Understanding US-China Relations:

Politics, Trade and COVID19

Curriculum Guide for the
2022 East Asia in the Upper Midwest Teaching Initiative



EAST ASIA
IN THE UPPER MIDWEST
CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Prepared by:
Laurie Dennis
Assistant Director, Center for East Asian Studies

Center for East Asian Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Introduction

East Asia in the Upper Midwest is an annual summer program designed to provide professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers across Wisconsin (and beyond) who are interested in integrating East Asia into their classrooms and to exploring the connections between East Asia and the Upper Midwest.

Previous programs have looked at teaching the Korean War (2020) and the Japanese influence on the architect Frank Lloyd Wright (2021).

Participants focus on a particular theme, interact with experts, receive classroom materials, and prepare lesson plans based on what they have learned.

Recordings of past programs and detailed lesson plans prepared by participants can be found on the website for the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS): www.eastasia.wisc.edu/eaum/

CEAS is the focal point connecting East Asia to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. One of the UW-Madison's eight federally funded National Resource Centers, CEAS is dedicated to all aspects of research, education and outreach related to China, Japan, and Korea.

The 2022 East Asia in the Upper Midwest program is focused on the topic of understanding the US-China relationship. In consultation with UW-Madison historian of modern China Judd Kinzley, this program features two current scholars: Zach Fredman of Duke Kunshan University, and John D. Wong of the University of Hong Kong discussing their research into the US-China relationship and their experience of the COVID19 pandemic. The following pages provide an overview of how to use the materials included in the EAUM program for 2022.

For further information on this program specifically or CEAS in general, contact CEAS Assistant Director Laurie Dennis at ldennis@wisc.edu.

Unit 1 • Geography and facts about China

Objectives:

- The basic geography of China
- A few notes on language and borders.



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Flag of the PRC

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is in Eastern Asia and the northern hemisphere. It has land borders with 14 countries including India and Russia. China has an area of 9.6 million sq km, making it slightly smaller than the USA and is the 4th largest country in the world. China is the most populous country in the world. Of every five persons in the world, one is Chinese. The growth rate is about 0.6%, the lowest for any developing country, but because its population is so huge, annual net population growth is still considerable.
– drawn from the Royal Geographic Society

China today consists of 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.

Beijing is the capital of China. The word means "northern capital."

The political status of the island of **Taiwan** is complex and in dispute: the PRC refers to it as "Taiwan Province," though the island is controlled by the sovereign "Republic of China on Taiwan."

Hong Kong and Macau are each classified as a "Special Administrative Region," or SAR, with a self-governing structure under the control of the central government in Beijing.

Maps printed in the PRC include line segments (the "nine-dash line" but sometimes including ten or eleven dashes) of contested areas in the South China Sea.

Chinese (also called Mandarin) is the official language of China, although many dialects and regional languages are used across the country, such as the Wu dialect (Shanghainese) spoken in the city of Shanghai, and the Yue dialect (Cantonese) used in Hong Kong and Guangdong Province. For the written language, the PRC uses a simplified version written in "pinyin," while Taiwan and Hong Kong use the older, traditional writing style. As an example of the difference, here are the two versions of the word for country:

国 simplified version (spelled "guo" in pinyin) 國 traditional version (usually spelled k'uo)

Some **geographic terms** that you will see on the map of China:

- Directional. Bei 北 = north, dong 东 = east, xi 西 = west, nan 南 = south.
- Landforms. Hai 海 = sea. He 河 and jiang 江 both mean "river." Shan 山 = "mountain.

Thus Shandong 山东Province = "East of the Mountains" and Henan 河南Province = "South of the River." The city of Shanghai 上海 = "On the Sea."

The **largest city** in China (and in the world) by population is Shanghai, with over 20 million in China's most recent 2010 census. It is one of ten cities in China with more than 10 million people (the others are Beijing, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Tianjin, Harbin, Wuhan and Suzhou).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China,**the PRC population** amounted to 1.41 billion people in 2021, with a current trend of declining birthrates. (China had a "one child policy" in place under Chairman Mao Zedong, but that policy has ended.) This makes China the largest country in the world by population, followed by India, which also has more than a billion people.

