

PL 366: Great Power Competition in the Global South

Credits: 4

Dates of course: January 21, 2025- April 30, 2024

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:40-5:30 pm

Location: Tisch 305

Instructor: Dr. Charmaine N. Willis

Office hours: Tuesdays 12-1pm in Ladd 308 and by appointment

Contact: cnwillis@skidmore.edu

Email hours: You will generally receive a reply from me within a few hours, but any e-mail correspondence after 7:00 pm may not receive a response until the next day.



What is “great power competition” and in what ways has it involved actors in the Global South? In this course, we will explore the ways that great powers in the international system have interacted with territories and countries in the Global South, at times competing with other great powers for resources and influence. We will explore the impacts of great power competition on the governments, societies, economies, and the environment in the Global South. Additionally, we will consider the agency of Global South countries and how they manage great power competition in their region, often between relatively stronger countries from other regions. We will examine these dynamics historically (with an emphasis on empire and colonization) and contemporary manifestations of great power competition in the Global South, focusing on the US, China, the Soviet Union/Russia, and the United Kingdom. The course will focus primarily on Southeast Asia, although we will also consider the Global South as a whole and other regions within the Global South including Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East as well.

Learning Objectives

This course endeavors not only to help students learn about great power competition and how Global South countries adapt to it, but also skills critical to success in college. To that end, the learning objectives for this course include:

- **Grasp key concepts and theories in the fields of comparative politics and international relations and be able to relay them to others.**

- **Apply these key concepts and theories to real world cases.**
- **Distill key ideas from academic articles and discuss them with others.**
- **Construct and execute an original research project over the course of the semester.**
- **Communicate one's research to others.**

University Resources and Policy Information

- **Accommodating Students with Disabilities:** Skidmore College is committed to supporting the learning needs of all students in our diverse community. If you have a documented barrier to learning or think you may have a disability, please consult with Meg Hegener, Associate Director of SAS and Coordinator of Student Access Services (mhegener@skidmore.edu). Accommodations are approved by the coordinator following a review of students' documentation. If you are approved for academic accommodations, please provide your letter of accommodations to me early in the semester or as soon as you are approved so that we can proactively coordinate implementation. Academic accommodations based on disability cannot be granted by individual faculty. For further information, please call (518) 580-8150 to contact Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center.
- **Conscientious Religious Observance Policy:** Skidmore College acknowledges that our community is one of many faiths with a diverse range of practices and observances important to each tradition. In order to fulfill our mission to educate a diverse population of talented students and our commitment to inclusion regardless of religious and spiritual tradition, we seek to practice an equitable and consistent approach in providing religious accommodations. If religious observance requires absence from class or you anticipate a conflict with assignments or due dates, please notify your instructor **prior** to the absence or conflict so that accommodations can be arranged. Although not required, please provide notification about a pending religious holiday at the start of the semester or at least one week before the holiday. As an option, you may use the form available at www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php [or [here](#)].

Accommodations for your absence should not reduce the overall expectations of a course nor unduly burden you for requesting accommodation. Students shall not suffer academic, athletic, or employment penalties because of the conscientious observance of any religious day or days. Faculty must permit students to take a makeup examination without any penalty if they have to miss an examination due to religious observances. Similarly, faculty must permit students to submit missed assignments by an agreed upon due date, without penalty.

If a student, supervisor, coach, or faculty member feels the policy is being violated, they should contact the Dean of Faculty Office at 518-580-5705 (Palamountain 416), the Dean of Students Office at 518-580-5760 (Case Center 313), or Human Resources at 518-580-5800 (Barrett Center first floor). The full policy can be found at www.skidmore.edu/religious-life/calendar.php.

