

PS 346 China in World Politics

Section Syllabus, Spring 2011

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

This discussion section has two primary objectives: one is to clarify concepts covered in the lecture and other class materials; the other is to connect theory and the real world by applying learned concepts to current events. The time of each section is divided accordingly into two parts. We will spend the first 10 to 20 minutes discussing unclear or confusing concepts; we will then spend the rest of the time applying learned knowledge to explaining and analyzing current events related to China's intercourse with the world.

Responsibilities

First, students are expected to take the initiative in both parts of the discussion section. Students raise questions about unclear concepts or arguments they encounter in the lecture or course readings and better their understanding through discussing with the TA and other classmates. This means you are expected to have finished reading assignments and reviewing your lecture notes before attending sections. Our first priority is to deal with the topics that you are particularly interested in or that you find particularly difficult to understand, but you need to take the initiative.

Second, **students are required to submit ONE discussion question EACH week.** Prof. Friedman will constantly forward web articles to the class, and these articles are required readings for the second part of the discussion section. **Every student should think through these articles and submit ONE discussion question to that week's discussion forum on Learn@UW by Saturday 5pm.** The weekly discussion question should cover web articles, lecture and course reading of that week and will be discussed in the following week's sections. For example, Week 2's discussion question should be related to web articles sent by Prof. Friedman during the period 1/23-1/29 AND linked to the lecture and course reading of the same period. Week 2's discussion questions will then be discussed in week 3's discussion sections.

Here is the operational procedure of posting on Learn@UW:

1. Go to <http://learnuw.wisc.edu> and log in;
2. Click on "polisci346: China in World Politics";
3. Click on "Discussion," which is located at the top tool bar, left-hand side;

4. Click on the proper week and your section;
5. Click “Compose,” type your question, and then hit “post” at the bottom-right corner.

Each week’s discussion forum will be automatically locked after 5pm of that Saturday, and after that, you can only read but not post any message. So, be sure to submit your discussion questions on time.

Here is an example of discussion questions that I look for:

In lecture we talked about whether or not international relations are a zero-sum game. In the press release, President Obama said, “And so, with respect to China, what President Hu and myself and our delegations have discussed is how do we make sure that in fact our trading relationship is fair and a win-win situation as opposed to a win-lose situation.” What are areas where you believe a “win-win” outcome is feasible? Professor Friedman mentioned in lecture the possibility of energy and pollution measures; are there any others that come to mind? In his article, Paul Krugman suggests that raising the value of the RMB could be a “win-win” scenario, do you agree? -Casey Kearney

I like this question because (1) it is linked to the lecture (and you could and are encouraged to link your questions to the course reading); (2) it refers to multiple web articles; this means the author is able to find a common concern in these various articles, and these common concerns are typically key issues in Chinese foreign policy, about which we certainly would like to be clear; (3) it is a question about “factors,” rather than “facts” in Chinese foreign policy; to be able to answer this question, you would need to know interests that drive Chinese foreign policy decision-making.

Third, **students are required to lead ONE discussion section over the semester.** The responsibility of the discussion leader is to organize everyone’s questions into big themes, i.e. several overarching questions, **brought up in the lecture or the class reading**(see the attached example). **The discussion leader is required to send the TA (klin4@wisc.edu) these big themes/overarching questions by Sunday 7pm** (several correspondences might ensue to ensure key themes of the class materials are properly covered in the discussion). During the section, the discussion leader will facilitate participation by, first, explaining his/her chosen themes and connecting them to the class materials; and, second, soliciting classmates’ responses to these questions. Here are the breakdown of discussion leaders’ jobs:

1. Read lecture notes and the course reading;
2. Read discussion questions submitted by classmates;
3. Find some common concerns mentioned in these discussion questions that are also brought up or linked to the lecture or course reading; transform these common concerns into questions, if they have not yet been;
4. Put your classmates’ names and their questions under the rubric of related big questions, and send to the TA by Sunday 7pm;
5. In section, explain how your big questions are linked to course materials, and then ask

your classmates for opinions. The names under each big questions are naturally the people you can call on.

Evaluation

Submitting discussion questions: 25%

Leading discussion: 25%

Participating in discussion: 25%

Attending sections: 25%

Office Hours

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or if there is any way I can help you better understand the course materials, please don't hesitate to contact me. My email address is listed above. However, if your questions cannot be clearly stated in two or three sentences, it's a better idea to come to my office hours, which are Wednesday 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, or by appointment. Office hours start from the second week of the class.