

**International Relations Program  
Winter 20/21**

**Course title:**

Geopolitical Games: Foreign Policy of China and Russia

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Dr. Anastassia V. Obydenkova

**Professor's contact and office hours:**

[Anastassia.Obydenkova@eui.eu](mailto:Anastassia.Obydenkova@eui.eu) (office hours by appointment)

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 3 US credits – 6 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:**

- Interest in studies of foreign policy, interest in Russia and/or in China.
- Previous background in international relations or comparative politics would be an advantage but it is not a formal requirement.

**Language requirements:** English

**Course focus and approach:** Foreign Policy, Russia, China, USA, Eurasia, Covid-19, International Relations, Comparative Politics

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**Course description:**

Russia is the largest state in the world by *landmass*. China is the second *economically strongest* state in the world, after the USA. Russia and China occupy the second and the third place in the world in terms of the *military strength* (after the USA, being the first). Russia and China are the biggest and strongest (military and economically) actors of foreign policy in Eurasia, and significant actors of the world politics. Analysis of foreign policy of China and Russia is crucial for understanding world politics and global governance.

This course offers insights into foreign policy of Russia and China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with special focus on their overlapping geopolitical goals and strategies in Eurasia, as well as their complicated relations with the USA, covering the presidency of Barak Obama and Donald Trump, as well as outlining perspective for policy-making of new US president. The emergence and the impact of COVID-19 on foreign policy of Russia and China, its implications for Russia-USA-China triangle of foreign policy will also be covered by this course.

Both states are located in Eurasia. They have overlapping interests, competing goals, and they face sometimes similar external challenges. The course offers insights into strategy of foreign policy of both states, contrasting and comparing their geopolitical battles. The course is structured in the following way: (1) theory of foreign policy analysis; (2) historical legacies in foreign policy; (3) goals and challenges of foreign policies of two states; (4) shared geopolitical space (struggle over the dominance in Central Asia); (5) implications of their foreign policies and their impact on the region. The topics above will

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be discussed within the context of specific case-studies. This course examines comparatively the development of foreign policy of China and Russia in Eurasia (so-called “near abroad”) and in the World Politics. The first part of the course will focus on foreign policy of Russia and China in Eurasia. The second part of the course will focus on foreign policy of both states in global context. It will look at how both states deal with these challenges. Moreover, the course will focus on the analysis of the strategies employed by China and Russia in terms of their own cooperation as well as competition over geopolitical space (e.g., access to energy resources).

### Learning objectives:

The goals of the course are:

- To acquire practical knowledge of analysis of foreign policy;
- To familiarize with historical legacies in foreign policy of China and Russia;
- To develop ability to compare and contrast the strategy of foreign policies;
- To identify goals of foreign policy (security, economic and political development);
- To place foreign policy of Russia and China within a global context of world politics.

**Course workload:** Reading material assigned per each class, participation in class discussions, in-class assignments, team-working (groups’ presentations), individual presentations, midterm exam and final exam.

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### Teaching methodology:

The course has 22 sessions, combination of lectures and seminars (one lecture and one seminar each week). Lectures are interactive. The seminars are based on groups’ presentations and individual presentations. Presenters are required to use power point to discuss one of the required or recommended readings and to consider 5 questions in the end of the presentation. The questions must be stated on the last slide of power point and are meant to initiate and lead the class discussion. The evaluation of the presentation includes the quality of the questions and the discussion. The power point must be sent to Dr. Obydenkova 48 hours before the presentation *including* the questions for discussion on the last slide (earlier submissions will be appreciated).

### Assessment criteria (adjusted to *digital* format):

The overall grade is calculated based on attendance, participation, team-working (groups’ presentations), individual presentations, midterm exam and final exam.

- Participation in discussions (20%)
- Groups’ presentations (30%)
- Individual Presentations *and* follow-up discussion (30%)
- In-class digital mid-term exam (10%): covers 1<sup>st</sup> half of the course.
- In-class digital final exam (10%): covers only 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the course

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**Absence policy:** Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE (“NO PRESENTAT”) for the course

The PEHE/HESP attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency, etc.) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the program.

