

THE BIG PICTURE:
HOW GEOGRAPHY, TRADE, AND POLITICS SHAPE OUR TROUBLED WORLD
SPRING 2022 SYLLABUS

Class Time: 4:10-7:00 p.m., Thursdays

Place: Shun-Wen Lecture Hall, 2nd Floor, Art and Culture Center

Instructor: William (Bill) A. Stanton (wastanton@gmail.com; wstanton@nccu.edu.tw)

Assistant: James Song (108265502@nccu.edu.tw)

Assistant: Michael Hsu (chwehsu@g.nccu.edu.tw)

Office Hours: Appointments made by email, or in person before or after class

Course Website: Moodle

I. COURSE DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES

The challenges to our “troubled” world are manifest in a continuing number of long-range as well as more immediate challenges, as well as both actual and potential conflicts, crises, and threats. Some examples, among many others, include:

- Climate change and the resulting increase in weather disasters such as droughts, fires, floods, and hurricanes around the world;
- The challenge of reducing reliance on fossil fuels and producing more clean energy;
- Declining populations in the developed world and growing populations in the developing world;
- Worldwide income inequality;
- Authoritarian crackdowns on any demands for democracy in Belarus, Russia, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and elsewhere;
- Increasing protectionist and populist policies dividing the world;
- The continuing threat of religious extremism;
- Continuing ethnic and sectarian fighting in the Middle East;
- Strategic, military, and economic competition between the United States and both the PRC and Russia;
- The PRC’s militarization of the South China Sea and its continuing territorial claims against ASEAN countries, Japan, and India;
- North Korean, Pakistani, and possibly Iranian nuclear weapons;

- Continuing Russian occupation of, and threats to, Ukrainian territory;
- Increasing PRC threats of war against Taiwan;
- Increasing government-sponsored cyber-attacks and information warfare; and
- Racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination almost everywhere.

This course aims to help students broadly understand the geographic, strategic, political, economic, and social origins of such problems. We will also introduce perspectives on how these challenges can be analyzed and addressed. The ultimate goal is to help students think independently and formulate their own views on critical world affairs, and to see inter-relationships among the challenges all countries face.

II. REQUIREMENTS

1. Class lectures, discussions, and student presentations are all in English.

2. Active Participation: Each class will be divided into three parts:

- The instructor will deliver a PowerPoint presentation lasting some 90 minutes or more on the key issues of that day's class. The Power Point presentation will also be posted the same day on the class website for review.
- Students will then be invited to offer comments and to ask questions.
- The third portion of the class will be devoted to class discussion. In advance of each class, the instructor will provide on the course website at least four questions for students to discuss. Students will be divided into groups, the size of which will be determined by the overall class size. Each group will choose a question to discuss and then offer brief presentations on each group's conclusions.

Assigned reading is relatively minimal and some is also available in Chinese. Therefore, each student is expected to complete all the required reading each week, and to contribute to the class discussions on the basis of the assigned reading and the lecture. For most classes, the instructor will also recommend further reading for students who are interested.

Keep the following questions in mind as you read articles and book chapters listed in the syllabus:

- What are the central issues?
- How are these issues similar to or related to issues in other countries and regions?
- What are the major arguments of the works being studied?
- How valuable and viable is the argument or idea that each puts forth?
- How would you make your own argument?

3. A Final Presentation: Class groups will each make a 20- to 30-minute PowerPoint presentation to the class in the course's final weeks. This presentation should include both your analysis of the issue chosen by your group and a proposed solution based on your group's discussion.

4. A Mid-Term (Week 9) and Final Exam (Week 18)

III. GRADING

- Class Participation (30%) Please note: class attendance will usually be taken.
- Mid-term (20%): Brief essays in answer to one or two questions that will be provided in advance.
- Final Group Presentation (20%)
- Final (30%): As in the mid-term exam.

Please note that half of the final grade will depend on your class participation and group presentations.

