

BRIAN C. CHAO

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EDUCATION

PhD in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, 2020
Dissertation committee: Avery Goldstein (chair), Michael C. Horowitz, Alex Weisiger.
Fields: International Relations, comparative politics.
Certificate in College and University Teaching, 2017
AM in Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, 2016
AB (*cum laude*) in Government, with High Honors, Dartmouth College, 2009

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Continental Powers and Naval Development: Strategy Coherence, Threat Diffusion, and Success at Sea. Cass Series: Naval Policy and History 75. London: Routledge, 2026.
“Muddled Waters: Freedom-of-Navigation Operations as Signals in the South China Sea,” with Hyun-Binn Cho. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 27, no. 1 (February 2025): 154-78.
“New Imagined Geographies into Old Geobodies: Problems and Prospects for China and Taiwan in the South China Sea.” *Territory, Politics, Governance* 12, no. 5 (May 2024): 628-48.
“Security in the Asia-Pacific and Signaling at Sea,” with Hyun-Binn Cho. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 23, no. 3 (September 2023): 511-39.
“Three’s a Crowd: The Impact of Two Chinas on the China Seas Territorial Disputes.” In *Security, Development and Sustainability in Asia: A World Scientific Reference on Major Policy and Development Issues of 21st Century Asia*, edited by Zhiqun Zhu, vol. 1, *Geopolitics, Security and Foreign Policy*, 235-51. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, 2023.
“‘A Brilliant Second’: France as a Naval Great Power.” In *Navies in Multipolar Worlds: From the Age of Sail to the Present*, edited by Paul Kennedy and Evan Wilson, 23-46. Cass Series: Naval Policy and History 66. London: Routledge, 2021.

OTHER MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Writing

China, Taiwan and the Crime of Aggression: An International Criminal Law Analysis of China’s Military Operations in the Indo-Pacific Region, with John Dotson and Brian Zhang. JuraLaw, 2024.

[“Erasing the American Global Military Footprint Won’t Make a Better World,”](#) with Jahara Matissek. *Newsweek*, December 19, 2023.

[“Five Recommendations for Left-of-Boom Security Assistance to Taiwan,”](#) with Jahara Matissek and William Reno. War on the Rocks. December 18, 2023.

[“War Books: Taiwan.”](#) United States Military Academy Modern War Institute. May 5, 2023.

[“A New Analogy: America and China through the Lens of the Pax Britannica.”](#) US Naval Institute. May 2, 2022.

[“Protecting the Taiwan Strait in the 21st Century.”](#) East Asia Forum. February 4, 2021.

[“Coast Guards Could Accidentally Spark War in the South China Sea.”](#) The National Interest. June 28, 2016.

[“East Asia’s Lessons from World War I.”](#) The Diplomat. July 16, 2014.

[“China’s Military Political Commissar System in Comparative Perspective,”](#) with Kenneth Allen and Ryan Kinsella. *China Brief* 13, no. 5 (March 4, 2013): 15-19.

Speaking

[“Boats against the Current: Continental Great Powers, Naval Development, and China in the 21st Century.”](#) Brown University China Chat. April 21, 2026.

[Lecture on continental powers’ naval development and contemporary China](#) to the Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies, March 17, 2026.

[“Continental Powers and Naval Development.”](#) Interview by Jonathan Selling. Center for International Maritime Security *Sea Control* 598, March 12, 2026.

[“US Freedom-of-Navigation Operations as Signals in the South China Sea,”](#) with Hyun-Binn Cho. Franco-German Observatory of the Indo-Pacific. January 29, 2025.

[“The Taiwan Question at 75: Coexistence and Confrontation, Past and Future.”](#) The College of New Jersey Politics Forum. November 1, 2024.

Testimony on Taiwanese statehood and right to self-determination at The Court of the Citizens of the World’s China Tribunal, July 8, 2024.

[“China’s Rise and the Taiwan Question: The Conventional Wisdom and Underexplored Issues.”](#) Lecture to the Union League of Philadelphia, Whitmarsh, PA, April 27, 2023.

