

DPI-421

Power Shifts: Understanding Global Change through History

Fall 2017

Tuesday and Thursday, 2.45pm-4.00pm, L130

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Course outline

Nobody can understand the present without a keen understanding of the past. After all, history is all we have to go on in providing the resources for making sense of the world we live in. Successful policymakers often understand this and turn a view of the past to their advantage in interpreting the present. They understand how **any good strategy is grounded in a sound view of history.**

History and historical methodologies can give policymakers a keener appreciation of what is possible to do, but also of what must be avoided and what needs to be changed. **History is mainly about change;** relentless, often confusing processes, over which individuals, communities, and even states seemingly have little say. But by studying change at key points in human history, we can **prepare ourselves better** for taking charge of our future, and for promoting or steering change when needed.

This class looks at major shifts in history from European and Asian antiquity up to today. It looks at **power in all its dimensions** – material, demographic, technological, ideological, military, or religious – and shows how it has influenced and been influenced by major transformations in global history. Our aim is to better **identify the key causes of power shifts,** but also to get an impression of the fickleness of established orders in times of tectonic change.

We have prepared **twelve new cases** specifically for this class. They range from the Peloponnesian War and the origins of Islamic empires up to the invasion of Iraq and US-China relations today. Through these cases we want to discuss the different dimensions of power and how they shift over time. We also want to look comparatively at how leaders have initiated, steered, or responded to power shifts. The purpose of the cases is to

illuminate how people in the past have reacted to major change and how their choices may help us understand the **tools and options that are at our disposal when making critical decisions.**

Reading

The main part of the reading for this class consists of the cases themselves. These are usually around 15pp and consist of an A part and a B part. The A part is mainly structural; it deals with analyzing the situation around a particular power shift – the material, ideological, and military realities of the time. The B part is usually oriented towards a particular crisis or decision, in which people had to make their own choices in response to a rapidly developing set of circumstances.

All students must study these cases carefully before each session, since the class discussions will draw extensively on the material included in them. While it is perfectly possible to contribute meaningfully to our discussions based only on the written cases themselves, we encourage students who are preparing a presentation or simulation, or those who have a particular interest in one topic, to consult the additional material available on Canvas.

Introductory books

It is useful to have a general grip on world history in order to situate these cases in time and space. We recommend having access to a good one volume world history – for instance J Roberts & OA Westad, *The Penguin History of the World* (6th ed.; also published in hardback as *A History of the World*) or similar.

Four books that have had a tremendous impact on how people understand issues of power shifts in international affairs are:

Kennedy, PM. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. New York, NY: Random House, 1987.

Acemoglu, D, and JA Robinson. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2012.

Darwin, J. *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009.

Morris, I. *Why the West Rules-- for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal about the Future*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

These books are extensive, provocative, and not always consistent. While recommended reading for the class, they are non-obligatory. But they are highly useful for getting a better understanding of what power shifts debates are all about.

These four books will be placed on reserve in the HKS and Widener libraries (please log in to Hollis to view where copies of these books are available).

Cases

A lot of thought and consideration have gone into the preparation of the cases for this class, but they are of course work in progress (and will always remain so). Your own input on how to improve the cases will be much

appreciated (see below). Our experience is that how much you get out of the case method depends entirely on how much you are willing to put into it before the class meeting begins.

Good rules of thumb are:

- + read the whole case a week before the first class meeting on each case, take notes, and outline what you see as the main questions. Review each part again the day before we meet.

- + decide what the main points of change in the case are; what matters most in the rapidly evolving situation you are looking at.

- + decide what you see as the main values, policies, and capabilities of each of the main decision makers in the case.

- + decide what is possible to do and what is not.

- + think about consequences; how will others react to a certain set of policies or actions?

- + make sure you base your thinking on the evidence available in the case (supported by additional reading, if necessary).

- + be critical about the historical outcome. Do think about alternative courses of action that may produce different results.

- + think in terms of comparisons and parallels, but also differences. Is this case more like X or Z among our cases? Is it similar: Why? Is it different: Why?

+ for the B sessions, especially:

+ put yourself in the place of the decision-maker.

+ what are the objectives of the decision-maker?

+ what are the options at the decision-maker's disposal?

+ how does the decision-maker achieve his or her objectives? In other words, how does he or she create a strategy that employs resources/capabilities to produce desired outcomes?

+ are the decision-maker's concepts of desired outcomes correct? Will they serve his or her interests, short-term and long-term?

+ how well or badly does the decision-maker understand the big power shift picture of their time?

