructor. A background in China as well as international relations is necessary for mastering the material that will be covered. Undergraduates will be evaluated along the same criteria: class participation (50%) and a research paper (50%). Undergraduates may choose a second a grading option, substituting two take-home essays, each roughly 15 pages in length, for the research paper. These essays must demonstrate a command of the readings in the course.

### **Course Information and Policies**

**Disabilities.** If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact me immediately so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**Extensions.** Make-up exams or extensions will not be granted except in case of emergency and in all cases require a note from the Dean or your doctor. Late work **will** be penalized by one third of a grade for **each** day that the assignment is late (e.g., a B to B-). The key dates for assignments in this course are outlined above.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is “a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work.” This includes ideas as well as specific phrases, sentences or paragraphs. **Do not misrepresent your own work.** See Avoiding Plagiarism from MIT’s Writing Center ([web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html](http://web.mit.edu/writing/Citation/plagiarism.html)) and MIT’s rules regarding academic honesty ([web.mit.edu/policies/10.0.html](http://web.mit.edu/policies/10.0.html)).

**Writing.** The Writing and Communication Center (12-132) offers you free professional advice from published writers about oral presentations and about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing. To schedule an appointment, go to <http://web.mit.edu/writing> and click on the yellow sunburst. The Center’s hours are Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; and Sundays, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

## **SCHEDULE MEETINGS AND READINGS**

### **3 FEBRUARY**

#### **Introduction**

### **10 FEBRUARY**

#### **Strategy and Strategic Culture**

Beaufre, Andre. *An Introduction to Strategy* (Praeger, 1966), pp. 19-50.

Collins, John. *Grand Strategy: Principles and Practices* (Naval Institute Press, 1974), pp. 14-43.

Posen, Barry. "Explaining Military Doctrine," in *Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 13-33.

Cerami, Joseph and James Holcomb, eds., *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy* (Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), Ch. 6, 7, Appendix

Johnston, Alistair Iain. *Cultural Realism*, Ch. 1

Gray, Colin S. "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation Of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25 (1999), 49–69.

Fairbank, John K. "Introduction: Varieties of the Chinese Military Experience," in Frank Kierman and John King Fairbank, *Chinese Ways in Warfare* (Harvard, 1974), pp. 1-16.

Dreyer, Edward L. "Continuity and Change," in David A. Graff and Robin Higham, *A Military History of China* (Westview, 2002), pp. 19–38.

### **17 FEBRUARY**

**(No Class – Monday Schedule of Classes)**

### **24 FEBRUARY**

#### **Ancient Chinese Thought**

Nivison, David Shepherd, "The Classical Philosophical Writings," in Lowe, Michael and Edward Shaughnessy, *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 745–812.

Ames, Roger and Henry Rosemont (trans.), *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (Ballantine Books, 1999)

Chin, Annping. *The Authentic Confucius: A Life of Thought and Politics* (Scribner, 2007)

### **3 MARCH**

#### **Sun Zi and the Art of War**

Sawyer, Ralph. *The Seven Military Classics*, pp. 1-18, 145-186.

Ames, Roger. *Sun Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (Ballantine Books, 1993), pp. 32–96, 173–196.

Smith, Kidder, et al. *The Art of War: The Denma Translation* (Shambhala 2001), pp. 1-65, 125-224

Griffith, Samuel B. *Sun Tzu: The Art of War* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 39–44.

### **10 MARCH**

#### **Six Secret Teachings, Wu Tzu and Wei Liao-tzu**

Sawyer, Ralph. *The Seven Military Classics*, pp. 19-106, 187-276

### **17 MARCH**

#### **Romance of the Three Kingdoms**

Roberts, Moss. *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*.

### **24 MARCH**

**(No Class – Spring Break!)**

### **31 MARCH**

#### **Commentaries on the *Art of War* and Deception**

Cleary, Thomas. *Mastering the Art of War: Zhuge Liang's and Liu Ji's commentaries on the Classic by Sun Tzu* (Shambhala, 1989), pp. 33–134.