**Classroom norms:**

- Keep your webcams on.
- Please keep your microphones off (during lectures)
- Your punctuality matters (even more so, in digital format).
- Students will have a 15-minute break after the first hour of each session.

**Weekly schedule**

*(can be slightly adjusted to the number of students)*

**WEEK 1 (Classes 1-2): Introduction to Foreign Policy. China and Russia: Regional and Global Approaches**

What are the driving forces of foreign policy of a state? How can we explain the difference between the strategies of foreign policy of the states? This session provides introduction to foreign policy analysis and two states under study (Russia and China). The session will introduce students to geopolitical games in Eurasia. It will focus on main so-called “game-players” – the European Union, the US, Russia and China. It will focus on the overlapping interests and challenges as well as on compatibility and conflict in Eurasia. The session will introduce the concept of “international security” into debate.

*Required reading:*

Edward Mansfield, Helen Milner and Peter Rosendorff (2002), “Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral Control and International Trade Agreements,” *International Organization*, 56, 477–513;

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Larson, D.W., and A. Shevchenko (2010) Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to the U.S. Primacy. *International Security* 34:63-95 (Global Approach)

*Suggested reading:*

Anastassia V. Obydenkova and Philippe Schmitter (2020) “Real Existing Democracies” and “Real Existing Autocracies” Their Relation to Regional Integration and Regional Cooperation”, *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Volume 16, No. 1, pp. 1-25.

Bueno de Mesquita, B., and A. Smith (2012) Domestic Explanations of International Relations. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:161-181

Kurt Taylor Gaubatz (1996), “Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations”, *International Organization* 50, 109-139.

Pevehouse, J.C. (2002a). With a Little Help from my Friends? Regional Organizations and the Consolidation of Democracy. *American Journal of Political Science* 46: 611-626

Peceny, M., Beer, C.C., and S. Sanchez-Terry (2002) Dictatorial Peace? *American Political Science Review* 96:15-26

Libman, A., and Obydenkova, A., (2018) “The Challenge of Authoritarian Regionalism” in *Journal of Democracy*, 29(4). (Regional Approach)

**WEEK 2 (Classes 3-4): Foreign Policy of Russia: “Near Abroad”**

How do understand the foreign policy of modern Russia? How do historical legacies account for foreign policy and strategy of this state? What are the motivations behind the actions? What are the elements of decision-making in foreign policy of Russia? This session will introduce students to Russian foreign policy in so-called “near abroad”, that is, Russia’s relations with former Soviet Republics: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asian Republics. The class will consider a few questions to this end. For example: How Russia accounts for current protests in Belarus 2020? What was Russia’s involvement in Ukraine? Etc.

*Required reading:*

Allison, R. (2017) Russia and the post-2014 International Legal Order: Revisionism and Realpolitik. *International Affairs* 93: 519-543

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Sierakowski, Sławomir. (2020) "Belarus Uprising: The Making of a Revolution." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 31 no. 4, 2020, p. 5-16. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/jod.2020.0051](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0051).

*Further reading:*

- Obydenkova, A., and A. Libman (2014) Understanding the Foreign Policy of Autocratic Actors: Ideology or Pragmatism? Russia and the Tymoshenko Trial as a Case Study. *Contemporary Politics* 20: 347-364
- Mikhail Molchanov (2018) Russian–European relations in the Balkans and Black Sea region: Great Power identity and the idea of Europe” Book Review, *International Affairs*, 94(3), 679–680.
- Whewell, Tim. 2014. “The Russians Fighting a ‘Holy War’ in Ukraine.” *BBC News Magazine* December 17. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30518054>
- Kudelia, S. (2014) The House that Yanukovych Built. *Journal of Democracy* 25:19-34
- Mankoff, Jeffrey. 2014. “Russia’s Latest Land Grab: How Putin Won Crimea and Lost Ukraine.” *Foreign Affairs* 93(3): 60–68

**WEEK 3 (Classes 5-6):**

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**Russia in Regional International Organizations: the CIS.**

The session investigates whether and how regional organizations created by Russia can be used for the regime survival of their member-states. Numerous regions of the world have witnessed a proliferation of regional organizations set up by powerful authoritarian states. The session analyzes how these organizations can indeed matter for the external influences on regime survival and eventual consolidation. The session will focus on the case of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (both international organizations founded and sponsored by Russia) to explore various strategies of Russia vis-à-vis different countries of the post-Soviet Eurasia. The session will help students to learn to identify strategic models of behavior of a leading state. The class will evaluate the benefits of the strategy for both a leading state and targeted states.