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

Week 1: February 17, 2022:

Introductory Lecture: Lessons Learned as a U.S. Diplomat: 1978 – 2012

Week 2: February 24, 2022:

Geo-Strategic Theories and Geopolitical Analyses: Countries Competing for Power and Influence

Required Reading:

Mearsheimer, John J., The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, rev. ed. 2014, Introduction, offensive realism, pp. 42-50. 可參考中譯版《大國政治的悲劇》導論。

Suggested Reading:

Mearsheimer, John J., The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, rev. ed. 2014, Introduction, Chapter 10: "Can China Rise Peacefully?"

Brotton, Jerry, A History of the World in Twelve Maps, (London: Penguin Books, 2012): Chapter 10: "Geopolitics," especially pp. 360-372 on Mackinder.

Kaplan, Robert D., The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate (New York: Random House, 2012): Chapter IV: "The Eurasian Map"

on Mackinder (pp. 60-78); Chapter VI: “The Rimland Thesis” on Nicholas Spykman (pp. 89-102); Chapter VII: “The Allure of Sea Power” on Alfred Thayer Mahan (pp. 103-113).

Mead, Walter Russell, “The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers,” Foreign Affairs, May/June 2014, Vol. 93, No. 3, pp. 69-79.

Week 3: March 3, 2022:

Africa and Latin America: Geographic Limitations and Destructive Colonial Legacies

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 5: “Africa” ; Chapter 9: “Latin America” . 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第五章及第九章。

Suggested Reading:

Oluwatosin Adeshokan, “China is the Biggest Winner from Africa’s New Free Trade Bloc,” Foreign Policy, August 19, 2021.

Oliver Stuenkel, “Latin American Governments are Caught in the Middle of the U.S.-China Tech War,” Foreign Policy, February 26, 2021.

Week 4: March 10, 2022:

The Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan/India: More Geographic Limitations and Destructive Colonial Legacies

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 6: “The Middle East” ; Chapter 7: “India and Pakistan.” 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第六章、第七章。

Suggested Reading:

Vohra, Anchal, “The Middle East is Becoming Literally Uninhabitable,” Foreign Policy, August 24, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/24/the-middle-east-is-becoming-literally-uninhabitable/>

Herzinger, Blake, “Taiwan Isn’t Afghanistan, Whatever Beijing Says,” Foreign Policy, August 23, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/23/taiwan-afghanistan-china-biden-us-reputation/>

Singh, Sushant, “To Get to the Negotiating Table. India and Pakistan Had Help,” Foreign Policy, March 4, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/04/india-pakistan-cease-fire-negotiations-peace/>

Week 5: March 17, 2022:

The United States: Enormous Geo-Strategic Advantages and Daunting Challenges

Required Reading:

Zeihan, Peter, The Accidental Superpower: The Next Generation of American Preeminence and the Coming Global Disorder (New York: Twelve/Hachette Book Group, 2014), Chapter 4: “Enter the Accidental Superpower” pp. 124-125, 134-140.

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015), Chapter 3: “United States.” 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第三章。

Suggested Reading:

Rhodes, Ben, “Them and Us: How America Lets Its Enemies Hijack Its Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs, September /October 2021.

Michael J. Green and Evan S. Medeiros, “Can America Rebuild Its Power in Asia? : Biden Started Strong, But Progress Is Halting,” Foreign Affairs, 31/01/2022.

The White House, “Fact Sheet: Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States,” 11 February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/11/fact-sheet-indo-pacific-strategy-of-the-united-states/>

The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States,” February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

Week 6: March 24, 2022:

China: Ambitions and Challenges

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 2: “China.” 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第二章。

Suggested Reading:

Ran Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, “What the West Gets Wrong about China,” Harvard Business Review, May-June 2021, hbr.org

Jude Blanchette, “Xi’s Gamble: The Race to Consolidate Power and Stave Off Disaster,” Foreign Affairs, July/August 2021.

Elizabeth Economy, “China’s Triumphalism Conceals Societal Fragmentation,” Foreign Affairs, May 28, 2021.

Michael Beckley, "Enemies of My Enemy: How Fear of China Is Forging a New World Order," Foreign Affairs, March/April 2022.

