

Course Information

Course Number: INTA 709
Course Title: China's Military
Section: One
Time: 6:30-9:10pm Thursday
Location: 7th Floor DC Teaching Site
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Professor Dennis Wilder
Office: *Location*
E-Mail: dennisw@ix.netcom.com
Office Hours: 4-6pm Thursday

Course Description

This course provides the opportunity to read and assess a significant sample of the growing body of publicly available literature on the rapidly modernizing Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). The course focus on the rising threat it poses to the United States and its neighbors, will review the guerilla origins of the PLA, and its modernization priorities. The course assesses the PLA in terms of its role in promoting CCP Chairman Xi Jinping's goal of China's political, economic, and military primacy in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. In addition to gaining a strong analytic understanding of the Chinese military, students will also gain new skills at writing the premier US intelligence product, the President's Daily Brief, using the analytic techniques of intelligence analysts, and developing an understanding of comparative military analysis.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Learning Outcomes

- A comprehensive understanding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.
- A comprehensive understanding of US strategic efforts to confront this near peer adversary.
- The ability to analyze Chinese weapons systems using the techniques of the President's Daily Brief.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

Required: Joel Wuthnow & Phillip C. Saunders. *China's Quest for Military Supremacy* (Polity Press 2025).

Required: Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, & Michael A. McDevitt. *Chinese*

Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949 (East Gate Books, 2003).

Recommended: Fiona S. Cunningham, *Under the Nuclear Shadow—China's Information-Age Weapons in International Security* (Princeton University Press, 2025)

Grading Policy

- Define a grading scale for the assignment of a letter grade (A through F) or the criteria for assigning S/U grades as appropriate.
- Describe the graded items for the course.
- Indicate weights as applicable for grade items included in calculating the course grade (e.g., exams, laboratory assignments, field student work, projects, papers, homework, class attendance, participation, and other graded activities).
- **The following sections can be added as necessary or deleted if not needed.**

Course Requirements

- Class presentation on regional relations (choose a country) with the PLA
- **Two analytic memos (2 pages each) on a new PLA weapon in development**
- First Trial Run PDB
- Second Graded PDB
- A final (8 page) take home essay exam.

Course Assessment

Students' final grades will be based on the following breakdown. The first analytic memo will not count toward your grade although I will assign them letter grades to let you know how well you have completed the assignment. The grading will be based on the quality of your analytic performance. The logic and depth of your analysis is what I wish to see rather than feeding back to me the analytic views that I express.

- Class discussion and presentation on PLA relations with a foreign military (30%)
- Two analytic memos (30%)
- Final exam (40%)

Attendance

It is important that students attend every class as this is, in part, a lecture course. Absences will be excused as long as the student informs the professor in advance.

Late Work Policy

- Students must seek an extension from the professor if they anticipate turning in a late assignment
- Students who do not seek an extension will be penalized one half grade for each 24 hours that the assignment is late

Course Schedule

Week 1: Why Should We Study the People's Liberation Army?

- *Discussion of current US strategic policy aims in the Indo-Pacific*
- *Discussion of the emerging Chinese military threat*

Week 2: The PLA as a Revolutionary Guerrilla Army (1927-1949)

- *Discussions of the origins of the PLA and Mao Zedong's Concept of Guerilla Forces*
- *The PLA and China's Civil War and Struggle to Defeat Japan*

Week 3: Learning to Write a Presidential Daily Brief (PDB)

- *History and Policy Significance of the PDB*
- *Key Elements of Writing a PDB*
- *Selection of a Chinese Weapons System in Development for 1st PDB*

Week 4: CMC Chairman Mao Zedong and the Post Liberation PLA

- *China's Role in the Korean War*
- *Mao's Military Concept of "Luring the Enemy in Deep"*
- *The Sino-Soviet Split*
- *The PLA and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*

Week 5: CMC Chairman Deng Xiaoping and the Beginnings of a Modern PLA

- *China's Look to the United States for Military Modernization*
- *China's Invasion of Vietnam in 1979*
- *China's Military Crackdown and the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989*

Week 6: CMC Chairman Jiang Zemin Faces China's Military Backwardness

- *China's Shock at US Military Supremacy in Gulf War I*
- *China's Reaction to the US Unintentional Bombing of China's Belgrade Embassy*
- *The 2001 EP-3 Crisis*

Week 7: CMC Chairman Hu Jintao Defines the “New Historic Missions” of the PLA

- *China’s Initial Development of Naval Power*
- *China’s Military Corruption Problem*
- *Hu Jintao’s Inability to Control the PLA*

Week 8: CMC Chairman Xi Jinping’s Dream of a Strong PLA

- *Xi’s Massive Military Reorganization*
- *Xi’s Massive Anticorruption Drive in the PLA*

Week 12: CMC Chairman Xi Jinping’s Dream of a Strong PLA (Part II)

- *Xi’s Goal of a Military Ready to Take Taiwan by 2027*
- *Xi’s Relationship with Putin and the Ukraine War*

Week 9: Table Top Exercise (TTX) of a Taiwan Strait Crisis

- *Lecture on China’s Military Options for Taking Taiwan*
- *Student Role Playing of Chinese, US, Taiwan, and Japanese Officials*
- *Hot Wash of the Exercise*

Week 10: Guest Lecture by Dr. James Mulvenon

- *China’s Cyber Security Capabilities*
- *China’s Revolution in Military Affairs*
- *Discussion of Job Opportunities for Working in the Private Sector on the PLA*

Week 11: PLA Nuclear Forces and Nuclear Doctrine

- *China’s Assured Retaliation Doctrine*
- *Implications of China’s Buildup of ICBM Forces*
- *Corruption Problems in the Rocket Forces*

Week 13: Guest Lecture by Dr. Phillip Saunders National Defense University

- *China’s Quest for Military Supremacy*
- *Discussion of Government Careers Working on the Chinese Military*

Week 14: Table Top Exercise (TTX) of a South China Sea Crisis

- *Lecture on the Sierra Madre Standoff*
- *Student Role Playing of Chinese, US, Philippine, and Japanese Officials*
- *Hot Wash of the Exercise*

Week 15: Assessing the PLA and the Future of Warfare

- *China's Development of Hypersonic Weapons*
- *China's Strategy Toward the Militarization of Space*
- *Chinese Military Use of Frontier Technologies*
- *Net Assessment of US and Chinese Military Forces*

University Policies

Technology Support – For technical support at the Bush School DC Campus contact the Bush School DC IT Team: bushschoolcit@tamu.edu

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work,

should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

Texas A&M at College Station

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Texas A&M at College Station

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Texas A&M at College Station

Students wishing to discuss concerns related to mental and/or physical health in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [University Health Services](#) or download the [TELUS Health Student Support app](#) for 24/7 access to professional counseling in multiple languages. Walk-in services for urgent, non-emergency needs are available during normal business hours at University Health Services locations; call 979.458.4584 for details.

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors influencing a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care practices by utilizing the resources and services available through [University Health Services](#). Students needing a listening ear can call the Texas A&M Helpline (979.845.2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends for mental health peer support while classes are in session. The [TELUS Health Student Support app](#) provides access to professional counseling in multiple languages anytime, anywhere by phone or chat, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24-hour emergency support at 988 or [988lifeline.org](#).

Texas A&M College Station

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Campus-Specific Policies**Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items may do so by going to [howdy.tamu.edu](#) and clicking on the "Directory Hold Information" link in the Student Records channel on the MyRecord tab. The complete [FERPA Notice to Students](#) and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees honors and awards received,

participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location and medical residence specialization.