

EASTD 199
China and the African Continent
Fall 2023

Cross-listed at the Department of African and African American Studies
and the Department of Government

Tuesday and Thursday 10:30 – 11:45am
2 Divinity Avenue, room 212

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Office Hours: Friday 2 – 3:30pm
and by appointment
meetings at 2 Divinity Ave, Room 227

Teaching Fellow: tba

Course Description: As Africa is facing daunting challenges, the “Beijing model” invites intriguing alternative visions to the poorly performing designs by traditional foreign actors in the region. Moving from Chinese farm households in Mozambique to state-owned copper mines in Zambia, military bases in East Africa and the United Nations headquarters, this course critically assesses the potential for China’s presence to transform Sub-Saharan Africa. After identifying the intellectual stakes (week 1), and discussing anecdotal glimpses from the grassroot-levels (week 2), the class compares traditional development assistance with Maoist attempts to revolutionize the “world countryside” – resulting in legacies such as a China-trained guerilla fighter serving as the President of Zimbabwe. We then discuss the current footprint of Beijing, including its influence on elite politics, Chinese public and private business interests, and the diversity of the one million Chinese migrants to Africa. Four sessions specialize on (1) resource extraction versus opportunities for human capital development (2) debt-traps of Western and Eastern origins (3) emerging tensions over human rights policies (4) and the military dimension, including China’s role in Peace-Keeping Operations. Finally, the course addresses how the Chinese presence and institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank may transform established multilateral institutions, and the challenges associated with African migration to China. Social science research will be read alongside journalistic accounts and primary documents, such as Chinese strategy papers and databases. Will Africa become “Beijing’s Second Continent,” of the neo-colonial or tributary kind? What promises does the China model hold for Africans? How do the partners on both continents react to experiences of disillusionment and retreat? The assignments are designed to train students for public policy work and require close group collaboration.

Course objectives:

- Introduces key topics in international relations beyond the US-China relationship, provides new perspectives on Africa’s political and economic development.
- Skill-building for public policy work, such as in international organizations, journalism, or diplomacy, with an emphasis on producing intellectual output in small group settings.
- Overview of the evolving social science field of research at the China/Africa intersection.

Nature of assignments: The course assignments range from academic writings, such as the weekly response papers, to exercises in professional policy work. As in a professional setting, students work in groups of two or three, assigned by the instructor while taking into account student preferences.

Students decide whether their work should remain in the protected space of the classroom, or appear online and in social media, in which case written consent is needed from all the authors involved.

Grades: For the smooth functioning of this course, deadlines must be respected. Student work contributes to the final grade as follow:

- Participation (communicate with the instructor if you have to miss a class) 15%
- Public policy projects (group work) 60%
 - Interview 1 (including writeup), due Sept 25 (15%)
 - Interview 2 (including writeup), presented & handed in on Oct 10 (15%)
 - Policy options memo, due Dec 4 (10%)
 - Final project (podcast or video clip), initial version presented on Nov 21, final version due on Dec 9 (20%)
- Academic assignments (individual work) 25%
 - Weekly responses to the readings, 8 installments of 150 words each, due on Saturday night before the week when the readings are discussed (15%)
 - Final reflections on China and the African Continent, 500 words, due Dec 9 (10%)

Collaboration & Academic Honesty:

Collaboration is vital to academic research and will be encouraged throughout the class. Products of group assignments belong jointly to all group members. You must credit others (outside the group) for any ideas or evidence that they contribute to your project in your citations. All citations must be marked by quotation marks. Instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council. Certain assignments in this course will permit the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, September 15. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

Language of Instruction: This course is taught in English and has no other language requirement.

Readings: Although available online through Hollis, I recommend buying Deborah Brautigam. 2010. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 416p. \$13.79 (kindle) to \$32.95 (new paperback). All required readings are available through the canvas website. Note that some readings contain controversial opinions outside of the academic discourse, including outright propaganda material, and will be critically discussed.

