

**TAIWAN SECURITY ISSUES**  
*Stanford University*  
*Spring Quarter 2024*  
*Version 2.0*

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**EASTASN 168/268**

*Time:* T-Th 10:30-11:50am

*Classroom:* 100-101K

*Canvas site:* [Sp24-EASTASN-168-02/268-01](https://canvas.libraries.stanford.edu/courses/168-02/268-01)

**Description:**

Taiwan has carved out a place for itself in the world that far outstrips its geographic size and population. With less than 24 million people, its economy is among the 20 largest in the world today, and Taiwanese firms, including its strategically important semiconductor industry, are key links in the multinational production chains that crisscross the Indo-Pacific. It is a major trading partner and long-standing friend of the United States in an increasingly volatile region. It is also one of the most successful cases in the Third Wave of democratization, and it remains by many measures the most liberal democracy in Asia.

Today, however, Taiwan is threatened by the rise of the authoritarian People’s Republic of China (PRC), an economic juggernaut and rapidly modernizing military power which asserts the right to rule over Taiwan and has relentlessly sought to extend the island’s diplomatic isolation and economic dependence on the Chinese mainland. As a consequence, Taiwan’s long-term security is as imperiled as any democracy in the world.

The cross-Strait relationship is crucial for regional and global security: it is still the one issue that could most plausibly draw the United States and the PRC into an armed conflict. Taiwan is also important as a democratic model: it provides a powerful counterexample to the argument that liberal democracy is inappropriate for Chinese-speaking or “Asian values” societies, including the PRC. And as one of the shining political successes of the Third Wave of democracy, its failure would be deeply tragic.

This course will provide a broad overview of Taiwan’s place in the security environment of East Asia, review different theoretical approaches for understanding the prospects for war or peace in the Taiwan Strait, and examine contemporary policy debates in the United States over how, or even whether, to continue to provide security assistance to the island.

Topics to be covered include:

- The history of US-Taiwan-PRC relations from 1945 to the present
- Taiwan’s contested sovereignty: its ambiguous status in the contemporary inter-state system, and the practical consequences of its diplomatic isolation
- Hard security issues: China’s rise, changes in the cross-Strait military balance, the US-Taiwan security partnership, and Taiwan defense and security planning and challenges
- Economic security issues: trends in cross-Strait trade and investment, Taiwan’s economic importance to the United States and other advanced economies, and PRC use of economic integration as a political tool
- Sharp power issues: PRC United Front strategy and tactics, “gray-zone” activities, covert and corrupting activities and the threats to democracy in Taiwan

- Taiwan's domestic politics: influence of PRC threats and activities on Taiwan's democratic politics, strengths and weaknesses of Taiwan's contemporary political system and impact on its security

### Course Materials:

#### *Required Books:*

Ryan Hass, Bonnie Glaser, and Richard Bush. 2023. *U.S.-Taiwan Relations: Will China's Challenge Lead to a Crisis?* Brookings Institution Press.

Scott Kastner. 2022. *War and Peace in the Taiwan Strait*. Columbia University Press.

Xin Qiang. 2022. *Mainland China's Taiwan Policy: From Peaceful Development to Selective Engagement*. Routledge.

Other readings will be posted to the Canvas site. Some of the readings are excerpts from books; these will be posted as pdfs or available electronically through Stanford Libraries. Most of the rest are also available online through Stanford University library's various electronic journal databases (e.g. MUSE, JSTOR).

#### *Newspaper Reading*

Because we will refer regularly to current events in this course, you are expected to follow the news in Taiwan on a daily basis. I recommend the *Taipei Times*, Taiwan's primary English-language daily newspaper, available online at [www.taipeitimes.com](http://www.taipeitimes.com), or [FocusTaiwan](http://FocusTaiwan), the English-language website of Taiwan's Central News Agency. In addition to these, I have posted a list of other online media resources (both English- and Chinese-language) on the Canvas site under Pages.

#### *Additional Readings and Resources*

I may occasionally assign other materials, and I will also post additional resources for your course assignments on the Canvas site. I also will make frequent use of the Canvas announcement tool and will keep you up to date on course assignments, activities, and any changes via that system, so double check that you can access your official Stanford email account to ensure you receive these notifications.