Longest river = the Yangtze River (in Chinese it is known as the Changjiang 长江, or "Long River"), which empties into the East China Sea to the north of Shanghai. It is the third-longest river in the world.

Highest mountain = Mount Everest (in Chinese it is Mt. Qomolangma, a Tibetan name), the highest in the world, bordering China and Nepal.

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Unit 2 • The Chinese Exclusion Act

Objectives:

- Understand the background and significance of this legislation
- Connect this legislation to current issues related to immigration and exclusion



The primary resource for this unit is the DVD, "The Chinese Exclusion Act," a co-production of Steeplechase Films and the Center for Asian American Media for PBS.

Directed by Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu.

This documentary was made in 2018 as a special presentation of The American Experience television series.

Screen time: Approximately 160 minutes.

Please note that this film includes visuals of political cartoons from the 1800s and early 1900s with racist and offensive imagery of Chinese and other peoples.

Key terms:

- **Exclusion**, to prevent or restrict entrance; gate-keeping
- **Statute**, a written law passed by a legislative body
- **Coolie**, from the Chinese word 苦力 "ku-li" or bitter labor," refers to a low-wage laborer
- **Xenophobia**, the fear and/or hatred of anything foreign, including people

Historical terms:

- **Manchu Qing Dynasty**, 1644-1912 the Manchu-led last dynasty in the imperial history of China. The Manchu are an ethnic minority whose ancestral home is in northern China.
- **Taiping Rebellion**, 1850-64, a rebellion and civil war in China, which historians cite as the bloodiest civil war in world history.
- **Transcontinental Railroad**, completed in 1869, joined the Central Pacific Railroad with the Union Pacific Railroad, linking San Francisco Bay to Omaha, Nebraska.
- **California Gold Rush**, 1848-55, in the Sierra Nevada, which led to the settlement of California.

Regions in China:

- **Pearl River Delta**, where the Pearl River flows into the South China Sea in the region of Hong Kong.
- **Guangdong Province**, China's most populous province, located along the coast to the south.

https://wisconsin.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/the-chinese-exclusion-act/asian-americans-video/

The PBS Wisconsin website, www.pbslearningmedia.org for Wisconsin educators, has a wealth of useful information about the Chinese Exclusion Act, including the overview below. This website is aimed at grades

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9-12 and includes links to primary documents and tools for building a lesson plan and sharing links with students.

The Chinese Exclusion Act – overview

Signed on May 6, 1882 by President Chester Arthur, the Chinese Exclusion Act was the first in a series of laws explicitly used to limit immigration based on race. The law changed the landscape for American immigration and set a precedent in policy-making for generations to come.

Chinese immigration to the United States began in the early 1800s. Many were leaving China to flee the economic crisis, political unrest, and the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) and turned to the United States to seek better opportunities. During the Gold Rush and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, Chinese worked as an expendable labor force. And when the end of the Civil War marked the end of slavery in the United States, Chinese filled the need for cheap labor solutions.

However, a rise in unemployment and racism gave way to an anti-Chinese movement, a movement with a rallying cry of "The Chinese must go."

As labor unions formed, they began to see the Chinese as their competition, and ultimately they lobbied for laws to limit immigration of the Chinese.

When the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed, it reflected the rampant scapegoating and stereotyping of the Chinese workers. This law barred Chinese laborers from entering the country, only allowing Chinese students, teachers, travelers, merchants, and diplomats to still apply for admission. This also marked the start of required immigration documents that the Chinese were required to hold on to their person to avoid deportation.

One early advocate for the Chinese was Frederick Douglass who spoke against the ban, stating that rights of immigrants, even those in the process of immigrating, were rights that should be respected and protected by those in power.

The law itself was repealed in 1943, two years after China became an Allied nation during World War II. In June 2012, the United States Congress passed a resolution of regret, H. Res. 683, introduced by Congresswoman Judy Chu from California that explicitly recognized the un-American actions and policies that unfairly targeted Chinese immigrants.