*Required reading:*

- Kubicek, P. (2009) The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Example of Failed Regionalism? *Review of International Studies* 35:237-256
- Libman, A., and A. Obydenkova (2013) Informal Governance and Participation in Non-Democratic International Organizations. *Review of International Organizations* 8:221-243.

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**WEEK 4 (Classes 7-8):**

**Russia, the EU, and the USA:  
The phenomenon of the Eurasian Economic Union**

This week will proceed discussing the strategy of Russia of creation of new regional organizations and how they used to influence and control “near abroad”. The session will focus on the case of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), also established and sponsored by Russia. It further explores various strategies of Russia vis-à-vis the European Union, the USA, and countries of the post-Soviet Eurasia. The session will help students to learn to identify strategic models of behavior of a leading state. The class will evaluate the benefits of the strategy for both a leading state and targeted states; and the role of the EU and the US presence in Central Asia – as factors driving the direction and strategy of foreign policy of Russia in Eurasia.

*Required:*

Libman, A., and A. Obydenkova (2018) “Regional International Organizations as a Strategy of Autocracy: The Eurasian Economic Union and Russian foreign policy” *International Affairs* 94 (5), pp. 1037–1058; ([Oxford University Press website](#)).

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**WEEK 5 (Classes 9-10): Presentation of Groups:**

**Class 9:**

Russia and the USA: 1917 – 1990

**Class 10:**

China and the USA: 1920 - 1990

**WEEK 6 (Classes 11-12):**

Summary of foreign policy of China and Russia in Eurasia and Mid-term Exam. This week is dedicated to summary of the topics that have been covered in previous sessions, consultations on group’s presentations, and a mid-term exam. Mid-term exam takes place during Class 12. To help students to prepare well for the mid-term exam, **there will be no readings assigned for this week.**

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**Week 7**

**Foreign Policy of China and Russia: Overlapping Geopolitics**

The session will introduce students to geopolitical overlapping strategies of China and Russia through the case-study of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO has a bipolar structure, with Russia and China being the key members. The SCO has also a very clear focus on its security agenda. The session will analyze the role of the SCO in some political issues (e.g., resolving border conflicts between Eurasian countries and China). The session introduce both cooperation and conflict between Russia and China (e.g., while China has shown some interest in advancing its economic agenda, Russia has consistently blocked such efforts). Finally, the role of the SCO in Eurasia and beyond will also be discussed. That is, the session will consider some of the aspects of complex relationship between the SCO, Europe, the US, and Iran. The session will place the role of the SCO within global focus considering its strategy and impact.

*Required reading:*

Bailes, A. (2007) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Europe. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5: 13-18 (5 pages)

Artyom Matusov Energy Cooperation in the SCO: Club or Gathering? *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5: **83-101**

*Further reading:*

Paul Kubicek (1997) Regionalism, Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 637-655

Frost, A. (2009) The Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Russia's Strategic Goals in Central Asia. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7:83-102.

Song, W. (2014) Interest, Power and China's Difficult Game in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. *Journal of Contemporary China* 23:85-101

Yuan, J.-D. (2010) China's Role in Establishing and Building the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). *Journal of Contemporary China* 19:855-869

Germanovich, G. (2008) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Threat to American Interests in Central Asia? *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 6:19-38

Ambrosio, T. (2008) Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:1321-1344.

Rahman, K. (2011) Central Asia, Energy Security and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. *Policy Perspectives* 8: 65-76

Brummer, M. (2007) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Iran: A Power-Ful Union. *Journal of International Affairs* 60:185-198.

