CHES5108 Selected Themes on Chinese Politics:
Non-Traditional Security in Contemporary China

2017-18, Term 2, Wednesdays 6:30pm-9:15pm
YIA402 (Yasumoto International Academic Park)

Lecturer: Dr. Catherine Yuk-ping LO (catherine-lo0331@gmail.com)
Teaching Assistant: Ms. Faye Tang

Course Description
In this course we are trying to make sense of potential threats that can lead to situations of national and human insecurity in China in the 21st century. The course begins with an introduction to the key theories and methodological approaches of the International Relations and Security Studies, before moving onto an exploration of an array of contemporary non-traditional security issues in the country. By the end of this course, you should have a more nuanced understanding of security threats in contemporary China and be able to use some of the theories in the discipline to explain why certain issues become threats and how political actors have sought to mitigate and resolve them.

Learning Outcomes
After completing the course you should be able to:

- describe major security challenges in China in the 21st century
- analyze theoretical approaches in the examination of Chinese security affairs through data interpretation and information gathering
- demonstrate critical thinking skills in explaining the differences and connections between security challenges in China
- develop effective oral communication in a team and essay writing skills

Learning Activities
A two-hour lecture followed by a one-hour tutorial will be held every Wednesday from 6:30pm to 9:15pm in YIA402.

Assessment Scheme
Attendance and participation: 5% of the course grade is attendance and another 15% goes to participation in class discussions.

Group presentation: students (in groups of 2-4) are required to conduct a 30-minute presentation on the selected topic covered in this course.

Individual research paper: there will be one final research paper on a topic of the students’ choice. Students may write about any topic related to this course. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss the topic. Your one-page research proposal needs to be submitted to me on February 26. The length of the final paper should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words, including footnotes. One hard copy of your paper and one electronic copy are due on April 30.

Course Grading System

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Group presentation</td>
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<td>Individual research paper</td>
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Late Policy and Plagiarism
Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day or part thereof (on the assignment in question) for a maximum of 10 days (including weekends), after which the assessment item will receive a grade of zero.

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.
Course Schedule

WEEK 1 Introduction (10 Jan)

We will begin this week with introduction, laying out the overall structure of the course, introducing key theoretical perspectives and approaches to International Relations and Security Studies, logistics and set-up.


WEEK 2 Traditional Security Issues in Contemporary China (17 Jan)

This week we will examine countries and events that are considered to endanger Chinese sovereignty, territorial integrity, economic development, and international stature in the 21st century.


WEEK 3 Non-Traditional Security Threats in Contemporary China (24 Jan)

Non-traditional security threats are not new for China and the rest of the countries in the world, but these have increased remarkably as a result of globalization and economic liberalization. We will look into the debates on broadening and widening of the concept of “security,” and the way in which China has incorporated the non-traditional/non-military security threats and the notion of human-centered security in its security agenda in the post-Cold War era.


WEEK 4 The Rise of China (31 Jan)

The economic and political reforms of the 1980s and 1990s transformed China into the world’s second-largest economy in less than a generation. Its economic growth has allowed the country to seek a greater role in shaping regional and international politics. Acknowledging China’s salient role in driving the world economy, Security Studies scholars have been concerned about the potential conflicts between China and the United States. The debate remains today: Is China a “status quo” or “revisionist” power? What are the key implications of the rising China on regional and international security?


WEEK 5 The Politics of Economic Security (7 Feb)

Starting from this week, we will focus on different forms of non-military security issues in contemporary China. We will examine the force shaping these threats and consider the problems involved in trying to address them. In light of the fact that all non-traditional security threats are differently complex but all have the economic implication, we will first examine economic security in China, identifying economic insecurities and political measures to maintain the economic growth—the key source of political legitimacy of the Chinese government.


WEEK 6 The Politics of Environmental Security (14 Feb)

China’s modernization has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty and created a booming middle class. Its economic growth however has come at the expense of its environment. Despite the recognition of environmental degradation at the national level in recent years, sub-national officials often prioritize economic development over environmental concerns. This week we will identify key environmental problems in China, and its spillover effects to economic, health, and food security. Rethinking the idea of “develop first, conserve later” (*xian fazhan hou zhengzhi*), we will discuss the potential solutions and challenges to achieve a sustainable development in the country.