Implications

- **The Chinese Exclusion Act marked the first time the US specifically denied an ethnic group the right of entry and citizenship.**
- The law remained in effect for **over 60 years**, from 1882 until 1943.
- The legislation was effective: **the Chinese population in the US sharply declined**.
- In 1884, a Chinese laundry guild contested a race-based San Francisco ordinance that went all the way to the Supreme Court and expanded rights for non-citizens. **Yick Wo v. Hopkins (1886)** was the first case to use the "equal protection" clause of the 14th Amendment, which prohibits states from denying any person within their jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. The case made all people in the US, not just citizens, equal before the law, and became important in the 1950s during civil rights legislation to condemn "separate but equal" schools. This is one of a number of lawsuits brought to challenge the Chinese Exclusion Act.

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Unit 3 • Early Trade between the US and China

Objectives:

- Understand the background and significance of a key figure, the merchant Houqua (1769-1843) in the start of the US-China trade
- Connect business practices in the 19th century to today
- Learn about the complex balance of interests between US and Chinese tea traders



This unit will focus on the work of historian John D. Wong 王迪安, associate professor of humanities and social sciences at The University of Hong Kong. Dr. Wong received his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Chicago, a Master of Business Administration degree from Stanford University, and doctorate in History from Harvard University. He worked for a number of years in finance and holds the designation of Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). He studies the flow of people, goods, capital, and ideas in the Hong Kong region and beyond. In a profile this month for the American Historical Association, Dr. Wong was asked how his research interests have evolved:

"Although I was trained primarily as a historian of late imperial China, I have endeavored to situate my work in a global context. Studying the China trade in the context of early 19th-century global exchange, my first monograph, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System*, demonstrates how China trade partners sustained their economic exchange on a global scale long before Western imperialism ushered in the era of globalization in a Eurocentric modern world. My institutional affiliation and geographical location have shifted my focus downstream to Hong Kong and a century closer to the present. Yet, the underlying intellectual and thematic emphases have stayed the same."

Key text:

Wong, John D., *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Trade between the US and China started with tea, which Americans and Europeans bought from licensed traders based in the port of Canton (today known as Guangzhou, located on the Pearl River about 75 miles north of Hong Kong), the sole port of call for China traders until the conclusion of the Opium War, when the era of the Treaty Ports was introduced.

Opium War, 1839-42, fought between Britain and the Qing Dynasty over illegal trade in opium by British and other foreign merchants. The war ended when the British imposed a treaty forcing open trade with China beyond the port of Canton (the first of what the Chinese later called "the unequal treaties") and ceding the island of Hong Kong to the British Empire.

The first ship to sail from the US for China was the *Empress of China*, which left New York on Feb. 22, 1784. Americans initially traded fur and also ginseng (a product still exported from Wisconsin and other states to East Asia) for tea and silk, but the market was much stronger for Chinese tea, which meant trade with the US was an important early source of silver for China.

Dominating the trade in Canton was a merchant with the surname of Wu who traded under the name "**Houqua**," and became the linchpin for the global tea trade. John Wong's profile of Houqua explains how

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the Wu family business, the richest in the Canton region, was so successful despite constant fees and constraints from the Qing court in Beijing, the high level of risk in sending ships of tea across oceans, the pressure from the British to receive unsellable British wool in exchange for the much more marketable Chinese tea, and the language barrier to writing contracts for trade and insurance terms.



"…Houqua served as the sole director of the **Yihe Company** (怡和行), 'the nexus of all trade' between China and the West, with 'tens of millions in turnover.'" (p. 41)

One key to Houqua's success was the partnership he formed with the American **John Perkins Cushing**, a young Boston businessman, who helped Houqua bypass the British stranglehold on the tea market and also protected Houqua's business license from the growing but illegal trade in opium.

"Although Houqua was fully aware of the source of their capital, records of his American associates indicate that Houqua stayed clear of the opium trade and his overseas partners structured their business to avoid implicating Houqua in the opium business. Smuggling opium into China was illegal both for Houqua as well as for his foreign trading partners; however, the ramifications were unequal for the two sides should Qing officials decide to prosecute the offenders." (p. 87)

Houqua cultivated close ties with his most trusted foreign business partners, and also understood the power in what we would today call "branding." He had his portrait painted and distributed (the image above is of a painting that can still be seen at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts), which helped create what Wong calls "an iconic status" for the merchant.