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**WEEK 8 (Classes 13-14): China in the World Politics**

The session discusses so-called “new diplomacy” of China in the world. The session continues with analysis of the role of China beyond the region of Eurasia. What tools does China use in its foreign policy? The session will look into international development finance and regional development banks and the role of China. Specifically, the case-study will be dedicated to understanding the functioning of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

*Required reading:*

- Parton, Charles (2020) "Revealing China's "Hidden Hand"." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 31 no. 4, 2020, p. 182-185. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/jod.2020.0064](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0064).
- Shaun Breslin (2009) "Understanding China's regional rise: Interpretations, identities and implications" *International Affairs* 85: 4, 817–835

*Further reading:*

- Hui, Victoria Tin-bor. "Crackdown: Hong Kong Faces Tiananmen 2.0." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 31 no. 4, 2020, p. 122-137. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/jod.2020.0060](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0060).
- Denny Roy (2005) Southeast Asia and China: Balancing or Bandwagoning? *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 2: 305–22
- Rosemary Foot (2006) "Chinese strategies in a US-hegemonic global order: accommodating and hedging" *International Affairs* 82, no. 1: 77-94
- Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones (2018) "China challenges global governance? Chinese international development finance and the AIIB" *International Affairs*, 94(3), 573–593.
- Medeiros, Evan and Taylor Fravel. 2003. "China's New Diplomacy." *Foreign Affairs* , 82 (6): 22–35
- Masanori Hasegawa (2018) "The geography and geopolitics of the renminbi: a regional key currency in Asia" in *International Affairs*, 94(3), pp. 535–552.
- Johnson, K. (2015) China Invests Billions in Its 'All-Weather Friendship' With Pakistan. *Foreign Policy* <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/china-invests-billions-in-its-all-weather-friendship-with-pakistan-silk-road-gwadar-indian-ocean/> Accessed on 11 March, 2016
- Evan Osnos, "Making China Great Again," *The New Yorker*, 8 Jan 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/08/making-china-great-again>
- Edward Wong, "A Chinese Empire Reborn", *The New York Times*, 5 January 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/sunday-review/china-military-economic-power.html>
- Anja Manuel, "China is Quietly Reshaping the World," *The Atlantic*, 17 October 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/china-belt-and-road/542667/>
- Rohini Kamal and Kevin Gallagher, "China goes global with development banks," *Bretton Woods Project*, 2016. <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2016/04/20508/>



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**WEEK 9 (Classes 17-18): The USA, Russia, and China: Groups' Presentations**

The week will be dedicated to the analysis of relationship between China, Russia, and the US. The class will analyze the cooperation as well as tensions among these states and project this into understanding foreign policy of these actors to each other. It requires analysis of China, Russia, and the US as economic partners and political rivals. The class will discuss interrelationship between trade partnership and foreign policies of two states with special focus for administration of Barack Obama and Donald Trump comparatively. The class will discuss similarities and differences of the US-China relations and US-Russia over the period of 2000 - 2021. The session will analyze the foreign policy strategy of China and Russia and its implications for world politics within the officially declared China paradigm of "peace, modernization, and development", on the one hand. On the other hand, foreign policy of China is also based on Princeton of "territorial integrity" and its implications for separatism. The session will focus on a few key-issues of China and Russia foreign strategy and the impact of COVID-19 on national and foreign policies of these states.

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**Class 17:**

Russia and the USA: 2000 - 2021

**Class 18:**

China and the USA: 2000 - 2021

*Required reading:*

Brook, S.G. and W.C. Wohlforth (2016) The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century. China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position. *International Security* 40:7-53

*Further reading:*

Bader, J. (2015) China, Autocratic Patron? An Empirical Investigation of China as a Factor in Authoritarian Survival. *International Studies Quarterly* 59:23-33

Yee, Andy. 2010. "China and the West: The Hedgehog's Dilemma."

*OpenDemocracyNet* March 9. Retrieved from

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/andy-yee/china-and-west-hedgehogs-dilemma>

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**WEEK 10: Foreign Policy of China and Russia: Regional and Global (US)**

The session will cover the main issues in the US-Russia relations starting from the 1990s till 2021. Special focus will be on the administration of Barack Obama and Russia, followed up by modern relations under president of Donald Trump and Russia. The class will discuss the issues of relations between NATO and Russia, conflict over the Ukraine and Syria. The class will discuss similarities and differences of the US-Russia relations over the period of 2009-2017 vs. 2017-2019.