Week 7: March 31, 2022:

The South China Sea and Its Threat to East Asian Stability and Prosperity

Required Reading:

Kaplan, Robert D., Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific, (New York: Random House, 2014) Chapter 8: "The State of Nature," pp. 398-405.

Suggested Reading:

Heydarian, Richard Javad, "Will the South China Sea Spark the Next Global Conflict?" The Diplomat, Issue 79, June 2021

Kaplan, Robert D., Chapter 1: "The Humanist Dilemma," pp. 5-31; and the rest of Chapter 8.

Week 8: April 7, 2022:

Korea and Japan: Leading Economies, Threatened Nations, Historical Foes, U.S. Allies

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 8: "Korea and Japan" pp. 429-436, 439-444, 458-459, 462, 472-473. 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第八章。

Suggested Reading:

Donald Kirk, "Moon Wants a Legacy on North Korea That Isn't Coming," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/13/moon-north-korea-legacy-biden/>

S. Nathan Park, "Japan Wasted a Golden Chance for Olympic Reconciliation," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/29/japan-olympics-korea-relations/>

Yoon Suk-yeol, "South Korea Needs to Step Up: Seoul Must Embrace a More Expansive Role in Asia and Beyond," Foreign Affairs, February 8, 2022.

William Sposato, "Japan's Foreign Minister Faces Tough Calls on China: Yoshimasa Hayashi Breaks the Pattern of Factional Appointments," Foreign Policy, November 11, 2021.

Daisuke Akimoto, "Japan's Changing ODA Diplomacy: From Ending Aid to China to a New Emphasis on Health amid the Pandemic, Japan's Official Development Assistance Is Evolving," The Diplomat, February 10, 2022.

Week 9: April 14, 2022: Mid-Term Exam

Week 10: April 21, 2022:

Russia: Fighting to Reclaim its “Rightful” Place

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 1: “Russia” 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第一章。

Zeihan, Peter, The Absent Superpower: The Shale Revolution and a World without America (New York: Twelve/Hatchette Book Group, 2016), Chapter 6: “The Twilight War,” pp. 328-334, 336.

Suggested Reading:

Jeff Hawn, Sim Tack, “Russia’s Ruling Party Wants a Big Win in Upcoming Elections,” Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/10/united-russia-ruling-party-elections-state-duma/>

Robbie Gramer, Jack Detsch, “Russia Policy Puts Biden Under Pressure Across Europe,” Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/25/biden-ukraine-russia-putin-nord-stream/>

Week 11: April 28, 2022:

A Divided and Increasingly Troubled Europe

Required Reading:

Marshall, Tim, Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything about the World (New York: Scribner, 2015) Chapter 4: “Western Europe.” 可參考中譯版《用十張地圖看懂全球政經局勢》，第四章。

Zeihan, Peter, The Accidental Superpower: The Next Generation of American Preeminence and the Coming Global Disorder (New York: Twelve/Hatchette Book Group, 2014) Chapter 11: “History Returns to Europe,” pp. 406-411.

Suggested Reading:

Elisabeth Braw, “Europe Runs the Risk of Becoming a Global Strategic Victim,” Foreign Policy August 23, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/23/europe-runs-the-risk-of-becoming-a-global-strategic-victim/>

Michael Hirsh, “Will the United States and Europe Break Up Over China,” Foreign Policy, July 14, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/14/us-germany-europe-china-russia-france-merkel-biden-macron/>

Caroline De Gruyter, "The Slow but Steady Strengthening of Europe's Values," *Foreign Policy*, August 19, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/19/the-slow-but-steady-strengthening-of-europes-values/>

Week 12: May 5, 2022:

Trade: Shared Interests and Cause of Conflicts

Required Reading:

Felicia Wong, "The New Economics: How the U.S. and Its Allies Are Rewriting the Rules on Spending and Trade," *Foreign Affairs*, November 16, 2021.