[“The Taiwan Question: Cross-Strait Relations and US Policy Past, Present, and Future.”](#) Naval War College Foundation Newport Lecture Series. Video recorded April 19, 2023.

[“History Rhymes: Lessons from the Past for Today’s US-China Maritime Competition.”](#) Maritime Security Challenges Virtual Session 10. Video recorded December 1, 2021.

[“French Seapower.”](#) Interview by Jared Samuelson. Center for International Maritime Security *Sea Control* 268, August 15, 2021.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

American Political Science Association Annual Meeting and Exhibition, 2021, 2024, September 2026 (scheduled)

Columbia University in the City of New York Conference on East Asia, 2016

Cornell University Interdisciplinary Graduate Workshop on Peace and Conflict, 2019

International Studies Association Annual Convention, 2017, 2019, 2024, 2025, 2026
ISA/APSA International Security Studies Conference, 2023, 2024, 2025
Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, 2015
United States Naval Academy McMullen Naval History Symposium, 2019, 2021
University of Pennsylvania Conference on International Borders in a Globalizing World, 2019
Yale University Naval History Conference, 2018

TEACHING

Naval War College

The Taiwan Question: Cross-Strait History, US Policy, and the Future, 2022-present
National Security Decision Making, 2021-present
Theater Security Decision Making, 2021-present

University of Pennsylvania

Introduction to International Relations, with Alex Weisiger, 2019
American Foreign Policy, with Michael C. Horowitz, 2017
War, Strategy, and Politics, with Michael C. Horowitz, 2016
International Security, with Avery Goldstein, 2016
Chinese Politics, with Avery Goldstein, 2015

Guest Teaching

Chinese Foreign Policy, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, February 2026
Contemporary Asia, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2024
Advanced Strategist Program Course, Naval War College, 2022, 2023
Strategy and Policy, United States Military Academy, 2023
Joint Military Operations, Naval War College, 2022, 2025, August 2026
Asian Security, California State University Maritime Academy, 2022
Governing China: The Chinese Party-State and PRC Foreign Policy, Naval War College, 2022
International Crises, Haverford College, 2020
Critical Inquiries, Moore College of Art and Design, 2019

AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE

Organizational Affiliations

American Political Science Association
International Institute for Strategic Studies
International Studies Association

Naval War College Service

Asia-Pacific Studies Prize student essay judging committee, 2022-present
International Master of Arts Program examination scorer, July 2026
Advanced Strategist Program master’s thesis advisor, 2022, 2022-23

Search committees

For the tenured senior historian, John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research, 2024-25

For a tenured associate professor, Cyber and Innovation Policy Institute, Strategic and Operational Research Department, 2023

For a tenure-track assistant professor, Cyber and Innovation Policy Institute, Strategic and Operational Research Department, 2022

Theater Security Decision Making International Security sub-course curriculum working group, National Security Affairs Department, 2021-22

Peer Reviewer

Asian Security; East Asia Forum; *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*; *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*; *International Security*; *Joint Force Quarterly*; *The Pacific Review*; *Parameters*; Routledge; *Territory, Politics, Governance*; *Texas National Security Review*

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Chinese: Mandarin; simplified and traditional.

Certificate in Chinese Language, National Taiwan University, 2011

Certificate in Chinese Language, Tsinghua University, 2010

Certificate in Modern Chinese, Peking University (Stanford-Peking University Program), 2009

French

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Research Fellow, Modern War Institute, United States Military Academy, 2022-23

Contributing Analyst, Asia-Pacific Desk, Wikistrat Inc., 2012-15

Research Associate for East Asia, Center for Intelligence Research and Analysis, Defense Group Inc., 2011-14

Country Director and Dartmouth College Class of 1964 Public Policy Intern; China, Taiwan, and Mongolia Team; Office of the Secretary of Defense; US Department of Defense, 2008

Intern, Presidential Materials Staff, Office of Presidential Libraries, US National Archives and Records Administration, 2007

Intern, Schools Program, and Associate *ad interim*, Public Programs, World Affairs Council of Northern California, 2006

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