Course title:
Foreign Policy of Russia and China

Language of instruction: English

Professor: Dr. Anastassia V. Obydenkova

Professor’s contact and office hours: Anastassia.Obydenkova@eui.eu (office hours by appointment)

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credit: 3 US credits – 6 ECTS credits

Course prerequisites:

- Interest in studies of foreign policy, interest in Russia and/or in China.
- Previous background in international relations or comparative politics would be an advantage but it is not a formal requirement.

Language requirements: English

Course focus and approach: Foreign Policy, Eurasia, Russia, China, International Relations, Comparative Politics

Course description:

This course offers insights into foreign policy of Russia (main focus) and China (secondary focus) in the 21st century with special focus on their overlapping geopolitical goals and strategies. Both states are located in Eurasia. They have overlapping interests, competing goals, and they face sometimes similar external challenges. The course offers insights into strategy of foreign policy of both states, contrasting and comparing their geopolitical battles. The course is structured in the following way: (1) theory of foreign policy analysis; (2) historical legacies in foreign policy; (3) goals and challenges of foreign policies of two states; (4) shared geopolitical space (struggle over the dominance in Central Asia); (5) implications of their foreign policies and their impact on the region. The topics above will be discussed within the context of specific case-studies. This course examines comparatively the development of foreign policy of China and Russia in Eurasia (so-called “near abroad”) and in the World Politics. The first part of the course will focus on foreign policy of Russia and China in Eurasia. The second part of the course will focus on foreign policy of both states in global context. It will look at how both states deal with these challenges. Moreover, the course will focus on the analysis of the strategies employed by China and Russia in terms of their own cooperation as well as competition over geopolitical space (e.g., access to energy resources).
Learning objectives:
The goals of the course are:
- To acquire practical knowledge of analysis of foreign policy;
- To familiarize with historical legacies in foreign policy of China and Russia;
- To develop ability to compare and contrast the strategy of foreign policies;
- To identify goals of foreign policy (security, economic and political development);
- To place foreign policy of Russia and China within a global context of world politics.

Course workload: Reading material assigned per each class, participation in class discussions, in-class assignments, team-working (groups’ presentations), individual presentations, midterm exam and final exam.

Teaching methodology:
The course has 22 sessions, combination of lectures and seminars (one lecture and one seminar each week). Lectures are interactive. The seminars are based on individual presentations. Presenter is required to use power point to discuss one of the required or recommended or suggested readings and to consider 5 questions in the end of the presentation. The questions must be stated on the last slide of power point and are meant to initiate and lead the class discussion. The evaluation of the presentation includes the quality of the questions and the discussion. The power point must be sent to Dr. Obydenkova 48 hours before the presentation including the questions for discussion on the last slide (earlier submissions will be appreciated).

Assessment criteria:
The overall grade is calculated based on attendance, participation, team-working (groups’ presentations), individual presentations, midterm exam and final exam.

- Participation in discussions (10%)
- Group’s presentations (15%)
- Individual Presentations and follow-up discussion (25%)
- Mid-term exam (25%)
- Final Exam (25%)

Absence policy: Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>No penalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE (“NO PRESENTAT”) for the course</td>
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The PEHE/HESP attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences. Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency, etc.) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the program.

Classroom norms:

- This is a **screen-down class**: no laptops, tablets or mobiles can be used in this class.¹
- Students may use **printed** materials, notes, and **printed** readings during the class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after the first hour of each session.

Weekly schedule

**WEEK 1 (Classes 1-2): Introduction to Foreign Policy and the Region.**

What are the driving forces of foreign policy of a state? How can we explain the difference between the strategies of foreign policy of the states? This session provides introduction to foreign policy analysis and two states under study (Russia and China).

*Required reading:*


*Suggested reading:*

¹ Please consult recent research that shows that students learn more when they take notes by hand and they learn less when laptops are in the classroom:

Mueller & Oppenheimer “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard. Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking” [http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159](http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159)


**WEEK 2 (Classes 3-4):**
**China and Russia: Regional and Global Approaches**
**First Round of Group Presentations**

The session will introduce students to geopolitical games in Eurasia. It will focus on main so-called “game-players” – the European Union, Russia and China. It will focus on the overlapping interests and challenges as well as on compatibility and conflict in Eurasia. The session will introduce the concept of “international security” into debate.