"His painted portrait hung on the walls of many American houses, highly prized as the symbol of all that is praiseworthy in public and private relations." (p. 123) – William C. Forbes (ambassador to Japan and grandson of the railroad magnate J.C. Forbes)

These portraits and the exchange of gifts were key to the business ties that Houqua cultivated – Cushing even sent him a cow that calved during the trip to China. Houqua wrote his thanks for a gift that "furnishes us with a most liberal quantity of rich milk." p. 132

"The mutual trust between Houqua and his select American partners was all the more impressive because, unlike other tight-knit business partnerships that involved people of similar backgrounds, their partnership transcended ethnic, social, and cultural boundaries." (p. 209)

"The success of this Chinese entrepreneur on the global stage also refutes any notion of China's passivity in the merging of regional economies as the modern world took shape…Moreover, as the strategic positioning of Houqua and his partners anchored their web of exchange, the geographical movement of these people and the cultivation of their trading network tell the story of how business partners transcended political, social, and cultural boundaries and improvised systems of exchange that sustained their economic activities against the backdrop of the tumultuous currents of geopolitical developments." (p. 217)

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Unit 4 • World War II and the US-China dynamic

Objectives:

- Understand some of the tensions in the US-China alliance during World War II



This unit will focus on the work of Duke Kunshan University Professor Zach Fredman, a diplomatic and military historian whose research is about the United States in the world, modern China, and US-East Asian relations. He earned his Ph.D. at Boston University in 2016 and was previously a postdoctoral fellow at Dartmouth College's John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding (2017-2018) and Nanyang Technological University's School of Humanities and Social Sciences (2016-2017). His writing has appeared in *The Washington Post* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education.*

Duke Kunshan University (DKU) is a Chinese-American partnership of Duke University in North Carolina with Wuhan University in Hubei Province. It is located in Kunshan, which borders the cities of Shanghai and Suzhou. DKU opened to its inaugural undergraduate class in 2018.

In a profile this month by the Duke Kunshan University Humanities Research Center, Dr. Fredman was asked about his interest in diplomatic and military history:

"I've always been interested in the history of warfare. In elementary school, I spent as much time reading about the Holocaust as I did riding my bike or playing video games. I subscribed to *Newsweek* and *Time* magazine as a nine-year-old after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in 1990 and followed the conflict very closely. I learned about the perspectives of regular soldiers by writing to pen pals who were stationed in Saudi Arabia. The social and cultural sides of war intrigued me more than battles or weaponry, what scholars call operational military history. My interest in US-China relations developed later, as a result of working in China after graduating college in 2003. I planned to stay one year but enjoyed China so much that I stayed for five. But even back then China-US relations were tense and complicated. The simultaneous hostility and admiration toward America that I observed in many of the Chinese people I interacted with really fascinated me. Chinese college students or young adults I worked with would openly tell me how much they hated the United States for supporting Taiwan, or how much they admired Osama Bin Laden for launching the 9/11 terrorist attacks. But the exact same people also bragged about their Nike Air Jordans or love for American TV shows like *Friends*. And almost all of them were trying to get into graduate school in the United States. I wrote my own graduate school application about wanting to explore this paradox."

Key Text:

Fredman, Zach. "GIs and 'Jeep girls': Sex and American soldiers in wartime China," *Journal of Modern Chinese History,* 2019, Vol 13, No 1, pgs 76-101. This article is based on research for the forthcoming book, *The Tormented Alliance: American Servicemen and the Occupation of China, 1941–1949*(UNC Press, 2022.

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China became a key ally of the US during World War II as part of the strategy to contain Japanese aggression in Asia. Japanese forces took over the wartime capital of Nanjing (also known in English as Nanking) in the infamous Nanjing Massacre of December 1937. China's Nationalist army retreated first to Chongqing in the west, and then Kunming in the south. The Nationalist leaders became media darlings in the US, with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek on the cover of Time magazine ten times. His wife Soong Mayling, known as Madame Chiang Kai-shek, became the first Chinese national to address Congress in Feb 1943. However, relations between the Generalissimo and "Vinegar Joe," or General Joseph Stillwell (assigned by the US to be Chiang's chief of staff and lead troops in the China theater), deteriorated as the Chinese government weakened and leaders disagreed over troop deployments and the level of US support.

