

Global China Studies Seminar Series Fall 2025

Ritsumeikan Global China Studies Seminar Early Career Researcher Series

Title: Public International Law and Commercial Diplomacy: China's Strategic Utilization of Mediation and Arbitration in the Belt and Road Initiative

Speaker: Ms. Harini Weerasinghe, Attorney at Law (LLB Sri Lanka), PhD Candidate at Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China

Date/Time: 16:40-18:10 (JST), Wednesday, 26 November

Venue: Hybrid (Osaka Ibaraki Campus AS561;
<https://ritsumei-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/94688123466> (no registration required))

Abstract: This seminar will examine China's mediation and arbitration strategies under the Belt and Road Initiative from perspectives of international law and commercial diplomacy, by using case studies including those from Sri Lanka. Ms Weerasinghe will also share insights from her journey pursuing a funded PhD after obtaining legal qualifications, offering valuable guidance for students and early-career researchers considering international academic careers.

Biography: Ms. Weerasinghe holds a Bachelor of Laws (Second Class Honours) from the University of London and a BA (Honours) in International Relations (Second Class Upper Division) from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She earned her Masters in Law with Merit from the University of Colombo, and completed her Diploma in Commercial Arbitration at the ICLP Arbitration Centre of Sri Lanka and her postgraduate diploma in Archaeology at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Currently an Attorney at Law in Sri Lanka, she is pursuing her PhD at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in China.

Ritsumeikan Global China Studies Seminar Series

Title: China's Rising Foreign Ministry: Practices and Representations of Assertive Diplomacy

Speaker: Dr. Dylan M.H. Loh, Associate Professor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Date/Time: 12:30-14:00 (JST), Thursday, 27 November

Venue: Hybrid (Osaka Ibaraki Campus AN517;
<https://ritsumei-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/94688123466> (no registration required))

Abstract: China's rise and its importance to international relations as a discipline-defining phenomenon is well recognized. Yet when scholars analyze China's foreign relations, they typically focus on Beijing's military power, economic might, or political leaders. As a result, most traditional assessments miss a crucial factor: China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In this talk, Dylan M.H Loh discusses how MOFA gradually became the main interface of China's foreign policy and the primary vehicle through which the idea of 'China' is produced, articulated, and represented on the world stage. Arguing that MOFA has increased in importance and influence, it offers an original reading of Chinese foreign policy, with wide-ranging implications for international relations. By shedding light on the dynamics of Chinese diplomacy and how assertiveness is constructed, Loh

provides readers with a re-appraisal of China's foreign ministry and the role it performs in China's rise.

Biography: Dr. Dylan M.H Loh is Associate Professor at the Public Policy & Global Affairs programme at Nanyang Technological University. His research encompasses Chinese foreign policy, international diplomacy, and conceptions of international order. With a PhD from Cambridge University, his work appears in leading journals including *China Quarterly*, *Cooperation & Conflict*, *International Studies Review*, and *International Affairs*. His book, *China's Rising Foreign Ministry* (Stanford University Press, 2024) received an 'Honorable Mention' for the 2025 Best Book Award in Diplomatic Studies by the International Studies Association.

Ritsumeikan Global China Studies Seminar Series

Title: Who Governs Deep-Sea Mining? A Battle between Global Governance and National Governance

Speaker: Dr. Lai-Ha Chan, Senior Lecturer, University of Technology Sydney

Date/Time: 16:40-18:10 (JST), Wednesday, 3 December

Venue: Hybrid (Osaka Ibaraki Campus AS561;
<https://ritsumei-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/94688123466> (no registration required))

Abstract: As deep-sea mining emerges as a critical source of minerals essential for digital technology and green energy transitions, crucial governance questions arise. Dr. Chan examines tensions between the International Seabed Authority's (ISA) multilateral framework and recent unilateral approaches, particularly President Trump's April 2025 executive order "Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources," which bypasses ISA approval. This seminar analyses China's dual strategy: advocating for ISA's Mining Code while pursuing bilateral agreements with Pacific Island countries like Cook Islands, Kiribati, and Nauru—strategically important due to their proximity to the mineral-rich Clarion-Clipperton Zone. Using a constructivist-interpretive approach, Dr. Chan explores how competing interpretations of "freedom of the seas" versus "common heritage of mankind" principles shape national strategies for accessing these strategic resources.

Biography: Dr. Lai-Ha Chan is Senior Lecturer in the Social and Political Sciences Program, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and a Research Associate at the Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. A former Fung Global Fellow at Princeton University (2016-2017), her research on China's role in global and regional politics has earned two award-winning journal articles, two monographs, two edited volumes, 16 peer-review journal articles and 15 book chapters. Her current research foci centre on global governance and unilateralism. Dr Chan has recently been awarded the Japan Foundation Indo-Pacific Partnership Fellowship.

For more information and registration, please contact Professor Miwa Hirono's Office at mh-rep@gst.ritsumei.ac.jp.