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Skidmore College is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community in which members develop their abilities to live in a complex and interconnected world. Consistent with our educational mission, we recognize ourselves as a community that respects individual identities based on varying sociocultural

characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, first language, religious and spiritual tradition, age, ability, socioeconomic status and learning style. We strive to create a socially just world that honors the dignity and worth of each individual, and we seek to build a community centered on mutual respect and openness to ideas—one in which individuals value cultural and intellectual diversity and share the responsibility for creating a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment. We recognize that our community is most inclusive when all members participate to their full capacity in the spirited and sometimes challenging conversations that are at the center of the college's educational mission.

- **Recording of Class Sessions:** To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may **NOT** record or stream classroom lectures, discussions, or activities unless permission is granted by the instructor or, with the instructor's involvement, through the academic accommodation process. The course "recording" policy extends to audio and video recording and streaming, photography, and transcription of audio through generative AI or other tools.

Students with approved accommodations that permit the recording of class meetings should submit an accommodation letter from [Accessibility Services](#) before recording commences. For all students, permission to record is conditioned on the requirement that recordings will be used exclusively for educational purposes, such as for assistance with notetaking. Consistent with Skidmore's commitment to academic freedom, freedom of speech, and respectful dialogue, recordings may not be used in any way that denigrates and/or decontextualizes the instructor or any student whose remarks are recorded. Any information contained in the recording may not be posted, published, or quoted, and all recordings must be erased at the end of the semester. Violation of these expectations will be reported to Student Conduct and may result in a grade penalty at the instructor's discretion.

- **Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct: Title IX Statement:** Skidmore College considers sexual and gender-based misconduct to be one of the most serious violations of the values and standards of the College. Unwelcome sexual contact of any form is a violation of students' personal integrity and their right to a safe environment and therefore violates Skidmore's values. Sexual and gender-based misconduct is also prohibited by federal and state regulations. Skidmore College faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. If a student chooses to confide in a member of Skidmore's faculty or staff regarding an issue of sexual or gender-based misconduct, that faculty or staff member is obligated to tell Skidmore's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator will assist the student in connecting with all possible resources for support and options for reporting both on and off campus. Identities and details will be shared only with those who need to know to support the student and to address the situation through the college's processes. If the student wishes to confide in a confidential resource, the Counseling Center Staff, Health Services, and Victim Advocates (anonymous) are all options available.

More information can be found at the Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct [website](#) or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator, Joel Aure (jaure@skidmore.edu), 580-5708.

- **Academic integrity and conduct:** The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Skidmore's Academic Honor Code states that: *"I hereby accept*

membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the college regulations.” A serious violation of academic integrity is plagiarism, the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. **If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me before submitting graded assignments. Please note that Skidmore College requires faculty to report all violations of the Academic Honor Code.** For more information about the university's academic integrity policies, please see the Student Handbook and the following resource:

https://www.skidmore.edu/osaa/integrity/new_integrity_docs/Definitions_and_Guidelines.pdf

- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool Usage¹:** You may use generative AI programs e.g., ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. **You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor).**
- **General Health and COVID-19:** The College expects all members of the community to adhere to the College's COVID-19 health and safety guidelines at all times.

If you think you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, please follow Health Services' recommendations regarding testing and when to safely return to class and public spaces. As with any health-related illness, we ask that you contact Health Services as soon as you can.

When mask wearing is required, you must wear a mask covering your mouth and nose fully at all times in the classroom. If your mask is not providing sufficient protection because it has slipped in some way, you are responsible for adjusting the fit. If I ask you to wear your mask properly, you must comply or you can choose to leave the classroom.

Skidmore College is committed to the health and safety of all members of our community and has implemented protocols based on recommendations from the CDC, New York State Department of Health, and Saratoga County Department of Health. The College is not requiring vaccinated individuals to wear a mask indoors; however, if anyone would like to ask that we all wear a mask at all times in our classroom, please speak with me outside of class, or contact me via email.

Course Policies

- **Discussion Etiquette:** Some of the topics that we will cover in class are controversial (which is the nature of politics). Learning from and attempting to understand other opinions is a crucial part of the learning experience. I expect there to be varying opinions and great

¹ Adapted from Holly Fernandez-Lyn, University of Pennsylvania.

debates. However, I also expect civility and respectfulness in our discussions. This means no personal attacks or obscene language.