Note: China's Nationalist Party is also known by its Chinese name, spelled either Guomindang or Kuomintang.

"By spring 1945, the US Army had worn out its welcome in China. President Chiang Kai-shek now had a capable American chief of staff in General Albert Wedemeyer, but he still had to contend with damage done by Wedemeyer's abrasive predecessor, General Joseph Stilwell. Stilwell's insistence on launching the 1944 Salween campaign and diverting aircraft to Burma had reduced China's capacity to resist Japan's Ichigo offensive, just as Chiang had warned. Ordinary Chinese also soured on the US presence. For the most part, the more they interacted with American soldiers, the more they hated them. The civilians who had welcomed them as allied friends back in 1942 now associated their presence with inflation, black marketeering, reckless driving, and alcohol-fueled violence. Interpreters and soldiers, meanwhile, seethed at American personnel treating them like second-class citizen in their own country." (p. 76)

Zach Fredman's article explains how, against this backdrop, sexual relations between American soldiers and Chinese women turned into the most contentious issue threatening US-China relations. Tension focuses on "Jeep girls," a term Dr. Fredman defines as "an epithet coined to describe Chinese women who consorted with American servicemen." (p. 77)



"The Jeep girl narratives reduced women to symbols in a propaganda battle among men seeking to control female sexuality and China's future." (p. 78)

The Chinese media at first criticized Chinese "modern girls" for their reckless behavior with GIs and for idolizing the West while China suffered. The media also ran articles about Chinese women being forced into Jeeps to be raped. However, when Wedemeyer worried that "sexual misconduct had caused Sino-American relations to deteriorate" (p. 91) and asked Chiang to push a better image of American serviceman, Chiang complied. The results "alienated large swathes of the Chinese populace." (p. 93)

"Both sides came off looking horribly tarnished: the Americans as a supposed ally whose sexual behavior brought to mind the ugliest excesses of Japan's occupation, and the Nationalist government as their enthusiastic enablers." (p. 96)

In the aftermath of WWII, Chiang Kai-shek lost to the Communists, led by Mao Zedong, who founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949. Chiang's Nationalists retreated to the island of Taiwan, where Chiang served as leader of the Republic of China until his death in 1975.

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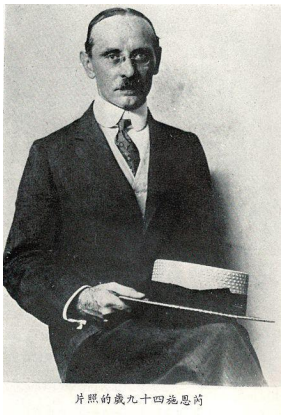
Select Timeline for US – China Relations in the Twentieth Century

Note: Quotes are from John Pomfret's *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom* overview of US-China relations (see Unit 6 for details).

The State Department's Office of the Historian also has a lengthy **"Chronology of US China Relations, 1784-2000"** from which a few of the following items were drawn.

1899-1901 – Boxer Rebellion, "a bloody antiforeign crusade born in Shandong province in response to Western land grabs and other depredations. The Boxers, so named because they held that kung fu could repel bullets, blamed China's poverty on Western goods and technology." (p. 109) An Eight National Alliance, which included the US, used military force to crush the rebellion and forced payment, known as the Boxer indemnity, from the Qing Dynasty. The US indemnity was mostly diverted to a scholarship program which brought hundreds of Chinese students to American universities, including 95 to the University of Wisconsin, the largest public university recipient of Boxer Indemnity scholars.

1911 – The Republican Revolution led the fall of the Manchu Qing Dynasty and the end of the imperial era to Chinese history. Sun Yatsen was sworn in as the provisional president of the Republic of China on Jan. 1, 1912.


片照的歲九十四施恩芮

1913 – President Woodrow Wilson named **Paul S. Reinsch (photo at left)** as the first American ambassador to a post-imperial Chinese government. Reinsch, a Milwaukee native, was a former professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin and recommended several Chinese students to his department for graduate study.