Weekly schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

- Get together with classmates to raise big questions about China and the African Continent
- 1st meeting Sep 5: No preparation needed.
- 2nd meeting Sep 7: Prepare your "mission statement" for this semester as per instructions at 1st meeting, look for inspiration from <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/>. Time budget: Ca. 45 minutes

individual prep, 45 minutes group meeting. Find partners using spreadsheet shared on Canvas.

Week 2: The case of Mozambique

- Form group and contact potential interviewees for the first interview assignment
- Plenary meetings on Sep 12, Sep 14
- Readings:
 - *The Dragon's Gift*. Read introduction, pp.1 - 21.
 - Howard W. French. *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa*. Read chapter 1, "Mozambique," pp.11 - 41.
 - Deborah Brautigam and Sigrid-Marianella Stensrud Ekman. 2012. "Rumors and Realities of Chinese Agricultural Engagement in Mozambique." *African Affairs* 111(444), pp.483-492.

Week 3: Mao's China and Deng's China in Africa

- Conduct first interview and submit assignment due on Sep 25 (Monday)
- Plenary meetings on Sep 19, Sep 21
- Readings
 - *The Dragon's Gift*. Read chapters 1 and 2, pp.22-70.
 - Julia Lovell. 2019. *Maoism: A Global History*. New York: Harper. Read chapter 6, "Into Africa," pp.185 – 222.

Week 4: China's approach as a development partner

- Form group and contact potential interviewees for the second interview assignment
- Plenary meetings on Sep 26, Sep 28
- Readings
 - Howard French. 2023. "Are China and Russia Bad for Africa? That's the Wrong Question." *Foreign Policy*.
 - Curtis Stone. 2018. "The Fundamental Difference Between China's and the West's Policy Toward Africa." *People's Daily* Sept 4, 2018.
 - *The Dragon's Gift*. Chapter 5 ("Orient Express: How Does Chinese Aid and Engagement Work?"), pp.131-161.
 - Guive Khan Mohammad. 2014. "The Chinese Presence in Burkina Faso: A Sino-African Cooperation from Below." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 43(1), pp.71-101.

Week 5: China's practice as a development partner

- Conduct second interview
- Plenary meetings on Oct 3, Sep 5
- Readings (please review instructions "How to Read a Dataset," available on Canvas)
 - Xiong Hao. 2022. "Deepening Global Development Cooperation and Improving Global Governance." [深化全球發展合作 推動完善全球治理]. Party Construction [黨建網]. Translation from <https://interpret.csis.org>.
 - Download "AidData's Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset, Version 2.0" and explain what it says about China/Africa <https://www.aiddata.org/data/aiddatas-global-chinese-development-finance-dataset-version-2-0>

- You could consult Axel Dreher et al. 2022. *Banking on Beijing: The Aims and Impacts of China's Overseas Development Program*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 6: Influencing elites and citizens

- Present findings from your second interview during our plenary meeting on Oct 10.
- Plenary meetings on Oct 10, Oct 12
- Readings
 - Jonathan Holslag. 2011. "China and the Coups: Coping with Political Instability in Africa." *African Affairs* 110: 440, 367-386.
 - Daniel Koss. 2021. "Globalizing Leninist Institutions: Trends in Overseas Party Building." *China Brief* 21(12), 22-28.
 - Giles Mohan and Ben Lampert. "Negotiating China: Reinserting African Agency into China-Africa Relations." *African Affairs* 112 (446), pp.92-110.

Week 7: Resource extraction versus human capital development

- Plenary meetings on Oct 17, Oct 19
- Readings
 - Ching Kwan Lee. 2000. *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa*. Read chapter 3, "Labor bargains," pp.704.
 - Motolani Agbebi. 2019. "Exploring the Human Capital Development Dimensions of Chinese Investments in Africa: Opportunities, Implications and Directions for Further Research." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 54(2), pp.189-210.

