

The University of Western Ontario
HISTORY 4611F
International Relations of the
People's Republic of China
Fall 2026
Weds, 11:30-2:30

Instructor: James A. Flath

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:30-13:30
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Course Description:

This course will examine the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China from its inception in 1949 through to the present Xi Jinping era. The focus of the course will be on China's political and security relations with global powers, including the Soviet Union/Russian Federation, Japan, India, Iran and the USA. The complexities of international relations will require further attention to spheres of mutual and conflicting influence, including Korea, Vietnam and Pakistan.

Prerequisite(s):

Registration in third year or above, any module.

Course Expectations and Outcomes

Living in this world means understanding that China is a part of it, and that China – its people, government, banks, armed forces – have a seat at the proverbial table. Students enrolled in this course will examine international relations from the Chinese perspective. They will be tasked with explaining how world events of the latter part of the 20th and the early 21st century were been shaped by Chinese influence, and how China adapted to international challenges.

Course Materials:

John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2018. (\$29.00 eBook, \$42.80 paperback).

Methods of Evaluation:**Essay Proposal (10%): Oct. 1**

Building on the Annotated Bibliography, the essay proposal redefines the essay topic, establishes the research question and preliminary thesis, and briefly outlines the draft Research Essay (see below).

Annotated Bibliography (10%): Oct. 21

The annotated bibliography will be the first step in writing the capstone term paper for the course. Once the student determines the essay topic in consultation with the professor, they will compile a bibliography of ten to fifteen texts (books and academic articles) that relate to the same topic. Each entry is to be accompanied by a paragraph that briefly outlines the position of the author and describes how the text relates to the essay topic.

Research Essay (50%): Nov. 25

As the capstone assignment for the course, the Research Essay develops the Annotated Bibliography into a comprehensive historiographical discussion and develops the Essay Proposal into a fully articulated scholarly discussion of 25-30 pages in length.

Essay Presentation (10%): Dec. 2

The last class of the term will be treated as a symposium in which students deliver 15-minute presentations of their research papers. Students will be graded on both the content and delivery of their paper.

Professionalism (20%)

This is not a lecture course. Students are expected to arrive in class fully prepared, and to make ongoing contributions to the discussion. To reinforce the atmosphere of professionalism, equal

portions of the Professionalism grade will be assigned to attendance, preparation (judged on the basis of a short weekly quiz), and participation.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1

Introduction

Garver, Chapter 1

Week 2

Soviet Union, Korea, and the Bandung Era

Garver, Chapter 2-4

Week 3

Sino-Soviet Split and Sino-Indian Conflict

Garver, Chapter 5-6

Week 4

Vietnam and the Cultural Revolution

Garver, Chapter 9-10

Week 5

Managing the USA and USSR

Garver, Chapter 11-12

Week 6

Opening Up, China VS Vietnam

Garver, Chapter 13-14

Week 7

Modernizing and Normalizing

Garver, Chapter 15-16

Week 8

Surviving the Collapse of Communism

Garver, Chapter 17-19

Week 9

China and the USA

Garver, Chapter 21-24

Week 10

China and its Neighbors

Garver, Chapter 26, 27

Week 11

China as a World Power

Garver, Chapter 25, 28, 29

Week 12

Conference Week

Student Papers

Additional Statements

AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) may be used for brainstorming, outlining, research planning, and grammar or style feedback. However, students are responsible for all submitted work and must verify the accuracy of any information provided by AI. Students may **not** submit AI-generated text as their own work, use AI-generated sources without verification, or rely on AI to complete historical analysis or writing assignments. All arguments, interpretations, and final written work must reflect the student's own thinking. Any significant use of AI must be acknowledged in a brief note submitted with the assignment. Failure to follow this policy may be treated as a violation of the university's academic integrity policy.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.