1931 – Pearl Buck publishes *The Good Earth*, which was made into a 1937 hit movie and follows a Chinese farming family through a series of crises. The novel "was both a vivid portrait of faraway China and a very American tale: an up-by-the-bootstraps parable about the values–modesty, thrift, and closeness to the land–that had made America great. *The Good Earth* married the Protestant work ethic with Confucius." (p. 175)

1937 – Edgar Snow publishes *Red Star Over China,* based on his lengthy interviews with Mao Zedong and other Communist leaders. These were the first encounters with an American for Mao, who went on to be the Chairman of the People's Republic of China. "Red Star was as American as Huckleberry Finn, one long prose poem to the previously unmown Chinese Communists." (p. 232) It proved influential to both Americans, and to students and intellectuals in China. Zhou Enlai (who became premier under Mao), called Snow "the greatest of foreign authors and our best friend abroad."

1941-42 – Flying Tigers, an American volunteer group of pilots formed to help oppose the Japanese invasion of China. Commanded by Claire Lee Chennault and based in Kunming (southwestern China), the group was credited with destroying 296 enemy aircraft along the "Burma Road" supply line. John Wayne starred in a film about them, and memorials to their legacy can be found in China and Taiwan.

1943 – Madame Soong Mayling became the first Chinese national to address both houses of Congress, to rally support for China's war effort. A graduate of Wesleyan College and the wife of Nationalist Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Madame Soong and her husband were declared "Man and Wife of the Year" by Time Magazine in 1937. This year also marked the **end of the Chinese Exclusion Act**, allowing Chinese immigration for the first time in 60 years.

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1949 – Chairman Mao Zedong's declaration from Beijing's Gate of Heavenly Peace that "the Chinese people have stood up" and formed **the People's Republic of China** led to a crisis in the US over "who lost China" and resulted in the "Two Chinas" geopolitical situation in which the PRC governs from Beijing, while the Republic of China governs from Taipei, Taiwan, and both claim to represent the true China.

1954 – First Taiwan Trait Crisis required intervention from the US after PRC forces amassed along the coast opposite Taiwan. Shelling of islands near Taiwan in 1958 constituted the second crisis, while military exercises in 1996 prompted the third.

1960 – President Dwight Eisenhower became the first US head of state to pay an official visit to a Chinese government when he met with Chiang Kai-shek (also spelled Jiang Jieshi) in Taiwan in June.

1966-76 – The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, a sociopolitical movement launched by Chairman Mao, closed universities, set off deadly power struggles, and ended essentially all relations between the US and China.

1971 – A US player at an international table tennis competition in Japan missed his team bus and hitched a ride with the team from the PRC, launching what became known as "**Ping-Pong Diplomacy**" and led to the first semi-official delegation of Americans in two decades – an American table tennis team visit to Beijing.

1972 – President Nixon arrived in China on February 21, the first American head of state ever to set foot on the Chinese Mainland. His weeklong visit resulted in the Shanghai Communiqué, which reduced US support of Taiwan and led to the normalization of relations between the US and the P.R.C.



1979 – Chairman Deng Xiaoping visited the US following the death of Chairman Mao in 1976 and the commencement of **normal diplomatic relations between the US and China** on New Year's Day of 1979. Deng's visit was part of his economic reforms program which also encouraged **academic exchanges**. UW-Madison's first delegation to China coincided with Deng's return flight to Beijing – faculty snapped bleary photos of Deng on the tarmac. The first group of Chinese scholars arrived in Madison that fall, and students from the PRC have attended UW-Madison ever since, today constituting the largest international cohort on campus (totaling 3,286 students in fall 2021).

1980 – The US Congress conditionally granted China **"Most Favored Nation" trade status,** allowing essentially unfettered access to the US market, but requiring an annual review. This lasted until May 2000, when Congress approved "Permanent Normal Trade Relations" status for China, which President George W. Bush called "the final step in normalizing U.S.-China trade relations and welcoming China into a global, rules-based trading system." China became a formal member of the World Trade Organization on Dec. 11, 2001.

1989 – A spontaneous **democracy movement** in Beijing's Tiananmen Square gained international attention. The movement was crushed on the night of June 3-4 in a military crackdown known outside of China as the **Tiananmen Square Massacre.** This severely strained US-China diplomatic ties, though trade remained open.