- **Late Penalties and Missed Assignments:** It is imperative that you do not fall behind on assignments. Assignments should be submitted by 11:59 pm the day that they are due via the Spring. After that, 5% will be deducted from the maximum possible score for each day that the assignment is late (including weekends). Missed assignments will receive '0' points. **Assignments that are a month or more late will not be accepted.**
- **Grade Appeals:** Students who feel that their assignments have been graded incorrectly should follow a three-step procedure. First, the student carefully reads the assignment and identifies the precise problem(s) with the grading. Second, the student sends a written appeal via email explaining why their answer was appropriate to the instructor; you must wait **24 hours** after receiving your grade to submit an appeal. Third, the instructor will regrade the assignment, taking the appeal into account. Note that the instructor may assign a higher or lower grade following such an appeal.

Course materials, grading, course structure, and assignments

- **Texts:** All texts for this course can be found on the Spring and/or linked in the syllabus.
- **Grading:** the course will be graded on a 1000-point scale. Each assignment and portion of the course is worth a set number of points and will be graded accordingly. At the end of the class your final grade will be based on your total number of points earned throughout the class.
 - **Rubric:**
 - 930- 1000 points: A
 - 900- 920 points: A-
 - 870- 890 points: B+
 - 830- 860 points: B
 - 800- 820 points: B-
 - 770- 790 points: C+
 - 730- 760 points: C
 - 700- 720 points: C-
 - 670- 690 points: D+
 - 630- 660 points: D
 - 600- 620 points: D-
 - 590 points and below: F
- **Structure:** The course will be divided into essentially three units. The first will explore great power competition in East Asia, the second will focus on great power competition in Africa, and the third will address other manifestation of great power competition.
- **Assignments:** This course is reading and writing intensive. You are expected to complete all the reading assignments prior to each class session and be prepared to discuss those readings with your classmates and me. **All writing assignments should be in a 12-pt standard font (ex. Times New Roman, Calibri, Garamond) with normal (1") margins.**

Writing assignments should have proper citations as necessary using a recognized citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago).

- The primary course learning activities will be reading the required readings for each week, actively participating in discussions about those readings,
- Summaries of these activities are listed below, but further information will be posted to the Spring.
 - **Attendance and participation (200 points)(20%):** For everyone's benefit, I expect you to attend each class session and to participate actively in class. We will be regularly working together in class to practice the skills outlined in the learning objectives. Missing class will result in a missed opportunity for practice and feedback and should be avoided. Additionally, missing class means that you cannot participate in class discussion that day and we will lose out on your potential contributions. Therefore, missing class should be avoided as much as possible. However, I understand that many things can happen over the course of a semester and an absence may be necessary. **Students are permitted three unexcused absences throughout the semester, no questions asked. Students with more than three unexcused absences will lose 30 points from their overall course grade for each additional unexcused absence.**
 - **Risk (75 points total (7.5%): 25 points for participation, 50 points for debriefing paper):** In this course, we will think about great power competition through the game *Risk*. The class will be split up into teams and assigned specific roles. Each person is responsible for completing a debriefing assignment at the conclusion of the game as well as actively participating in the simulation. **The debriefing assignment is due March 4 by 11:59 pm on the Spring. More information about the game and the assignment will be available at the end of January.**
 - **Simulation (125 points total: 50 points for position paper, 25 points for participation, 50 points for debriefing paper (12.5%)):** You will participate in a simulation modeling the dynamics of great power competition in the Global South that we have covered this semester. The class will be split up into teams and assigned specific roles. **Each person is responsible for writing a short paper at the beginning of the simulation (position paper), actively participating in the simulation, and a debriefing paper.** More information about the simulation will be available in March.
 - **Gaming Great Power Competition (175 points total (17.5%): 25 points for progress report, 50 for presentation, 100 for game):** The use of games and simulations to teach students political science concepts and theories has gained popularity in recent years. To this end, you will design a game or simulation to teach students about some aspect of great power competition **in teams**. You will submit a short progress report about how your game design is going on **March 25 by 11:59 pm on the Spring** and present and submit the final game design on **April 22** (yes, we're going to play them!).
 - **Response papers (150 points total (15%), 50 points each):** As mentioned, the class will be structured into essentially three topical units: states, international relations, and societies. Beginning in Week 2, you will write a response paper to the