WEEK NO CLASS – Lunar New Year (21 Feb)

WEEK 7 The Politics of Energy Security (28 Feb)

China is reliant on imports for 60 percent of its crude oil needs, and that reliance is growing as the demand growth has outpaced the country’s domestic production growth since 1993. This week we will examine the following questions: what are the sources of Chinese energy insecurity? What has China done to tackle the energy independence challenges it faced and improve its energy security footing? To what extent Chinese energy security strategies would induce conflict flashpoints in the region?


In the Chinese context, food security has long been defined as national food self-sufficiency. Such concept however has been questioned in recent years; some senior party officials have been pressuring the Chinese government to abandon the concept of self-sufficiency and embrace a market-oriented food security strategy. With the reference to the historical food security-related events and policies at international and national levels, this week we will examine the current level of food security in China in terms of availability, utilization, access, and stability. We will then engage in the debate (self-sufficiency versus market-oriented approaches) on achieving food security in China. We will also look into some spillover effects (i.e. energy, health, and environmental security) associated with food security in the country.


Historically, the 1918 Spanish flu and the Black Death were two of the worst global pandemics that threatened the survival of mankind—the two pandemics killed more people than the combined total casualties of World War I and II. Despite the medical advancement and political commitment, dangerous infectious disease outbreaks are on the rise around the world—from MERS in the Middle East to Ebola in West Africa to Zika in South America. What would be the next pandemic? Is China and (the world) ready for the threat? Considering the linkage between health and security, this week we will review some of the key infectious disease outbreaks in China (i.e. HIV/AIDS, SARS, H5N1, H1N1) in the past 30 years and related policies in mitigating the threats posed by infectious diseases. Based on the case studies in China we will also consider the upsides and downsides of securitizing infectious diseases toward the end of the lesson.


Human trafficking has constituted one of the key transnational organized crimes and is a modern expression of the ancient crime slavery. Despite the rapid growth of economy, national wealth, and international stature, according to the 2016 Global Slavery Index, 3.4 million people in China are living in a contemporary form of slavery. This week we will examine the scope and magnitude of human trafficking globally, in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in China, analyzing the connection of human trafficking to human and national security of the country.


WEEK 11 The Politics of Terrorism (28 Mar)

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, terrorism has emerged as the most widely recognized threat to a nation’s security. This week we will explore the definitional debate surrounding terrorism, various strategies and common tactics employed by most terrorist organizations, and also key terrorist groups and jihadist movement operating in the region. The discussion will then focus on terrorist incidents on the Chinese soil, in particular the insurgency in Xinjiang, reviewing the Chinese National Security Policy regarding the combat of the “three evil forces” (terrorism, separatism, and extremism), together with the Chinese participation in regional and international counterterrorism.


WEEK 12 NO CLASS—(4 Apr)

WEEK 13 Movie Night on Health Security (11 Apr)

Movie: *Contagion*

Followed by class discussion based on the questions on the worksheet and the lecture in WEEK 9.

WEEK 14 The Politics of Cyber Security (18 Apr)

“Cyber security” is relatively a new and understudied concept on the non-traditional security agenda in response to a mixture of technological advancement and geopolitical environment. Given that China has the highest number of Internet users in the globe, the potential for the virtual cyberspace to be manipulated to harm those in the real world, in the forms of cyber crimes and cyber terrorism, is perceived as one of the most serious threats to national security and prosperity. Through examining different typologies of cyber threats and the famous (and infamous) cyber security measures in China, we will reconsider a fundamental question in Security Studies: whose security is to be protected? Individual? Political leader? State?


WEEK 15 Threat Trend Analysis and Course Revision (25 Apr)

Over the past 13 weeks, we have surveyed an array of non-traditional security issues in contemporary China. In this concluding week, we will try to put together our brainpower to think about how the security situation in China might evolve within our lifetime!! Go back and review some of the theory from the first week to refresh your memory.


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Selected additional readings:


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