*Required reading:*


*Further reading:*


**WEEK 3 (Classes 5-6): Foreign Policy of Russia**

How do understand the foreign policy of modern Russia? How do historical legacies account for foreign policy and strategy of this state? What are the motivations behind the actions? What are the elements of decision-making in foreign policy of Russia? This session will introduce students to Russian foreign policy in so-called “near abroad”, that is, Russia’s relations with former Soviet Republics.

*Required reading:*)


Further reading:


**WEEK 4 (Classes 7-8):**

**Russia in Regional International Organizations: the CIS.**

Numerous regions of the world have witnessed a proliferation of regional organizations set up by powerful authoritarian states. The session analyzes how these organizations can indeed matter for the external influences on regime survival and eventual consolidation. The session will focus on the the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (international organizations founded and sponsored by Russia) to explore various strategies of Russia vis-à-vis different countries of the post-Soviet Eurasia.

**Required reading:**


**Further reading:**

Week 5 (Classes 9 – 10): Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union.

The session will focus on the case of the Russia’s foreign policy and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) to explore various strategies of Russia vis-à-vis the European Union and post-Soviet Eurasia. The session will help students to learn to identify strategic models of behavior of a leading state. The class will evaluate the benefits of the strategy for both a leading state and targeted states.

Required reading:


Further reading:


WEEK 6 (Classes 11-12): Foreign Policy of China and Russia: Overlapping Geopolitics

The session will introduce students to geopolitical overlapping strategies of China and Russia through the case-study of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO has a bipolar structure, with Russia and China being the key members. The SCO has also a very clear focus on its security agenda. The session will analyze the role of the SCO in some political issues (e.g., resolving border conflicts between Eurasian countries and China). The session introduce both cooperation and conflict between Russia and China (e.g., while China has shown some interest in advancing its economic agenda, Russia has consistently blocked such efforts). Finally, the role of the SCO in Eurasia and beyond will also be discussed. That is, the session will consider some of the aspects of complex relationship between the SCO, Europe, the US, and Iran. The session will place the role of the SCO within global focus considering its strategy and impact.

Required reading:

Suggested readings:


WEEK 7 (Classes 13-14): : Mid-term Exam

Summary of foreign policy of China and Russia in Eurasia and Mid-term Exam

This week is dedicated to summary of the topics that have been covered in previous sessions, consultations on group’s presentations, and a mid-term exam. Mid-term exam takes place during Class 12. To help students to prepare well for the mid-term exam, **there will be no readings assigned for this week.**
WEEK 8 (Classes 15-16): China in the World Politics

The session discusses so-called “new diplomacy” of China in the world. The session continues with analysis of the role of China beyond the region of Eurasia. What tools does China use in its foreign policy? The session will look into international development finance and regional development banks and the role of China. Specifically, the case-study will be dedicated to understanding the functioning of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Required reading:


Further reading:

WEEK 9 (Classes 17-18): The US and Russia: Groups’ Presentations
Second and Third Rounds of Group Presentations

This session has double aim: to address a few main issues in foreign policy of Russia beyond its “near abroad” and to conclude on the main discussions of the course. The session will discuss the case-study of Russia and the US, Russia and Syria, Russia and the EU. The session will look separately into complex impact of international ties on Russia – democratic western influences (coming from the European Union) and autocratic external influences (associated with Soviet historical legacies and former Soviet trade ties).

Suggested Reading:


WEEK 10 (Classes 19-20): The US and China: Groups’ Presentations
Second and Third Rounds of Group Presentations

The week will be dedicated to the analysis of relationship between China and the US. The class will analyze the cooperation as well as tensions between two states and project this into understanding foreign policy of both actors to each other. It requires analysis of both China and the US as economic partners. The class will discuss interrelationship between trade partnership and foreign policies of two states with special focus for administration of Barack Obama and Donald Trump comparatively. The class will discuss similarities and differences of the US-China relations over the period of 2009-2017 versus 2017-2019. The session will analyze the foreign policy strategy of China and its implications for world politics within the officially declared China paradigm of “peace, modernization, and development”, on the one hand. On the other hand, foreign policy of China is also based on Princeton of “territorial integrity” and its implications for separatism. The session will focus on a few key-issues of China foreign strategy (e.g., establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank).

Suggested reading:


**WEEK 11 (Classes 21-22): Consultations, Feedback and Final Exam**

This week is dedicated to the individual consultations on mid-term exam and individual feedback on overall performance. **Final exam takes place on Class 22. To help students to prepare for the final exam, there will be no readings assigned for this week.**

**Main required reading:**


**Other Readings:**