There is more about learning with cases on the HKS website:

https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/1136_o.pdf

Teaching

Two weekly sessions, both dealing with the same case, with the A part discussed in the first session and the B part in the second session.

In each of the B sessions, we will do in-character presentations or mini-simulations. One or several assignment groups will be responsible for preparing each of these sessions.

The TF's office hours will discuss material students may find difficult, help prepare class assignments, or help produce outlines for the final paper.

NOTE: 10/10/17 will be a double session to make up for 10/5/17, when class is cancelled. The second session will take place after the conclusion of class at 4:00pm. Class will reconvene at 4:15pm in Taubman 520 and continue until 5:30pm. All students without course conflicts are expected to attend, but the session will be recorded.

Assignment Groups

All students will be divided into assignment groups immediately after our first meeting. Some re-assigning will be necessary during the first few weeks to accommodate students adding or dropping the class. The course coordinator (Ms. Gammons) will assign students to groups as necessary.

Participation Assessment

This class is dependent on student participation, and the assessment method is drawn up to facilitate this.

50% of the grade is based on participation of three kinds: On-line comments before or after each class; presentations/simulations; and overall contributions to class discussions.

After reading each case with care the week before we meet, please submit an initial short response (from a few sentences up to several paragraphs) on the case on Canvas. Initial short responses are due by 11am of the day each part of the case will be discussed.

After each case, or between the A and the B part, please submit a further closing response based on what you have learned both directly from the case and in the classroom.

We expect that students will make these interventions into a discussion, so please read what others have written first and respond to that in your own comments.

We will set up an **on-line, interactive forum** within Canvas for these interventions and the discussion/comments that follow from them. Students will be graded on the nature and the frequency of their contributions. **As a minimum, each student will need to make at least five substantial responses (meaning more than 200 words each) during the semester.** The degree to which comments engender and develop discussions will be assessed.

The Canvas forum will provide an overall opportunity to prepare and continue class conversations online, and will also be an opportunity to discuss current events in comparison with our historical cases.

The nature of the on-line interventions could take different forms, such as:

- here is my position on the overall significance of this case
- what I have learnt from this case
- here is something I really wonder about concerning this case

- of the cases we have discussed, is X more like Y than Z?
- are any basic empirical elements omitted from the case?
- here is a book or an article that I have read that really contributes to this week's case
- here is a real-life situation that I have been in that reminds me about the choices we discussed this week
- here is an on-going issue in foreign affairs in which decision-makers would benefit from thinking about things we have discussed this week
- here is how I think this case links to the overall section theme

Please remember that this forum is intended to encourage productive and meaningful conversation, and we expect that your interactions with each other will be substantive, courteous, and appropriate. Please be vigilant in your own participation, open to constructive criticism, and respectful of the opinions of others. The teaching team will monitor these spaces and hold each of you to the highest standards of conduct.

Final Paper

50% of the class grade for all students is given based on a policy memo of up to 5,500 words. There will be no exceptions to this requirement. The memo should consist of a 750 word executive summary and a main body of text that outlines and discusses the current relationship between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China in light of one or several of the historical cases we have discussed in class.

The policy memo could be written for the political leadership of either the United States or China. It should contain policy proposals intended to learn from the past and concrete suggestions that would be to the advantage of the government in question.

You will be required to meet with the teaching fellow or the instructor and discuss your outline for this assignment by **October 31**. Please be advised that there are multiple resources available to assist you in developing your policy memos, including the HKS communications program and materials linked on Canvas.

The final paper has to be submitted on Canvas before 12 noon Monday December 11.

Academic Integrity

The final paper must be appropriately referenced and all quotes must be appropriately cited. Students seeking guidance regarding proper citation and academic honesty should refer to the Harvard Kennedy School Academic Code. The School takes academic integrity seriously, and any violations could have serious consequences, such as failing the course and expulsion. If you still have questions as to whether or not you have used citation properly, please speak with the instructors before turning in your written assignment.

Case development

Since all the cases have been developed specifically for this class, we depend on student input to take them further. After each session, please make suggestions for possible changes/improvements on and in the written case, and post to Canvas. We will look at all the suggestions and make use of them in improving the case for the next group of students.

Class policies

This is a **screen-down class**, so no laptops, tablets or smartphones can be used during our meetings. Students who need to use note-taking technology should contact the Course Coordinator for assistance.

You are expected to attend every lecture, prepared to discuss the day's case and ready to make thoughtful contributions to the learning of your classmates. Additional activities will include participation in one or more simulations or other role-playing exercises.

