

The China-Russia Convergence in a New Global Order

Course Content

The course will comprise five weekly sessions of 75 minutes each, consisting of lectures illustrated with PowerPoint slides, with time reserved at the end of each session for questions and open discussion. Before each session, suggested background readings will be sent by email to registered students.

This will be a team-taught course. Because the instructors have backgrounds in assessing Chinese and Russian developments respectively, they will both participate in the presentations for most topics addressed, and in fielding questions during the open discussion period.

This will be a hybrid course. The Virtual Assistant (VA) will curate questions and comments by online students employing the Chat function, grouping them by topic so the instructors can address them as a bloc during the open discussion period. The VA will also prepare recordings of the class sessions; the instructor will send a link to the class recording to accompany the background readings that are emailed to students between sessions.

The overall progression of the course will be as follows:

Session One - Introduction and Overview. Historical and Geopolitical Background. The China-Russia Convergence in the Context of the War in Ukraine. Professed Interest in a “New Global Order” by Chinese and Russian Leaders. Reactions by Western and Third-World Countries.

Session Two – Authoritarianism in China and Russia. Leadership Profiles: Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. Characteristics of Authoritarianism as Currently Practiced in China and in Russia. The Authoritarianism-Democracy Faceoff. Foreign Policy Objectives and Tactics in Confronting Democratic Powers Led by the United States.

Session Three – The Convergence Takes Shape. Xi Meets Putin in Moscow, March 2023: Limits of the “No-Limits Partnership.” How Xi and Putin See an Anti-US World Order Taking Shape. The China-Russia Convergence in Relation to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Geo-Strategic Positioning by Chinese and Russian Military Assets.

Session Four – Pitfalls and Flashpoints. Potential Strains in the China-Russia Convergence as the War in Ukraine Unfolds. Economic Challenges. Repercussions of Russia’s Being Seen as “Junior Partner” to China. The Taiwan, North Korea, and South China Sea Wildcards.

Session Five – The Road Ahead. How US Geo-Political Strategy May Be Affected by the China-Russia Convergence. How the International System Can Still Check China and Russia.