Stanton, William, "The time is ripe for a U.S.-Taiwan free trade agreement," [Original title: "Why the U.S. Needs a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan"], *Taiwan News*, 2019/06/28, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3734133>

Week 13: May 12, 2022:

Taiwan: Geopolitical Challenges and its Future

Required Reading:

Rigger, Shelly, *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011) Chapter 9: "Why Taiwan Matters to America and the World," pp. 187-197.

Stanton, William, "Learning to Appreciate a Modern Miracle: Taiwan," *Taiwan News*, 19/02/2019, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3640792>

Suggested:

Oriana Skylar Mastro, "The Taiwan Temptation: Why Beijing Might Resort to Force," *Foreign Affairs*, June 22, 2021.

Mike Gallagher, "Taiwan Can't Wait: What America Must Do to Prevent a Successful Chinese Invasion," *Foreign Affairs*, February 01, 2022.

Week 14: May 19, 2022: No Class

Week 15: May 26, 2022: Group Presentations

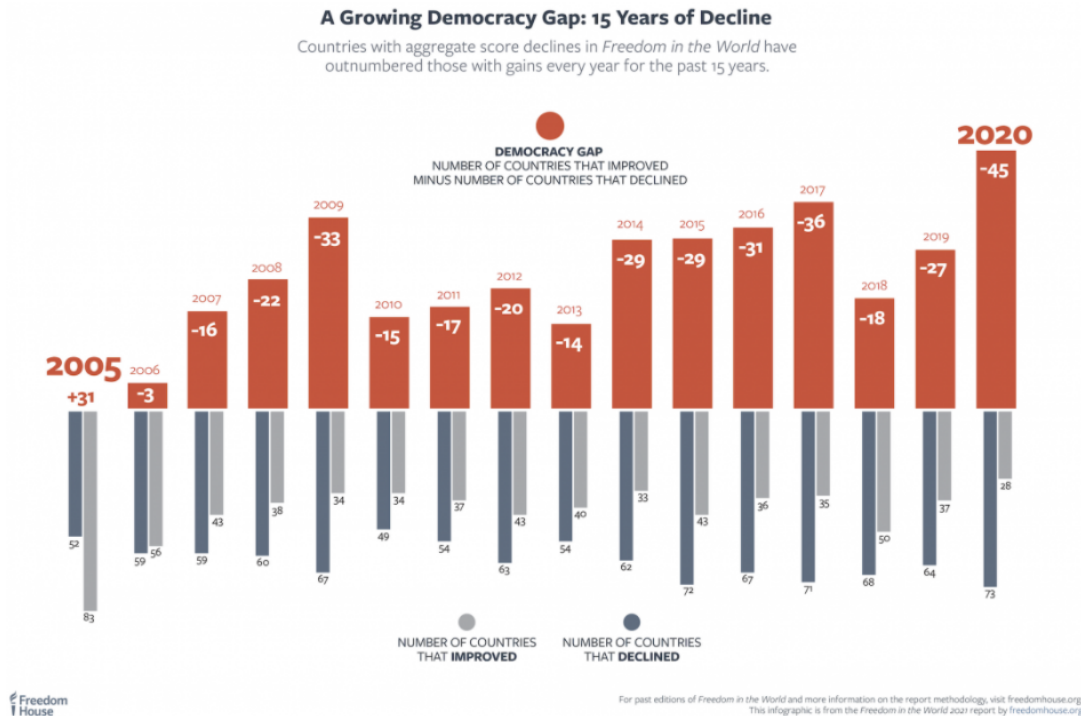
Week 16: June 2, 2022: Group Presentations

Week 17: June 9, 2022: Group Presentations

Week 18: June 16, 2022: Final Exam

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS (If in doubt, please ask!)