readings and discussion for one of the classes in each unit (a total of four response papers over the course of the semester). The best papers will be those that contain a brief summary of the key ideas of the readings (with informal citations), synthesis of the readings (i.e., how the readings relate to one another), original analysis, and critical reflection. Papers should draw from **at least two** of the assigned readings and go beyond mere summaries. Papers should be 1.5-2 pages typed and double-spaced (350-500 words). The due dates for the response papers are as follows:

- **Unit 1 Response Paper: Due March 4**
- **Unit 2 Response Paper: Due April 10**
- **Unit 3 Response Paper: Due May 7**
- **Research Project (275 points (27.5%)):** An important part of political science and many disciplines is learning how to conduct your own research. This is an opportunity for you to explore an issue related to great power competition more in-depth than we may cover through our class readings and discussions. You may choose to elaborate on a topic we cover in class or choose something related to the class that we did not discuss. The project will be broken down into several parts throughout the semester to give you an opportunity to get feedback at various stages in the writing process.
 - **Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (25 points):** The proposal is the first stage in the research process and allows you to receive feedback from me at an early stage to ensure the project is on the right track. The proposal should include a research question, a background to the research question, and an annotated bibliography with three sources (at least two peer-reviewed). It should be about 1-2 typed pages, double spaced and is due on the Spring by **February 18 at 11:59 pm**.
 - **Draft of Literature Review (75 points):** Writing a literature review is an important part of political science research as it helps the researcher identify what has already been said about their topic and what gaps in our knowledge remain. As part of the research process, you will submit a draft of your literature review on the Spring by **March 18 at 11:59 pm**. The literature review should contain at least 5 peer-reviewed sources and be about 2-3 typed pages, double-spaced in length.
 - **Paper Presentation (75 points):** Receiving and giving peer feedback is an important part of the writing process. Your presentation grade is composed of two parts:
 - **Poster Presentation (50 points)²:** Each of you will present your project through a poster presentation **on April 29** prior to submitting the final paper. Further instructions about the specific components of the poster will be given in November.
 - **Peer Evaluation (25 points):** in addition to presenting your own research, you will evaluate your peers' posters and provide

² I thank Jane Lawrence Summer at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities for this assignment.

feedback. Further instructions about the specific components of the poster will be given in November.

- **Final Paper (100 points):** your project will culminate in a final paper of about 10-12 pages (2,500-3,300 words) typed, double-spaced. It is due on the Spring by **May 7 at 11:59 pm**. Further instructions about the specific components of the paper will be given in early March.

Schedule:

Week	Day	Unit	Topic	Readings and Assignments Due for Class
Week 1	January 21		Introduction	
	January 23		What is Great Power Competition (GPC)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Power Competition Will Drive Irregular Conflicts • Global Development in an Era of Great Power Competition • Mastanduno (2019), Liberal hegemony, international order, and US foreign policy: A reconsideration
Week 2	January 28		Alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuik (2021): Getting Hedging Right • Koga (2018): The Concept of “Hedging” Revisited • Blakenship (2020): Promises under Pressure: Statements of Reassurance in US Alliances
	January 30 <i>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Paul Yoo</i>		The Korean War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumings (2005): Collision, 1945-1953
Week 3	February 4		Reactions to GPC in East Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemmer and Katzenstein (2003):