This session has double aim: to address a few main issues in foreign policy of China and Russia beyond its “near abroad” and to conclude on the main discussions of the course. The session will discuss the case-study of Russia and Syria and Russia and the EU. The session will look separately into complex impact of international ties on Russia – democratic western influences (coming from the European Union) and autocratic external influences (associated with Soviet historical legacies and former Soviet trade ties).

*Required reading:*

Allison, R. (2013) Russia and Syria: Explaining Alignment with a Regime in a Crisis. *International Affairs* 89: 795-823

Jeffrey Mankoff (2012) “The politics of US missile defense cooperation with Europe and Russia”, *International Affairs* 88: 2, 329-347

*Further reading:*

Legvold, Robert. 2014. “The New Cold War: What Moscow and Washington Can Learn from the Previous One.” *Foreign Affairs* 93 (July/August): 74–84

Nexon, Daniel. 2014. “The ‘Failure’ of the ‘Reset:’ Obama’s Great Mistake? Or Putin’s?” *Washington Post’s* Blog Monkey Cage March 4. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/04/the-failure-of-the-reset-obamas-great-mistake-or-putinss/>

**WEEK 11 (Classes 21-22): Conclusions, Consultations, and Final Exam**

This week is dedicated to summary of the entire course, individual consultations on mid-term exam; individual feedback on overall performance. Final exam takes place during Class 22. Class 21 will provide detailed instructions on preparation for the final exam. **To help students to prepare for the final exam, there will be no readings assigned for this week.**

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**Suggested Readings:**

Obydenkova, Anastassia V. & Alexander Libman (2019) *Authoritarian Regionalism in the World of International Organizations: Global Perspective and Eurasian Enigma* ISBN 9780198839040 Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York

Allison, R. (2017) Russia and the post-2014 International Legal Order: Revisionism and Realpolitik. *International Affairs* 93: 519-543

Allison, R. (2013) Russia and Syria: Explaining Alignment with a Regime in a Crisis. *International Affairs* 89: 795-823

Bailes, A. (2007) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Europe. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5: 13-18

Brook, S.G. and W.C. Wohlforth (2016) The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century. China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position. *International Security* 40:7-53

Brummer, M. (2007) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Iran: A Power-Ful Union. *Journal of International Affairs* 60:185-198.

Bueno de Mesquita, B., and A. Smith (2012) Domestic Explanations of International Relations. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15:161-181

Frost, A. (2009) The Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Russia's Strategic Goals in Central Asia. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7:83-102.

Germanovich, G. (2008) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Threat to American Interests in Central Asia? *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 6:19-38

Ikenberry, John. 2008. "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs* 87(1): 23-37

Kubicek, P. (2009) The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Example of Failed Regionalism? *Review of International Studies* 35:237-256

Legvold, Robert. 2014. "The New Cold War: What Moscow and Washington Can Learn from the Previous One." *Foreign Affairs* 93 (July/August): 74-84

Libman, A., and A. Obydenkova (2013) Informal Governance and Participation in Non-Democratic International Organizations. *Review of International Organizations* 8:221-243.

Libman, A., and Obydenkova, A., (2018) "The Challenge of Authoritarian Regionalism" in *Journal of Democracy*, 29(4).

Larson, D.W., and A. Shevchenko (2010) Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to the U.S. Primacy. *International Security* 34:63-95

Mankoff, Jeffrey. 2014. "Russia's Latest Land Grab: How Putin Won Crimea and Lost Ukraine." *Foreign Affairs* 93(3): 60-68

Medeiros, Evan and Taylor Fravel. 2003. "China's New Diplomacy." *Foreign Affairs* 82 (6): 22-35

Obydenkova, Anastassia V. & Alexander Libman (2019) *Authoritarian Regionalism in the World of International Organizations: Global Perspective and Eurasian Enigma* Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York

Obydenkova, A., and A. Libman (2014) Understanding the Foreign Policy of Autocratic Actors: Ideology or Pragmatism? Russia and the Tymoshenko Trial as a Case Study. *Contemporary Politics* 20: 347-364

Rahman, K. (2011) Central Asia, Energy Security and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. *Policy Perspectives* 8: 65-76

Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones (2018) "China challenges global governance? Chinese international development finance and the AIIB" *International Affairs*, 94(3), 573-593.