### Course Requirements:

#### *Attendance and Participation*

This course will include a mix of lecture and discussion. In general, I will use Thursday's class to introduce the topic and motivating questions for that week's material, and the next Tuesday's class will be a discussion of the readings. **Assigned readings for each week should be completed before the discussion.**

I expect students to attend every class. Missing a class meeting will have a significant impact on your ability to contribute to the course. More than two unexcused absences (those not due to religious exemptions, COVID-19-related or other major illnesses, or university-approved activities) will lower your participation grade one interval (e.g. A to A-) per absence. In addition, arriving late to class can be disruptive and is an inconvenience to the rest of us; habitual tardiness will likewise adversely affect your grade. If you think you might struggle regularly to attend the discussion sections, please contact me directly to work out an accommodation.

The simple rule of thumb here: if something outside your control comes up and prevents you from participating in class one day, let me know as early as you can, and we will find a way to get you caught up.

### *Discussion*

As befits an upper-level seminar, student-driven discussion is a central part of this course. To this end, you should come to our weekly discussion class prepared to talk about all the assigned readings. Note that the reading load is moderate-to-heavy, and that we will only hold discussion once a week; please plan accordingly.

### *Canvas Discussion Posts*

**Before 8am on the day of our discussion session**, please post a one- or-two paragraph question or comment about at least one of the assigned readings or recent news items to the Canvas discussion page. I will use these posts to structure our class discussion around what you find odd, perplexing, controversial, or otherwise worth talking about. This post can ask for a clarification—for instance, about evidence or the argument that you do not understand. Or it can be a substantive issue that you think would be helpful to discuss in class—for instance, how does a reading or recent development in Taiwan relate to something from the lecture? It can even be a critique—say, “this reading sucks, and here’s why!”—or a response to something one of your peers has written. These comments are due before every discussion class (i.e. once a week). You may miss up to two comments before your discussion grade is adversely affected.

I encourage you to use these discussion prompts to engage with each other as well. If one of your classmates posts a discussion question, you can also make your contribution for the week by responding to that question in the forum. This prompt is a chance for you to speak directly with (and argue with—respectfully, of course!) your peers.

A final note here: **if you are responsible for a recap or summary (see next item), you are not required to post a discussion question for that week**—just concentrate on preparing a good recap!

### *Recaps and Summaries*

At the beginning of each discussion class, we will have three students each give a ~5 minute summary of the previous lecture, a Taiwan speaker series talk, or a supplementary commentary article. This presentation should be verbal (so no power points or handouts!)—think of it as a “cliff notes” briefing of the topics discussed in the talk or article. This assignment has a couple objectives: to remind everyone what we previously covered, and to tee up that day’s discussion by presenting a policy debate laid out in the supplementary articles. You will each be responsible for giving one summary to the class. I will pass around a sign-up sheet for this assignment on Thursday, April 4.

### *Commentary Paper*

One of the most common forms of media content about Taiwan is the “commentary,” such as what you will find in online magazines like [The Diplomat](#), [Foreign Policy](#), [The National Interest](#), [The Atlantic](#), and (usually in longer form) [Foreign Affairs](#). These typically take one of two forms (and sometimes both): analysis or advocacy. An *analytical commentary* provides a detailed discussion of a contemporary political or social issue, informed by a theoretical framework that is meant to help the reader better understand what is happening and why. An *advocacy commentary* presents a clear opinion, often with a recommended set of principles, policies, or courses of action that the writer seeks to persuade readers should be followed.

To give you practice writing in this genre, you will write a commentary on one of the topics of the course. Your commentary should be on a topic of relevance to contemporary Taiwan security issues and should be clearly related to one of our motivating questions or themes. But you are otherwise free to choose the topic, the analytical framework and the position you wish to advocate for. To help stimulate your thinking, I have included several recent sample commentaries in Canvas. I will also schedule a time the week of April 22 to meet with you individually to discuss possible topics and resources.

The first draft of your commentary will be due on **Friday, May 10, by 5pm**. I will review these and provide feedback on your drafts, and you are encouraged to revise them. Final drafts are due on **Tuesday, June 11**, by noon. Submit your commentary by uploading the paper via the Canvas assignment feature. Your draft should be double-spaced and numbered, using 12-point Times New Roman font, with your name, class number, week and date in the upper left-hand corner. For references, it is now standard in these commentaries simply to include links within the text, [like so](#), rather than footnotes or a bibliography.

#### *Credit Units: 4.0 vs 5.0*

The default unit number for this course is 4.0 credits. If you wish to register for the 5.0 credit option, you will be asked to write a longer commentary, on the order of 4-5000 words rather than 1000-1200. This is the only additional requirement to earn the extra unit.