Sawyer, Ralph. *The Tao of Deception: Unorthodox Warfare in Historic and Modern China*. (Basic Books, 2007), pp. 3-162, skim 163-322.

### **7 APRIL**

#### **Mao Zedong: Thought**

Mao, Zedong, in *Selected Military Writings*:

[“Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War”](#)

[“Problems of Strategy in Guerilla War Against Japan”](#)

[“On Protracted War”](#)

[“Problems of War and Strategy”](#)

Mao, Zedong, [“On Contradiction,”](#) in *Selected Works*

Starr, John Bryan. *Continuing the Revolution: The Political Thought of Mao* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 3-45

Alastair Iain Johnston, “Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China,” in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 216-270

## **14 APRIL**

### **Mao Zedong Practice**

Boylan, Edward S. "Chinese Cultural Style of Warfare," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1982), pp. 341-364.

Whiting, Allen S. "China's Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 103-131

Finkelstein, David, Michael McDevitt, and Mark Ryan, "Patterns of Chinese Warfighting," in Finkelstein, McDevitt and Ryan, eds., *Chinese Warfighting: the PLA Experience since 1949* (M.E. Sharpe, 2003), pp. 3-22.

Adelman, Jonathan R. and Shih Chih-yu. *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840–1980*. (Institute of International Relations, National Cheng-chi University, 1993), pp. 21-37

Mott, William H. and Jae Chang Kim, *The Philosophy of Chinese Military Culture* (Palgrave, 2007), pp. 16-42

### Korea

Christensen, Thomas J. *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, 1996), pp. 148-176

Scobell, Andrew. *China's Use of Military Force* (Cambridge, 2003), Ch. 4.

### Soviet Union

Goldstein, Lyle. "Return to Zhenbao Island: Who Started Shooting and Why it Matters," *The China Quarterly*, No. 168 (2001), pp. 985-997

Fravel, M. Taylor. *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, 2008), Ch. 4

## **21 APRIL**

**(No Class – President's Day)**

## **28 APRIL**

### **Contemporary China: Military Strategy**

Godwin, Paul. "From Continent to Periphery: PLA Doctrine, Strategy, and Capabilities Toward 2000," *The China Quarterly*, No. 146 (June 1996), pp. 464-487.

Nan, Li, "The PLA's Evolving Warfighting Doctrine, Strategy and Tactics, 1985-1995: A Chinese Perspective," *The China Quarterly*, No. 146 (June 1996), pp. 443-463.

Peng, Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, *The Science of Military Strategy [Zhanlue Xue]*, (Academy of Military Science, 2005), Chs. 1, 3, 9, 10, 20-24

Wang, Houqing and Zhang Xingye, *The Science of Campaigns [Zhanyi Xue]* (National Defense University, 2000), Chs. 3, 16

Li, Jijun. "Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China," Letort Paper No. 1 (1997).

### **5 MAY**

#### **Contemporary China: Grand Strategy**

Goldstein, Avery. *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, 2005).

Saunders, Philip. *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools* (Institute for National Strategic Studies, Occasional Paper 4, National Defense University October 2006).

*China's National Defense in 2008* (State Council Information Office, 2009), pp. TBD

Sawyer, Ralph. *The Tao of Deception: Unorthodox Warfare in Historic and Modern China*, 375–401.

### **12 MAY**

#### **Assessing China's Strategic Culture**

Johnston, Alastair Iain. *Cultural Realism*, Ch. 2, 3, 6, 7.

Michael Handel, *Masters of War, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini* (Frank Cass, 1992), pp. TBD.

Scobell, Andrew. *China and Strategic Culture*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, May 2002, 1–27.

Lantis, Jeffrey S. "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* Vol. 4, No. 3, (2002), pp. 87–113.

Sawyer, Ralph. "Chinese Warfare: The Riddle of the Unlearned Lesson," *American Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1999)