Absences will be excused for medical or family emergencies and for religious holidays. Students are expected to schedule interviews, ordinary medical appointments, other academic engagements, and all other business around the class meetings. Students are also expected to attend the entirety of each class, and so are advised to schedule other courses in a way that allows them to be at each lecture for its duration. Late arrivals and early exits will count as absences.

Phones and other devices should be silenced.

Class outline

What are Power Shifts?

Introduction: 8/31/17 (Thurs)

SECTION 1: Building a Strong State

1.1. The Han Empire

A. The Growth of the Han Empire's Power

B. The War against the Yue, 112-111 BC

Class A: 9/5/17 (Tues) ; Class B: 9/7/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple): Advising the Emperor on Subsuming the Yue

This case is about the character of the Han Empire and about its decision to conquer and incorporate what is today southern China around 100BC. The case deals with Confucianism, imperial ideology, cultural claims to centrality, and methods for imperial colonization and integration.

From around 180BC the Han Empire had become increasingly preoccupied with securing its southern border. The Minyue and Nanyue, two kingdoms in the south, were mainly inhabited by Vietnamese-speakers. The two kingdoms alternated between cooperation and conflict with the Han in a bid to keep their independence. In 111BC a pro-Han leadership in Nanyue was overthrown. The Han responded with a full-scale invasion. Between 111BC and the end of the Han Empire in 220AD all of the region was fully integrated into China and local identities mostly wiped out by cultural assimilation, colonization, and genocide. Today the population is Chinese and the region is part of the People's Republic of China.

1.2. Philip II and Habsburg Spain

A. Habsburg Spain

B. The Spanish Armada, 1588

Class A: 9/12/17 (Tues); Class B: 9/14/17 (Thurs)

B assignment (single): Philip II on Why the Need to Attack England

This case is about the character of the Spanish empire and its ideology under Philip II. The case deals with religious rights to rule, the social and economic structure of the empire, the Habsburg inheritance in Europe, Spain's control of the Americas, and the conflict between Spain and England.

In 1588 the Spanish Empire under Philip II was the most powerful European state. Not only had Philip united the Spanish and Portuguese empires, but he had continued the Spanish expansion in the Americas,

controlling most of South America and significant parts of North America. Spain also controlled the Netherlands and parts of France and Italy, as well as numerous settlements on the African and Asian coasts (the Philippines was named after its king). Philip, who was a devout Catholic, saw England as an upstart nation of pirates and religious dissenters. He wanted to put a Catholic monarch on the English throne. But his 1588 naval expedition against England failed and his armada destroyed. The loss broke the Spanish dominance of the Atlantic sea-routes as well as Philip's dreams of uniting Europe under his leadership.

1.3. The United States and the Marshall Plan

A. The Crisis in Europe, 1945-1947

B. The Marshall Plan and the US Congress, 1948

Class A: 9/19/17 (Tues); Class B: 9/21/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple - simulation): US Congressional Debate on the Marshall Plan

This case is about the Truman Administration's domestic and international mobilization to confront the Soviet Union and assist European recovery in the first phase of the Cold War. The case deals with political leadership, reactions to a perceived emergency, bipartisanship in foreign policy, and the building of overseas alliances.

The Truman Administration interpreted Soviet actions in Europe and Asia as threats to the causes for which the United States had fought World War II: Non-aggression, political democracy, and economic freedom. "I believe," said Truman, "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." But some Americans questioned whether the United States would be well served by further foreign involvements. And some of the regimes Truman supported were less than democracies. Even so, the President managed to get bi-partisan support for massive foreign aid programs and new permanent military alliances. Some of these institutions, such as NATO, have lasted up to today.

SECTION 2: War & Peace

2.1. The Peloponnesian War

A. The Sparta-Athens Rivalry and Its Consequences

B. Deciding for War, 432BC

Class A: 9/26/17 (Tues); Class B: 9/28/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple – simulation): Sparta and Athens Presenting before the Greek Assembly

This case is about why Athens and Sparta decided to go to war against each other, the conduct of the war, and its consequences. The case deals with strategies of a rising power (Athens) and of a status quo power (Sparta), ideologies, the definition of interests, the significance of alliances, and the rhetoric of war as solution to a power shift dilemma.

In 433BC Athens decided to intervene militarily in a conflict between Corinth and the former Corinthian colony of Corcyra. The intervention prevented a Corinthian victory. Athens also intervened in a number of other local conflicts. Sparta believed that the rising power of Athens and the Athenians' insistence on the universal validity of their ideology made Athens an immediate threat to their state's survival. Encouraged by its Corinthian allies, Sparta in 432BC declared war on Athens, leading to a thirty-year war that destroyed the state system of ancient Greece.