February 4: Drop/Grade Option (S/U) Deadline				<p>Why is there no NATO in Asia?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beeson (2022): Decentered? ASEAN's Struggle to Accommodate Great Power Competition • Acharya (2016): Studying the Bandung Conference from a Global IR Perspective
	February 6		The Vietnam War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nguyen (2012): Abbreviations • Nguyen (2012): Breaking the Stalemate
Week 4	February 11		GPC and Geopolitics in East Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeo and O'Hanlon (2024): Geostrategic Competition and US, Chinese, and Russian Basing in East Asia • Partnership of convenience: Ream Naval Base and the Cambodia–China convergence • Koga (2020): Singapore's Distinctive Quasi-Bases
	February 13		GPC and Territorial Disputes in East Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still Dangerous Grounds –South China Sea Updates with Jay Batongbacal • Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea • Poznansky (2024): The Ukraine-Taiwan Tradeoff
Week 5	February 18		GPC and Nuclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paper Proposal and Annotated</i>

			Weapons in East Asia	<i>Bibliography due by 11:59 pm</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Threat Like No Other: Russia-North Korea Military Cooperation • Wertz (2019): China-North Korea Relations • Choe (2022): South Korea Gets Squeezed Between the US and China
	February 20		GPC and Economic Policy in Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huang (2016): Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiatives • Beeman (2024): Walking Out of Free Trade in the Asia-Pacific • Blackwill and Fontaine (2024): Rhetoric Meets Reality
Week 6	February 25		Regional GPC: China-India Edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India-China Rivalry and its Long Shadow Over the BRICS • Malik (2011): Burma: Fulcrum of Rivalry • The Emerging Great Game
	February 27		Risk	
Week 7	March 4		No class: instructor at conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unit 1 Response Paper due by 11:59 pm</i>
	March 6		Risk	
<i>Spring Break March 8-16</i>				
Week 8	March 18	Unit 2: Great Power Competition in Africa	The Scramble for Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Literature Review due by 11:59 pm</i> • What was the 'Scramble for Africa'?

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016): The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa
	March 20		The Cold War and Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hongoh (2016): The Asian-African Conference (Bandung) and Pan-Africanism • Schmidt (2013): Africa • White (2005): As the Snake Sheds Its Skin: Eisenhower Diplomacy, African Decolonization, and Nationalism
Week 9	March 25		GPC and Basing in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Game Design Progress Report due by 11:59 pm</i> • Kardon (2022): China's Global Maritime Access • Murphy (2023): Strategic Competition for Overseas Basing in Sub-Saharan Africa • The US is Losing Access to its Bases in Niger
	March 27		GPC and Economic Policy in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asante (2018): China and Africa • Beeman (2024): Walking Out on Developing Countries • Priorities for the New U.S. Administration and Congress on Strengthening Economic Relations with Africa

Week 10	April 1		GPC and Resource Extraction from Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lee (2006): The 21st Century Scramble for Africa Yates (2012): Foreign States and Trade Relations The US won't gain a lead in the competition for Africa's critical minerals without innovation
	April 3		Simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simulation Position Paper due by 3:30 pm Background packet
Week 11 <i>April 10: Course Withdrawal Deadline</i>	April 8		Simulation	
	April 10	Unit 3: Other Manifestations of GPC	GPC in Latin America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 2 Response Paper due by 11:59 pm Chindea et al. (2023): Great Power Competition in Latin America (chapter 2)
Week 12	April 15		GPC in the Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
	April 17		Future Prospects for GPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake (2018): Economic Openness and Great Power Competition Larson (2021): Policy or Pique? Trump and the Turn to Great Power Competition
Week 13	April 22		Game Presentations	
	April 24 <i>Guest Lecturer: Prof. Devon Cantwell-</i>		Environmental Impacts of GPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Power Competition and Green Protectionism

	<i>Chavez, University of Ottawa</i>			
Week 14	April 29		Poster Session and Course Wrap-Up	
<i>Unit 3 Response Paper due May 1 by 11:59 pm</i>				
<i>Final Paper due May 7 by 11:59 pm</i>				