1995 – China hosted the U.N's Fourth **World Conference on Women**, the largest and highest profile international event to be held in China up to that time, with First Lady Hilary Clinton in attendance.

1999 – US accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade killed four and injured 20, sparking a wave of anti-US protests across China and ending with an apology from President Bill Clinton.

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Unit 5 • The COVID19 Impact

Objectives:

- Context for the pandemic in China

The key text for this unit is Yang, Guobin, *The Wuhan Lockdown* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022). Dr. Yang is a professor of communication and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He collaborates with faculty at UW-Madison and has given talks in Madison. His Twitter account can be found at @Yangguobin

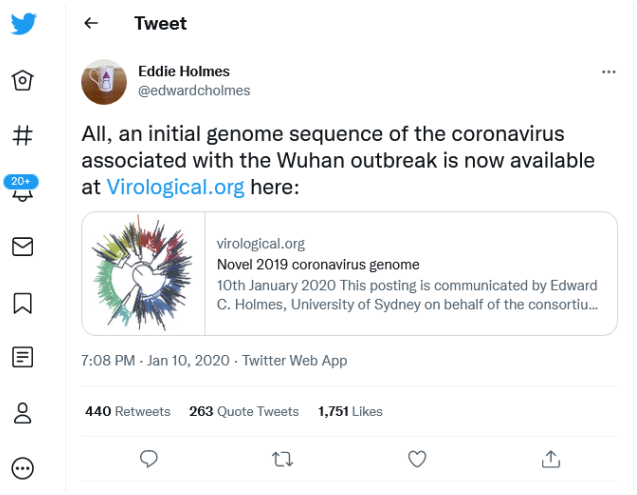
In *The Wuhan Lockdown*, Dr. Yang approaches the pandemic from the context of a sociologist and an expert in China's social media. Wuhan is the city where the COVID19 pandemic first emerged. It is one of China's largest, with a population of about 11 million, and lies at the center of China's most important railway and highway lines. What became a global pandemic started in the key city in China's heartland as the country prepared for the Lunar New Year festival – China's most important holiday – and also for an important annual government event, when the media tends to shun negative news.

Wuhan timeline for January 2020:

January 1 – The Public Security Department in Wuhan posted a report criticizing a group for using social media to inappropriately talk about cases of pneumonia in medical institutions. This group, which became known as "The Anonymous Eight," were being "dealt with according to the law" and the report infamously claimed that no human-to-human transmission had been found. One of the eight turned out to be Dr. Li Wenliang at Wuhan Central Hospital, whose death from COVID19 a month later would cause an outpouring of grief across China and the world.

January 6-18 – Congresses held at the municipal and provincial levels in Wuhan, which Dr. Yang cites as the reason for a 20-day delay in informing the public in Wuhan of a new epidemic.

January 10 – an Australian virologist tweeted the genome sequence for "the coronavirus associated with the Wuhan outbreak," working with his Chinese colleagues who agreed to make their discovery available for free to the scientific community, though they were not able to do this from within China. This scientific collaboration allowed for the speedy development of vaccines in the US and around the world.



January 20 – Dr. Zhong Nanshan, a pulmonologist known as "China's Dr. Fauci" refuted the official line and publicly acknowledged that the novel

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pneumonia could be transmitted from human to human. He would later receive China's highest honor for his role in fighting COVID19.

January 22 – The Wuhan municipal government announced in the evening that a strict lockdown would begin the next day at 10 a.m.

January 23 – The start of a 76-day lockdown for Wuhan, which suspended all public transport and movement in and out of the city. Residents were confined to their homes until the lockdown ended April 8th. By February 6, two new special hospitals opened to handle the surge of patients. Wuhan reported 50,340 cases and 3,869 deaths from COVID19, numbers that have been challenged as underreported.

January 25 – The Chinese Lunar New Year for 2020, the start of the Year of the Rat in the Chinese zodiac.

In *The Wuhan Lockdown*, Dr. Yang studies public diaries kept by residents of Wuhan and beyond and examines social media posts to understand how the pandemic unfolded. The diary by Fang Fang became the most well-known, and is available in English: Wuhan Diary by Fang Fang (Harper Collins, 2020).