2.2. The Roman Empire

A. *The Crisis of the Roman Empire*

B. *Defending the Empire, 392-410*

Class A: 10/3/17 (Tues); Class B: 10/10/17 (Tues)

B assignment (single): Stilicho on His Grand Strategy around 400

*Please note: class will be cancelled on Thursday, 10/5/17. We will hold a **double session** the following Tuesday, 10/10/17. Location for session two is yet to be determined.

This case is about the character of the Roman empire and its reaction to the political and military crisis around 400AD. The case deals with political leadership, setting strategic priorities, mobilization of domestic resources, and immigration/integration.

In the 390sAD the Roman Empire was weakened by civil war. Under threat from the Huns, large numbers of people from outside the frontiers of the Empire had crossed over into Roman territory. Roman leaders tried to recruit these new groups to their civil wars. The Visigoths had served on both sides in the wars, but were denied full integration within the Empire. In 408 they rebelled, and in 410 they sacked the city of Rome. Although the Empire in the west survived in name for another two generations, its prestige and its power was broken.

2.3. World War I

A. *The European Powers, 1900-1914*

B. *German decisions, July-August 1914*

Class A: 10/10/17 (Tues); Class B: 10/12/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple – simulation): Advising the Kaiser, July 28 1914

*Please note: class on 10/10/17 is a double session. Class A of World War I will take place following the second session on the Roman Empire.

This case is about the causes of war within a system of great powers. The case deals with alliances, political credibility, military strategies, and mobilization of domestic political and strategic resources.

The newly united Germany had been the rising power in Europe since the 1870s. It had engaged in an arms race with the dominant global power, Great Britain. Local wars in the Balkans had threatened to draw in the Great Powers, which, by 1907, were organized in two main alliances: Germany was allied with Austria-Hungary, and Britain with France and Russia. Austro-Hungarian meddling in the Balkans intensified the sense of crisis. When the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated in Sarajevo in June 1914 by Slavic nationalists, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia, which it accused of being behind the murder. Russia, which viewed Serbia, a fellow Slavic and Orthodox nation, with sympathy, mobilized four of its military districts. On July 28 1914 Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and a week later World War I began.

2.4. The United States and Iraq

A. New Peril, Old Adversary: George W. Bush, 9/11, & Iraq

B. Deciding on the invasion, 2002-03

Class A: 10/17/17 (Tues); Class B: 10/19/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple – reports): Taking the Iraq Case to the UN Security Council, early 2003

This case is about the invasion and occupation of a country that is considered a strategic threat to a great power's interests. The case deals with long term diplomatic and strategic priorities, fear of consequences of military inaction, alliance building and deterioration, and challenges to post-war reconstruction.

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States was the undisputed global Superpower. Its military capabilities were unmatched and it was at the center of an expanding world capitalist system. Still, a solution to the strategic, political, and economic problems of the Middle East seemed to elude successive US administrations. In September 2001 an Islamist terrorist group, originating in the Middle East, attacked inside the United States, killing 3,000 people. The United States responded by invading Afghanistan, where the group's main bases were, overthrowing its government and establishing a new regime there. Meanwhile, Iraq, led by a radical nationalist party whom the Middle Eastern Islamists detested, refused to comply with demands to allow UN inspectors unfettered access to its weapons production facilities. The Bush Administration suspected that Iraq, with which the United States had fought a brief war in 1991, was producing weapons of mass destruction. In March 2003 the United

States and its allies invaded Iraq and removed its government. The invasion set off a series of wars that have lasted up to today.

SECTION 3: Strategies

3.1. The Rise of Islam

A. The Rise of Islam, 610-700

B. The Choices of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan

Class A: 10/24/17 (Tues); Class B: 10/26/17 (Thurs)

B assignments (multiple – reports): How to Treat Non-Muslims under Sharia Law (around 700)

This case is about the rise of a new religion and the consolidation of an empire that is built on the faith. The case deals with religious justifications for war and expansion, the establishment of *sharia* as a religiously-based legal code for the empire, and the incorporation of Christians, Jews, and other groups under Muslim rule.

Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan of the Umayyad dynasty ruled from Damascus as the caliph of the Islamic Empire from 685AD to 705AD. The first part of his reign coincided with the second Fitna, a time of civil war among Muslims, from which Abd al-Malik emerged victorious. By the time of his death the empire had expanded from the Middle East to north Africa, Central Asia, and parts of India, encompassing slightly less than one third of humanity at the time. The Caliph's biggest challenges were to build a strong state and economy, while integrating the different population groups, most of whom were not Muslims, under Islamic rule. Abd al-Malik saw himself as the key authority in both religious and secular matters and attempted to practice Sharia – Islamic law – so that it did not conflict with the needs of his empire or of the peoples within it.

