

# PO9G4-20 China in Global Politics: Strategy, Identity, and Power

**26/27**

**Department**

Politics & International Studies

**Level**

Taught Postgraduate Level

**Module leader**

Chi Zhang

**Credit value**

20

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module provides an in-depth analysis of China's role in global politics, focusing on its strategic ambitions, identity, and power dynamics. Through a combination of theoretical frameworks, historical context, and contemporary case studies, students will explore China's foreign policy-making processes, its interactions with key global and regional actors, and its influence on international norms and institutions. It encourages critical thinking and practical applications, such as policy recommendations, to bridge academic and real-world perspectives.

### Module aims

The module provides an advanced analysis into the concepts and debates surrounding China's role in global politics, focusing on its strategic ambitions, identity, and power dynamics.

More specifically, the principal module aims are:

- To explore China's foreign policy-making processes through a combination of theoretical frameworks, historical context and contemporary case studies;
- To consider China's interactions with key global and regional actors and its influence on

international norms and institutions;

- To explore practical applications to bridge academic and real-world perspectives on China's role in global politics.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

### Week 1: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Foreign Policy

- The "Century of Humiliation" and its impact on China's modern foreign policy.
- The evolution of China's global role from the Qing dynasty to the present.
- The enduring influence of historical narratives on China's strategic thinking.
- Activity: Foreign Policy Memory Map (What historical event do you think most shapes this country's foreign policy today?)

### Week 2: China's Foreign Policy-Making Apparatus

- Key actors: CCP leadership, PLA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and think tanks.
- Decision-making processes and the role of ideology.
- Influence of domestic politics on foreign policy.
- Activity: Foreign Policy Bureaucracy Speed Dating

### Week 3: Power Dynamics in Asia: Regional Leadership and Rivalries

- China's relationships with Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN.
- The Taiwan issue and its geopolitical implications.
- Territorial disputes: South China Sea and the Himalayas.
- Activity: Hedging Game

### Week 4: China and Global Governance

- China's engagement with international institutions (UN, WTO, WHO).
- Challenges to liberal norms: cyber sovereignty, human rights, and the rule of law.
- The role of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in shaping global governance.
- Activity: Crisis Coordination Simulation

### Week 5: China's Economic Statecraft and Geoeconomics

- Trade, investment, and infrastructure diplomacy.
- Case studies: Africa, Latin America, and Europe.
- Economic decoupling and the geopolitics of technology (e.g., semiconductors, 5G).
- Activity: Follow the Supply Chain

### Week 6: Reading Week

### Week 7: China and the Global South

- Historical solidarity and new patterns of engagement.

- Development financing: opportunities and controversies (BRI, AIIB).
- Balancing strategic interests and development goals.
- Activity: BRI Local Community Hearing

#### Week 8: Nationalism and Soft Power in Global Politics

- The interplay between nationalism and foreign policy.
- Tools of soft power: culture, education, media, and sports.
- Challenges in building global narratives: Confucius Institutes and “wolf warrior diplomacy.”
- Activity: Global Reactions to Chinese Culture

#### Week 9: Security and Technology in China’s Global Strategy

- China’s military modernisation and strategic ambitions.
- Cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space exploration.
- Security challenges: espionage, counterterrorism, and maritime disputes.
- Activity: AI Governance Summit

#### Week 10: Climate Change and Environmental Diplomacy

- China’s role in global climate negotiations (e.g., Paris Agreement).
- Renewable energy leadership and environmental challenges.
- Domestic environmental governance and global implications.
- Activity: Green Power Competition

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate China’s role in shaping global political, economic, and security landscapes.
- Analyze the domestic and international factors influencing China’s foreign policy.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to understand China’s strategies and global aspirations.
- Reflect on key debates surrounding China’s rise and its implications for the international order.
- Develop skills in research, policy analysis, and strategic thinking through interactive activities and assessments.

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

## International

This module is focussed on China's role in global politics.

## Subject specific skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following subject specific skills:

To understand China's role in the evolving global order;

To understand China's engagement with international institutions;

To have an awareness of the key geopolitical issues, including China's role in global governance;

To be familiar with a wide range of contemporary academic literature on Chinese politics and foreign policy;

To be able to critically analyse complex ideas with relation to contemporary Chinese politics.

## Transferable skills

Communication skills, both oral and written

Critical thinking skills

Independent research skills

Problem solving

Time management

Digital literacy

AI literacy

Awareness of, and sensitivity to, diversity

Decision making

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (9%)
Private study	155 hours (78%)
Assessment	27 hours (14%)
Total	200 hours

### Private study description

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### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A1

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
To provide an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of China's international engagement. 5000 word essay	100%	27 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

### Feedback on assessment

- Essay feedback will be returned within 20 working days of essay submission
- Essay grading will conform to the marking criteria for MA degrees established by the Department (PAIS)
- It will give extensive comments on comprehension, analysis, critique and presentation as well as overall comments and suggestions for improvement.
- A standardised sheet (available in the MA Handbook) on which the mark and constructive comments are entered will be provided as feedback to students.
- Students are entitled to request further feedback/clarification from the marker if they have questions about the written feedback they receive regarding coursework.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PT MA in International Development
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9Q1 Postgraduate Politics, Big Data and Quantitative Methods
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1P3 Postgraduate Taught International Political Economy
- Year 1 of TPOS-M1P8 Postgraduate Taught International Politics and East Asia
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9P9 Postgraduate Taught International Relations
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PC Postgraduate Taught International Security

- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PS Postgraduate Taught Political and Legal Theory
- Year 1 of TPOS-M9PF Postgraduate Taught Public Policy

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TPOS-M1PD Postgraduate Taught the Politics of Climate Change