He concludes with four broad themes:

- **An obsession with appearance** blinded Chinese government authorities to the urgency of the epidemic outbreak, with disastrous effects. "In crucial ways, the lockdown of Wuhan was a drastic step to make up for regulatory failures in the weeks prior to it. Resulting from an obsession with appearance, those failures ended up damaging it." (p. 215)
- **Active citizenship was important** to Wuhan's emergence from the pandemic. He counts writing and sharing diaries online as one example of this. "Strictly following the regimen of quarantine and stay-at-home orders required self-discipline and sacrifice; it benefited family and collective well-being. As such, it was also a moral act of citizenship, a form of active inaction." (p. 219)
- **Moral feelings, sometimes expressed in public rants, created a "moral community"** that became hubs for sharing information and navigating crises. This includes the example of what became known as "Wuhan Swearing Aunty," an anonymous rant by an elderly woman venting her anger over unresponsive local government representatives. "Citizens cooperated with government authorities out of a sense of civic responsibility. They complained and protested only when party authorities failed to fulfill their official duties. The Wuhan aunty's swearing speech went viral on social media because her remarks contained the force of moral persuasion." (p. 220)
- **Digital infrastructures matter.** "The experiences of people during lockdown were inextricably tied to the infrastructural support of the internet. The whole galaxy of digital networks – social media, smart phones, apps – was essential to governmental agencies in fulfilling basic functions, to essential workers in performing their work, to citizen in meeting daily livelihood needs, to educators and students in conducting virtual classes, and to volunteers and activists in organizing public support." (p. 222)

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Unit 6 • Further Resources

Possibly the best current overview of US China relations is John Pomfret's *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Picador, 2016). A Milwaukee native, Mr. Pomfret covered China as a correspondent for the *Washington Post*. This book is included in the materials for East Asia in the Upper Midwest.

Some useful links currently available to stream on YouTube:

- Book talk by John Pomfret on The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom, 2016, 56 minutes
- PBS NewsHour Presents China: Power and Prosperity, July 2020, 57 minutes
- Pride & Shame: The Roots Of US-China Tensions | When Titans Clash Ep ¼, CNA Documentary, January 2021, 49 minutes

Other background materials to be aware of:

- **Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China** by Evan Osnos (National Book Award Winner). Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. 416 pages.
- **Beautiful Country** (memoir) by Qian Julie Wang. Doubleday, 2021. 464 pages.
- **Beijing Jeep: A case study of Western business in China** (Fortune magazine included this book on its list of 75 all-time great books about business in 2005) by Jim Mann. Westview Press, 1997. 351 pages.
- **Blockchain Chicken Farm and Other Stories of Tech in China's Countryside** by Xiaowei Wang. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020. 243 pages.
- **Chaos Under Heaven: Trump, Xi, and the Battle for the Twenty-First Century** by Josh Rogin. Mariner Books, 2021. 384 pages.
- **China in Ten Words** (essay collection) by Yu Hua. Translated from Chinese by Allan H. Barr. Anchor, 2012. 240 pages.
- **China's Environmental Challenges** by Judith Shapiro. Polity, 2015 (2nd edition). 256 pages.
- **Country Driving: A Chinese Road Trip** (NYT Notable Book of the Year) by Peter Hessler. Harper Perennial, 2011. 448 pages.
- **God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan** by Jonathon Spence. W. W. Norton & Company, 1996. 432 pages.
- **Land of Big Numbers** (one of Barack Obama's Summer Reading Picks for 2021) by Te-Ping Chen. Mariner Books, 2021. 256 pages.
- **Life and Death in Shanghai** (memoir of the Cultural Revolution) by Nien Cheng. Grove Press, 2010 (reissue edition). 560 pages.
- **Son of the Revolution** (memoir of the Cultural Revolution) by Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro. Vintage, 1983. 320 pages.
- **Stilwell and the American Experience in China** by Barbara Tuchman. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2017. 768 pages.
- **The Souls of China: The return of religion after Mao** by Ian Johnson. Vintage, 2018. 480 pages.
- **Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China** (family history) by Jung Chang. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 538 pages.

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