- In Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (1997), Jared Diamond wrote: "Because diseases have been the biggest killers of people, they have also been decisive shapers of history. Until World War II, more victims of war died of war-borne microbes than of battle wounds. All those military histories glorifying great generals over-simplify the ego-deflating truth: the winners of past wars were not always the armies with the best generals and weapons, but were often those bearing the nastiest germs to transit to their enemies." Prepare a presentation on a key example Diamond cites: the European conquests of the Americas beginning with Columbus's voyage in 1493. Or choose another example from history where disease has played a decisive role in determining the future of human societies.
- Faced with the outbreak of the deadly novel coronavirus, the PRC and others appear to have been slow to react and prevent its spread. Why have some countries, like Taiwan, been more successful in countering this disease than others? What should the international community do to address more effectively the next outbreak of a new and deadly disease?
- During the course we have considered a number of threats to the security and stability of our world. Prepare a presentation on what you see as the greatest threat to world peace, explain why it is so dangerous, and offer suggestions on what we can do to counter this threat without war.
- We have also discussed a number of global economic and social problems, such as unequal distributions of wealth, persistent poverty in some countries and regions, protectionism, unfair trade practices, and demographic changes. Prepare a presentation on your assessment of the one or more of the greatest economic or social challenges and propose ideas for how best to address them.
- Prepare a presentation on what specific policies you would adopt if you were the President of Taiwan to try to improve the cross-Strait relationship short of capitulating to a PRC demand for unification? Please also address how you would handle the so-called '92 consensus and the "One Country-Two Systems" formula for reunification.
- The Freedom in the World 2021 report found that 2020 "marked the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. The countries experiencing deterioration outnumbered those with improvements by the largest margin recorded since the negative trend began in 2006. The long democratic recession is deepening."



Prepare a presentation on this anti-democratic trend, the reasons for it, and what – if anything – can be done to reverse it.

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENTARIES

If you are interested, you can find the following commentaries by Bill Stanton published in Taiwan News on current issues related to Taiwan, the PRC, and the U.S.:

11/18/21 "The Biden-Xi Summit: There is Really No Point Talking to the PRC"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4348857>

10/22/21 "US needs to take more concrete steps to defend Taiwan"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4321091>

09/06/21 "The fall of Kabul is not the main event; the PRC threat is"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4281700>

07/26/21 "My reflections on visiting San Francisco: Former AIT director"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4258457>

05/25/21 "In a time of danger, US should help its family and friends first,"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4209788>

4/10/21 1. "US leaders have often best served China's interests,"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4172775>

04/09/21 2. "Agents of influence acting on behalf of China,"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4170721>

02/19/21 "Personal Reflections on the Secretary of State I Admire Most"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4130925>

01/27/21 "Initial Biden steps give Taiwan reason for optimism"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4113028>

12/29/20 "A New Year's Taiwan wish list for President Biden"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4089278>

11/28/2020 "How to stop China winning without war," A review of Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to 'Win Without Fighting' by Kerry K. Kershaneck

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4063024>

07/07/2020 1. "The Trump conundrum — A Taiwan-centric perspective"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3961812>

07/08/2020 2. "Trump and Biden's mixed records on China and Taiwan"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3961798>

05/05/2020. "Wuhan virus finally alters global perceptions of the PRC"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3928245>

04/01/2020 "US relations with PRC and Taiwan in a time of 'plague'"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3908597>

2/24/20 "Continuing PRC Efforts to Intimidate Taiwan and Its Friends,"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3880658>

01/11/20: "The 2020 Taiwan Presidential Elections: A Laowai's Perspective"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3855260>

12/31/19: "'Island Nation': Then and Now: Reflections on the Story of Taiwan's Success"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3847967>

10/13/19 "Arrival of Flagship in Taiwan Significant for US-Taiwan Relations"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3794865>

9/10/2019: "Why China's Wealthy Elite are Losing Faith In their Country's Future"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3773424>

7/27/2019: "Only China Can Untie Its Own Knot in US Relations"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3752724>

06/28/19: The Time Is Ripe for a U.S-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement"

Original Title: "The U.S. Needs a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3734133>

05/28/19: "Time to Bury AIT Washington"

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3712467>

04/29/19: "Time for Washington to Change How It Talks about Taiwan"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3690579>

02/19/19 "Learning to Appreciate a Modern Miracle"
<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3640792>