



China's Policy and Presence in Africa

Cours en ligne pour le Semestre 1 de 3^e année

Titre du cours - *Course title*

China's Policy and Presence in Africa

Cours en ligne / Online course

Langue / Language of instruction : English

Enseignant(s)- *Teacher(s)*

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Descriptif du cours - *Course description*

In the 1990's, China devoted great political attention to African countries in order to compete with Taiwan for international recognition, to build solidarity with members of the Third World bloc in the United Nations and other world organizations, to facilitate some advantageous trade in oil and other commodities, and to portray itself internationally as a power with growing international stature and influence. The Chinese government generally avoided commitments that would involve substantial Chinese aid or other resources or that would antagonize countries in the continent's many conflicts. Although Chinese media at the time often focused on themes of opposition to US dominance and hegemony in world affairs, the low level of US or allied powers involvement in African affairs meant that Beijing devoted a low level of media and political attention to criticizing US and other power's policies that were incompatible with Chinese goals on the continent.

By the late 1990's, the Chinese leaders characterized People Republic of China (PRC)-Third World solidarity as essential for promoting China's multipolar foreign policy, defending PRC position in international forums such as the United Nations, and standing firm against US global dominance. Aspiring to more equal status with the world's great power, China also viewed positive relations with African states and other developing countries as important for pressing forward on national priorities of securing vital energy and minerals resources, expanding exports, including conventional arms, and pressing for eventual Taiwan-mainland reunification.

A Popular Republic of China focus on trade priorities was present across Africa in the late 1990's. China pursued oil deals, notably with Nigeria, Sudan, and Angola, mineral extraction rights with Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, exports of textiles, consumer goods, machinery and others manufactured goods to multiple countries, Chinese companies were involved in construction of infrastructure projects throughout Africa financed by international and Chinese sources.

The Twenty-first century showed a deepening and broadening of Chinese interactions with African countries along with the lines set down in the 1990s. The rise in Chinese trade, investment financing, and high-level official interaction with African countries stood in contrast with the often stagnant and contentious relations African countries had with developed countries and international financial institutions. A marked increase in Chinese purchases of oil and raw materials from Africa, a concurrent effort to foster Chinese exports to African markets, and an increase in Chinese constructions projects in Africa were new and important drivers of Chinese interests in the continent.

A landmark in China's efforts to formulate a comprehensive outreach to Africa came in October 2000 when China's leaders and the leaders of forty-five African countries met in Beijing to form the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (CACF). They agreed that CACF would meet every three years to further mutual economic development and cooperation. But the amounts of Chinese assistance to Africa seemed modest and very much less than that provided by developed countries and international financial institutions.

During the 2010's, the majority of Chinese foreign policy initiatives in Africa were commercial. The Xi Jinping government took a few steps that increased China's foreign policy profile in non-commercial areas as sending troops to support UN peacekeeping missions. The Xi government launched various Silk Road initiatives and proposed investment, loans, and financing plan supporting Chinese interacting with other developing countries. China emphasized its investment and support for large infrastructure projects where Chinese construction firms would play a leading role. China wants to assist Africa to develop « Three major Networks » railway, road and regional aviation.

There are existing constraints and limitations to recent multibillion-dollar Chinese proposals throughout the developing world. There are evidences that China implements only a fraction of its seemingly very expensive pledges. Chinese enterprises more often than not are losing money in foreign invested deals. Regarding foreign investment, China deals accounts for less than 5 percent of foreign investment in Africa. China is « one among many » foreign powers in Africa.

Prerequisites:

The prerequisites of this course are to be highly interested in international affairs, to have basic knowledge of China, to be familiar with using maps and economic graphs and data. Finally, the students will need to have basic knowledge of the current situation in the biggest African countries, and more precisely of the main economic powers of the continent.

Learning outcomes:

The main aim is for the students to be able at the end of the course to have a full understanding of the rise in importance of Africa in China's foreign policy and the Chinese goals set as gaining international influence and reaching natural resources in Africa.

Exercises during the course and grading:

Especially during the 6 hours of workshops and also during the course on a more lighter mode, the students will be asked to do some press review on China-Africa relations and the different themes in the press, to read some academic articles chosen by the professor in relations with the course, to read and analyze some official documents and discourses coming from the authorities of China and the United States. Some oral presentations will be made by the students on press review or readings of academic articles. They can be asked to do short presentation on a specific point of the course (economic data, negotiations between China and the US if ever).

The grading will be based on those different oral presentations and short writing papers all along the course.

Plan– Course outline

Course structure : 18 hours of course and 6 hours of workshop

Session 1: The start of China's great political attention to African countries in the 1990's

Session 2: The Chinese search for growing international stature thanks to Africa-China relations in the 1990's

Session 3: The Chinese national priorities in Africa in the 1990's and the deepening and broadening of China's relations with Africa in the 2000's

Session 4: *workshop* on the previous themes of the course (1 to 3)

Session 5: The search of oil and raw materials

Session 6: The institutional frame for the China-Africa relations : the China-Africa Cooperation Forum

Session 7: The military relations with African countries

Session 8: *workshop* on the previous themes of the course (4 to 7)

Session 9: Continuity and change in Xi Jinping's Africa policy

Session 10: The Silk and Road initiatives in Africa

Session 11: The first Chinese military base is in Africa: Djibouti

Session 12: *workshop*, the Sino-African relations after the Covid-19 pandemic

Bibliographie - Bibliography

Books :

TAYLOR Ian, *China's new role in Africa*, Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 2008
LANTEIGNE Marc, *Chinese foreign policy : an introduction*, 4th Edition, Routledge, June 25,2019, see the chapter related to the Belt and road initiative

Articles :

BRAUTIGAM Deborah, *A critical look at Chinese « debt-trap diplomacy : the rise of a meme*, *_Area Development and Policy_*, Volume 5, 2020 - Issue 1, **published online:** 6 Dec 2019

CABESTAN, Jean-Pierre, *China's military base in Djibouti : a microcosm of China's growing competition with the United States and new bipolarity*, *The Journal of Contemporary China*, 23 december 2019, published online.

PAIRAULT Thierry, *China in Africa: Goods Supplier, Service Provider rather than Investor*. *Bridges Africa*, 2018, 7 (5). ([halshs-01882464](#))

BLANCHARD Jean-Marc, *The geopolitics of China's maritime silk road initiative*, *Geopolitics*, vol 22, 18 April 2017 Issue 2.

ZHAO Suisheng, *China's Belt-Road initiative as the signature of President Xi Jinping diplomacy : easier said than done*, *Journal of contemporary China*, vol 29-2020, issue 123

Websites :

Council on Foreign relations : *China in Africa*.