#### *Midterm Exam*

On May 16 at the end of class, you will be given a take-home midterm exam covering all of the material from lectures, discussion, and readings up to that point. The midterm will also include a set of essay prompts from which you may choose two to respond to. The midterm exam is due on May 21 at the beginning of class.

#### *Class Debates*

In the last week of the course, we will put to use what we have learned over the quarter by holding a set of class debates. You will be assigned to teams of three people; each team will square off against another team in a 20 minute debate on a major question in the course (e.g. “Resolved: The U.S. should switch to strategic clarity.”) I will provide more details on the format and evaluation system later in the quarter.

#### **Grading:**

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- |                                      |     |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| • Participation:                     |     | 30% |
| ○ Attendance:                        | 10% |     |
| ○ Discussion (on Canvas & in class): | 10% |     |
| ○ Lecture recap or article summary:  | 10% |     |
| • Commentary:                        |     | 30% |
| • Midterm exam:                      |     | 25% |
| • Final debate presentation:         |     | 15% |

#### **Other Stuff:**

##### *Privacy and Security Concerns*

Some of the topics we will cover in this course may be politically sensitive. Our class sessions will not be open to the public or recorded, and they are accessible only to registered Stanford students and auditors that I have explicitly approved. However, this course will also include the option to attend events sponsored by the Hoover Institution’s Project on Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific Region, including the project’s speaker series and annual conference. These events will be public. In addition, I may invite special guests with expertise relevant to our course to join our discussions as opportunities arise. I encourage your direct participation in these events and engagement with our guest speakers. But,

recognizing that some students may be uncomfortable appearing in public forums, active engagement in these sessions is not required. If you have concerns about privacy or security, please contact me directly.

### *Email*

Email is the easiest way to reach me—I check frequently, and I will do my best to reply promptly. (The one exception is on the weekends, when I do not normally answer email: I will respond on Monday.) I will also send important class announcements to your email account via the Canvas announcement function, so please make sure you have a working Stanford email address and check it regularly.

### *Office Hours (Herbert Hoover Memorial Building, Room 311)*

Office hours are for your benefit. I urge you to come to my office hours to talk about any questions you may have about the class or to discuss a topic touched upon in class or in the readings. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, I am happy to schedule individual appointments.

### *Academic Dishonesty*

Per the university Honor Code, academic dishonesty includes “all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism.” This includes the use of AI to generate an essay without permission from your instructor, and swapping answers with a classmate during the midterm exam. Simply put, don’t do it. If I suspect that you have plagiarized a paper or cheated on an exam, I will follow university procedures to the letter, up to and including receiving a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Dishonesty has no place in the classroom. If you are not sure what constitutes a violation of this policy, please ask!

### *Special Accommodations*

I am happy to work with students who feel they may require an accommodation for observance of religious holidays, for a disability, or for other kinds of personal issues that may arise over the term. If you anticipate needing a special accommodation, please see me during office hours, preferably early in the term.

I also repost this notice from the Office of Accessible Education (OAE):

*“Stanford is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students. Disabled students are a valued and essential part of the Stanford community. We welcome you to our class.*

*If you experience disability, please register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate your needs, support appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Academic Accommodation Letter for faculty. To get started, or to re-initiate services, please visit [oea.stanford.edu](http://oea.stanford.edu).*

*If you already have an Academic Accommodation Letter, we invite you to share your letter with us. Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared at the earliest possible opportunity so we may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course.”*

And this statement of the University’s Campus Disruption Policy (adopted in 1967):

*“Because the rights of free speech and peaceable assembly are fundamental to the democratic process, Stanford firmly supports the rights of all members of the University community to express their views or to protest against actions and opinions with which they disagree.*

*All members of the University also share a concurrent obligation to maintain on the campus an atmosphere conducive to scholarly pursuits, to preserve the dignity and seriousness of University ceremonies and public exercises, and to respect the rights of all individuals.*

*The following regulations are intended to reconcile these objectives.*

*It is a violation of University policy for a member of the faculty, staff, or student body to:*

- 1. Prevent or disrupt the effective carrying out of a University function or approved activity, such as classes, lectures, meetings, interviews, ceremonies, the conduct of University business in a University office, and public events.*
- 2. Obstruct the legitimate movement of any person about the campus or in any University building or facility.*

## Tentative Schedule

### 0. Introduction: Taiwan and Its Place in the World

**Tuesday, April 2.** Introductions, Overview of Course, Historical Background

Readings:

1. Kastner, *War and Peace in the Taiwan Strait*, Introduction
2. Hass-Glaser-Bush, Intro and Ch. 1.

### 1. The “Taiwan Problem” in the Inter-State System

**Thursday, April 4.** Lecture

Required Readings:

1. Kastner Ch. 1
2. Stephen D. Krasner, 2001, “Problematic Sovereignty,” Ch. 1 in *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities*. Columbia University Press.
3. Robert Madsen, 2001, “The Struggle for Sovereignty between China and Taiwan,” in *Problematic Sovereignty*

Commentaries:

- Eliot Cohen, “Telling the Truth about Taiwan,” *The Atlantic*, October 2023
- Michael Swaine, “The Worrying Erosion of the One China Policy,” *The National Interest*, February 2023.

*Supplementary Readings:*

- Hoopes and Brinkely, 1997, *FDR and the Creation of the UN*, excerpts
- Chengxin Pan, 2012, “Normative Convergence and Cross-Strait Divergence: Westphalian Sovereignty as an Ideational Source of Conflict,” in *New Thinking about the Taiwan Issue*.
- Jessica Drun and Bonnie Glaser, “The Distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and Limits on Taiwan’s Access to the United Nations,” German Marshall Fund report, March 2022.
- David Lake, 2009, “The State and International Relations,” *Oxford Handbook of International Relations*.

**Tuesday, April 9.** Discussion

### 2. Systemic Explanations of War: The Security Dilemma across the Taiwan Strait

**Thursday, April 11.** Lecture

Required Readings:

1. Kastner Ch. 2
2. Jack S. Levy, 2008, “Power Transition Theory and the Rise of China,” in *China’s Ascent*.
3. Adam Liff and Ikenberry, 2014, “Racing Toward Tragedy?: China’s Rise, Military Competition in the Asia-Pacific, and the Security Dilemma.” *International Security* 39(2): 52-91.

Commentaries:

- Michelle Flournoy and Mike Brown, “Time Is Running Out to Defend Taiwan,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 2022.
- Andrew Nathan, “Beijing Is Still Playing the Long Game on Taiwan,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 2022.

Supplementary readings:

- Kenneth Waltz, 1988, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory.” In Rothberg and Rabb, *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*.
- Robert Jervis, 1978, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*
- Stephen Van Evera, 1998, “Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War,” *International Security*

**Tuesday, April 16:** Discussion

<b>3. Hierarchies, Alliances, and Security Cooperation: Taiwan as a Client State</b>
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**Thursday, April 18.** Lecture

Required Readings:

1. Kastner, Ch. 3
2. Hass, Glaser, Bush, Ch. 2-3
3. Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper, 2016, “To Arm or To Ally?: The Patron’s Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances,” *International Security* 41(2): 90-139.

Commentaries:

- Charles Glaser, “Washington is Avoiding the Tough Questions on Taiwan and China: The Case for Reconsidering U.S. Commitments in Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 2021.
- Andrew Erickson, Gabriel Collins, and Matt Pottinger, “The Taiwan Catastrophe: What America—and the World—Would Lose If China Took the Island.” *Foreign Affairs*, February 2024.

Supplementary Readings:

- David Lake, 2011, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, introduction
- James Morrow, 1991, “Alliances and Asymmetry,” *American Journal of Political Science*
- James Morrow, 1993, “Arms versus Allies,” *International Organization*
- Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, 1990, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks,” *International Organization*

**Tuesday, April 23.** Discussion

<b>4. Domestic Influences on Foreign Policy: Democracy in Taiwan</b>
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**Thursday, April 25.** Lecture



## Readings:

1. Kharis Templeman, "Taiwan's Transition to Democracy and Beyond (1986-2024)," forthcoming in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Taiwan*.
2. Kastner, Ch. 4
3. Xin Qiang, *Mainland China's Taiwan Policy*, Ch 1-3

## Commentaries:

- Tanner Greer, September 2019, "Why Taiwan's Defense Strategy Makes No Sense," *Foreign Affairs*
- Raymond Kuo, December 2021, "The Counter-Intuitive Sensibility of Taiwan's New Defense Strategy," *War on the Rocks*.