3.2. The Dutch East India Company

A. The Birth of 'Jan Compagnie'

B. The One Hundred Options of Jan Pieterszoon Coen

Class A: 10/31/17 (Tues); Class B: 11/2/17 (Thurs)

B assignment (single): Jan Coen on His Strategy, 1620

This case is about the expansion of the Company in eastern Asia and its trading and financial operations. The case deals with patterns of trade and settlement, profit-making, forms of investment and financial rewards, the challenges of seaborne communication, and conquest and diplomacy along the coasts of Asia.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC), founded in 1602, dominated European trade in Asia for more than a century. From its bases in India, Indonesia, Malaya, Taiwan, and Japan it supplied Europe with spice, tea, porcelain, silk and other products. It also facilitated inter-Asian trade that was highly profitable. Through its ownership structure as a company owned by its shareholders and existing for their profit, the VOC revolutionized not only trade but also investment and finance. Its biggest challenges were its dependence on cooperation with Asian states as well as with Dutch authorities, the need to maximize profit for its investors, and the long lines of communication between its Amsterdam headquarters and the Governor General in Batavia (Jakarta). In the 18th century, as the Netherlands' influence in Europe declined, the VOC came under increasing pressure from its British competitors.

3.3. The Royal Navy

A. The British Navy in the 18th Century

B. The Navy Act, 1740

Class A: 11/7/17 (Tues); Class B: 11/9/17 (Thurs)

B assignment (multiple - statements): The Debate in Parliament on the Navy Act

This case is about the building of the British Royal Navy in the 18th century and how it became the most powerful military instrument in the world. The case deals with military leadership, procurement, recruitment, and the financing of the navy.

In the mid-18th century the Royal Navy was the most effective fighting force in the world; it won all the great battles at sea, and almost all the wars. It did so because its ships carried well-organized, well-drilled and coherent teams, working to a common cause, bound together by ambition and shared identity. The crews of British warships handled their sails and fired their guns more quickly than their rivals. The British also kept their ships cleaner, helping to reduce losses to disease. The fleet at sea was supported by the world's fastest growing economic base, a massive infrastructure of dockyards, food stores and equipment warehouses, all funded by a nation that saw its future as dependent on the seas. The Royal Navy laid the foundation for a century-and-a-half of British global predominance.

3.4. German Unification (1990)

A. The Division of Germany and the Cold War

B. The Two-Plus-Four Negotiations and the Unification of Germany

Class A: 11/14/17 (Tues); Class B: 11/16/17 (Thurs)

B assignment (multiple - statements): Two-Plus-Four Negotiations May 1990

This case is about the global position of the United States in the 1980s and President Bush's strategy towards eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the collapse of Communist rule. The case deals with Cold War strategies, state and ideological collapse, national reunification (Germany), avoiding

ethnic conflict and nuclear proliferation, and reconfiguring the international system after the fall of a Superpower.

Even though US-Soviet relations had been rapidly improving after Mikhail Gorbachev became Soviet leader in 1985, the Cold War still defined the international system when the eastern European revolutions of 1989 broke out. President George H.W. Bush had to find a US policy that encouraged change in Europe while avoiding a confrontation with the Soviets. This need became especially acute after the Communists lost control in East Germany and the country was heading towards unification. At the same time, Bush had to figure out how to approach the situation inside the Soviet Union in 1990 and 1991, as Gorbachev's reforms were stalling and he began to lose control of his own country.

3.5. The Rise of China Since the 1990s

A. China's Rise

B. China's Strategy in the South China Sea Today

Class A: 11/21/17 (Tues); Class B: 11/28/17 (Tues)

B assignments (multiple – simulation): CCP Politburo Debates South China Sea Strategies

This case is about defining a national strategy for China today. The case deals with identifications of national purpose, regional strategies, the relationship to the United States, the needs of the Chinese economy, and the positions taken by different groups within the Chinese leadership.

China today faces key choices about its international orientation. After a generation of rapid economic growth, China is now the most powerful country in Asia. But it has few friends among its neighbors and its form of government is different from that of most other countries. China's relationship with the United States, the world's predominant power in the post-Cold War era, veers between rivalry and accommodation. What would be the best strategy for China's leaders over the next five years, both with regard to its region and its relations with the United States?

Future Power Shifts?

Concluding lecture: 11/30/17 (Thurs)