Week 8: Debt traps of Eastern and Western origins

- Plenary meetings on Oct 24, Oct 26
- Readings
 - Barry Sautman and Hairong Yan. 2019. "The 'Chinese Debt Trap' and its Sri Lanka Example." *Thought Leadership Brief* 29, pp.1-4.
 - Deborah Brautigam and Yufan Huang. 2023. "Integrating China into Multilateral Debt Relief: Progress and Problems in the G20 DSSI." *Briefing Paper by the China Africa Research Initiative*.
 - Study World Bank debt statistics <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/debt-statistics> to gather some hard facts on Zambia's debt issue.

Week 9: Human rights

- Plenary meetings on Oct 31, Nov 2
- Readings
 - The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. 2019. *Seeking Happiness for People: 70 Years of Progress on Human Rights in China*. Read preamble, chapter VII, and chapter VIII.
 - Elizabeth Perry. 2008. "Chinese Conceptions of 'Rights': From Mencius to Mao - and Now." *Perspectives on Politics* 6(1), 37-50.
 - Ted Piccone. 2021. "UN Human Rights Council: As the US returns, it will have to deal with China and its friends." (blog by the Brookings Institution).

Week 10: China's soft and hard power in Africa

- Form group and start research for your final project
- Plenary meetings on Nov 7, Nov 9
- Readings
 - Maria Repnikova. 2022. "Rethinking China's Soft Power: 'Pragmatic Enticement' of Confucius Institutes in Ethiopia." *The China Quarterly* 250, pp.440-463.
 - Erica Downs, Jeffrey Becker and Patrick deGateno. 2017. *China's Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China's First Overseas Base*. Washington: Pentagon.
 - Jean-Pierre Cabestan. 2018. "China's Involvement in Africa's Security: The Case of China's Participation in the UN Mission to Stabilize Mali." *The China Quarterly* 235, pp.713-734.
- References (no required reading):
 - Andrew Jacobs and Jane Perlez. 2017. "U.S. Wary of Its New Neighbor in Djibouti: A Chinese Naval Base." *New York Times* Feb 25, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/25/world/africa/us-djibouti-chinese-naval-base.html>
 - Songying Fang and Fanglu Sun. 2019. "Gauging Chinese Public Support for China's Role in Peacekeeping." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12(2), 179-201.

Week 11: Emerging alternatives to the established multilateral institutions?

- Record the initial version of your final project
- Plenary meetings on Nov 14, Nov 16
- Readings
 - Xi Jinping. 2020. Remarks by Xi Jinping at the Opening Ceremony of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [習近平在亞洲基礎設施投資銀行第五屆理事會年會視頻會議開幕式上的致辭]. Translation from <https://interpret.csis.org>.
 - Study the project database on the website of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/list/index.html> to understand the bank's Africa business
 - Kai Yin Allison Haga. 2021. "The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank: A Qualified Success for Beijing's Economic Statecraft." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 50(3), 391-421.
 - Rosemary Foot. 2014. "'Doing Some Things' in the Xi Jinping Era: The United Nations as China's Venue of Choice." *International Affairs* 90(5), 1085-1100.

Week 12: Presentations

- Present initial version of final project in class
- One plenary meeting on Nov 21
- No readings

Week 13: Africans in China and outlook to the future

- Form group and write policy options memo, due Dec 4
- Plenary meetings on Nov 28, Nov 30, Dec 5
- Readings
 - Two video excerpts from: Zhang Yong, Fu Dong, Hodan Abdi. 2017. *Africans in Yiwu* [非洲人在義烏].
 - Guangzhi Huang. 2019. "Policing Blacks in Guangzhou: How Public Security Constructs

- Africans as *Sanfei*.” *Modern China* 45(2), pp.171-200.
- Shanshan Lan. 2017. *Mapping the New African Diaspora in China: Race and the Cultural Politics of Belonging*. New York: Routledge. Read chapter 6 “Between Guangzhou and Lagos: Business and Family Strategies of Chinese/Nigerian Couples.”

Week 14: Reading period and final assignments

- Write up final reflections on China and the African Continent, due Dec 9
- Finalize group project, due Dec 9