## Supplementary readings:

- Kenneth Schultz, 2013, "Domestic Politics and International Relations," Sage Handbook
- James Lee Ray, 1998, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?" *Annual Review of Political Science*
- Michael W. Doyle, 1986, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review*
- Stan Hwok-wei Wong and Nicole Wu, 2016, "Can Beijing Buy Taiwan?" *Journal of Contemporary China*

**Tuesday, April 30.** Discussion + *Guest Presentation by Scott Lai*

*Scott Lai is the Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in San Francisco, one of Taiwan's de facto consulates in the United States. He is a career diplomat in Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).*

**5. Rationalist Explanations of War: Information Asymmetries and Commitment Problems across the Taiwan Strait**
**Thursday, May 2.** Lecture + *Virtual Conversation with Laura Rosenberger*

*Laura Rosenberger is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), a position she has served in since March 2023. Prior to her appointment as chairwoman, she served in a variety of roles at the State Department and the National Security Council in the Biden Administration.*

## Readings:

1. Kastner, 2022, *War and Peace in the Taiwan Strait*, Ch 5-8.

## Commentaries:

- Hal Brands, "U.S. Deterrence in Taiwan is Failing," *Foreign Policy*, September 2023.
- Elbridge Colby, "America Must Prepare for a War Over Taiwan," *Foreign Affairs*, August 2022.
- Glaser, Christensen and Weiss, "Taiwan and the True Sources of Deterrence," *Foreign Affairs*, November 2023.
- Raymond Kuo, Michael Hunzeker and Mark Christopher, "Scared Strait: How Should America Deter China from Attacking Taiwan?" & rebuttal

## Supplementary Readings:

- James Fearon, 1995, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*
- Robert Powell, 2002, “Bargaining Theory and International Conflict,” *Annual Review of Political Science*
- Robert Powell, 2006, “War as a Commitment Problem,” *International Organization*

**Tuesday, May 7.** Discussion

<b>6. Sharp Power: Non-Military Coercion across the Taiwan Strait</b>
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**Thursday, May 9.** Lecture

Readings:

1. Xin Qiang, *Mainland China's Taiwan Policy*, Ch. 4 & conclusion
2. Hass, Glaser, Bush, Ch. 3
3. Wendy Cheng, 2023, *Island X: Taiwanese Migrants, Campus Spies, and Cold War Activism*, Introduction and Ch. 1, pp. 1-47.

Commentaries:

- Thomas Shattuck and Benjamin Lewis, “How Taiwan’s New President Should Respond to Chinese Coercion,” *War on the Rocks*, January 2024.
- Pratik Jakhar, “China’s Economic Coercion Is More Bark Than Bite,” *Foreign Policy*, October 2021

*Supplementary Readings:*

- David A. Baldwin, 2013, “Power and International Relations,” Sage Handbook
- Christopher Walker, Shanti Kalathil, and Jessica Ludwig, 2020, “The Cutting Edge of Sharp Power,” *Journal of Democracy*
- Kharis Templeman, 2020, “How Taiwan Stands Up to China,” *Journal of Democracy*
- David Stilwell, 2020, “Covert, Coercive, and Corrupting: Countering the Chinese Communist Party’s Malign Influence in Free Societies,” remarks delivered at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

**\*\*\* Commentary Drafts Due, Friday, May 10, 5pm \*\*\***

**Tuesday, May 14.** Discussion – *with special guest Wendy Cheng,*

*Wendy Cheng is Professor of American Studies at Scripps College, and author of Island X: Taiwanese Student Migrants, Campus Spies, and Cold War Activism. She is speaking on her book on May 13 from 2-3:30pm at the Hoover Institution, Stauffer Auditorium*

**Thursday, May 16** – Class review for midterm exam.

**\*\*\*Take-home midterm exam distributed at the end of class\*\*\***

<b>7. Wrap Up: Current Debates over Taiwan's Security</b>
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**Tuesday, May 21** – Lecture: Major debates in the Taiwan security community

**\*\*\*Midterm Exams due at beginning of class\*\*\***

Required Readings:

- Matt Pottinger, ed., *The Boiling Moat: Urgent Steps to Defend Taiwan*. Forthcoming from Hoover Institution Press. Excerpts TBD.

**Thursday, May 23.** NO CLASS – Attend Project on Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific Region Conference.

**Tuesday, May 28.** Discussion class: Taiwan conference and May 21 Lecture

**Thursday, May 30. Student Debates**

**Tuesday, June 4. Last Class – Student Debates**

**Tuesday, June 11. FINAL COMMENTARY PAPER DUE AT NOON, UPLOADED TO CANVAS**

GOOD LUCK ON FINALS AND HAVE A GREAT SUMMER BREAK!