

EAS 677.123: CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Winter 2022 – 2 credits

Mondays 1pm to 3:00pm

Class Meeting Room: 3556 Dana Building

Faculty: Bilal Butt, PhD.

School for Environment & Sustainability

E-mail: bilalb@umich.edu

Twitter: [@enviro_conflict](https://twitter.com/enviro_conflict)

Tel. (734)-615-6149

Office: 2502 Dana Building

Mailbox: 1535 Dana Building

Office hours: By Appointment

Course outline

Although the topic of geopolitics is not new, its application to the fields of environment and sustainability are becoming more important for both theory and practice. A number of new books, articles and approaches have centred around international environmental geopolitics that focus on (as

Dalby has stated): 1. Inquiring into how human agency, and particularly uneven power relationships, is portrayed or obscured in geopolitical claims about environmental issues, and; (2) 2. Recognize ways in which selective, spatial focus, such as universal generalizations about environmental processes or place-specific, environmental situations, serve to legitimize particular perspectives or political interests

The purpose of this class is to look at these questions within the context of terrestrial, atmospheric, oceanic, and outer space contexts. The class would be taught in a seminar-style with two readings per week being discussed. Evaluation would include a short response paper at the end of term

Important COVID-19 Policies

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic creates unprecedented, stressful circumstances that affect your academic, professional, and personal capacities. We pledge to be intentional and adaptable in supporting your physical and psychological health needs, which will undoubtedly be affected by the pandemic during the semester; we ask the same of you for us. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with your concerns and needs. Regardless of class format, we are committed to continuing to provide you with a meaningful learning opportunity this semester.

See [Maize and Blueprint](#) for the latest updates about the University of Michigan and COVID-19.

To best and most safely serve all course participants currently, please read this document in its entirety.

Course and Safety Logistics

For the time being, our course will be offered in a synchronous or “live”, in-person/hybrid format. Due to the discussion-based nature of our course, all students, whether remote or in-person, are required to join our lecture and discussion at the designated class time. All students will have access to the Zoom link for each



session, if in-person learners need to stay home. If you are unable to attend a session, please let the Graduate Student Instructor know as soon as possible.

Course Communications

All course communications will be sent via Canvas Notifications and email (course listserv: EAS542-2020@umich.edu). Please be sure to check both frequently. The Graduate Student Instructor should be the first point of contact for questions or concerns about the course, logistics, and assignments.

In-Person Safety Logistics

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been required for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. *Your participation in this course on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class.* Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#), the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#) and SEAS [Questions & Concerns](#) document. Your ability to participate in this course in-person as well as your grade may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis (if available) or to disenroll from the class. We also encourage you to review the [Statement of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#) and check-in with the Office of Academic Affairs Director to navigate support and resources for you.

In-person sessions will be offered as long as it is safe in Ann Arbor. The opportunity to take this course in person depends on everyone's ability to abide by all safety regulations:

- Each room will have a defined layout to accommodate social distancing.
- Students will have assigned seats to assist with contact tracing in the event of an exposure.
- Each room will be equipped with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. Students are responsible for disinfecting their table/chair when they enter the room at the start of class and using hand sanitizer.
- Each student will be provided with a [starter kit](#) with two masks, two bandanas, and a small bottle of sanitizer.
- Students are required to wear face coverings, wash after each day of use, and bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use.
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home and access the course remotely. All students will have access to the online lecture for each offering.
- **If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis or to disenroll from the class.**

Follow safety precautions and practice recommended procedures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Stay home or leave class if you:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Are sick.
- Have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

Remote Learning Logistics

This course will be offered through Zoom Meetings. Each remote-learner is required to download the [Zoom application](#). This is the only software required for this course. Please see the below requirements for remote learning:

- This course is synchronous. This means that all students are required to attend the lecture at the designated course time:
- Students are *strongly encouraged to have their webcams turned on* for the entire duration of the class session. This allows for better engagement with course materials, classmates, and the instructors. However, we understand that there may be situations in which this is not possible.
- Please keep your mic muted unless you are speaking.
- Due to the hybrid format of this course, we would like those who are remote learners to still engage verbally as much as possible. We ask that you utilize the chat function in Zoom to request an opportunity to speak and the Graduate Student Instructor will moderate the chat to give everyone the opportunity to participate to their fullest potential.

Preparedness to Switch to Fully Remote

If the situation evolves in such a manner that in-person/hybrid learning is not possible, we will switch to a fully remote format. In this case, session formats will consist of approximately 45 minutes of lecture from Dr. Butt followed by smaller group breakout discussion sessions for the remainder of the available time. One of these breakouts will be facilitated by Dr. Butt and the other by the Graduate Student Instructor. However, given the unprecedented nature of this situation, we anticipate that we may need to amend plans to provide the best possible learning experience for our students. We ask for your patience, understanding, and adaptability throughout the course of the semester.

Copyright / Privacy Information

Course lectures will be audio/video recorded and made available to students *only in the event that they are unable to attend the class due to a reasonable explanation*. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact the Graduate Student Instructor the first week of class (or as soon as you enroll in the course, whichever is latest) to discuss alternative arrangements. Otherwise you will be asked to consent to be recorded for the purpose of sharing the recording with your classmates.

Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any Class Activity or Material without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Please see the [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#) for additional information.

Course prerequisites

There are no prerequisites, but I assume that students have a working knowledge of where places are located and can find out if they do not. This class is intended primarily for Masters and PhD students who are focused on research. It is theoretically heavy and draws on multiple epistemological approaches to the study of people and the environment.

Course format

Classes are discussion-oriented and draw heavily on readings from the literature (both the required and in some cases, the supplemental readings). Some discussions will be led by students and will involve the preparation of a carefully thought out set of discussion questions or discussion points. Material for the handouts can be drawn from the readings (e.g. key figures) or from other sources. All students are expected to do the readings and to be ready to discuss them in class.

Discussion Signup

Each week, a pair of students will prepare a list of questions for discussion and should be prepared to facilitate the discussion. This is intended to provide students with the ability to learn how to facilitate a group discussion and provide opportunities for inclusive leadership.

Academic Misconduct

Students are advised to thoroughly examine the student advocacy and judicial affairs website to understand what is meant by academic misconduct. The website can be accessed from here (http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_and_professional_integrity/).

Course readings

Additional readings (required): Will be provided as needed as pdf files on CANVAS

Readings Responses

A critical component of graduate education is the gain the ability to thoughtfully read and critique academic works as well as to formalize these critiques in a written form. To help you achieve this goal, you will be required to write a two to four-page response to the readings each two-week interval. You will receive a prompt for the first of the three responses, while the other four will be independently structured. You will post these responses to the CANVAS —Discussion section at pre-set due dates. During the end of each class period the instructor will provide a preview of the following assignment. It is important to develop and refine your own ideas as part of these responses Discussion section at pre-set due dates

Grading

Seminar Participation:	50%
Readings Responses (7 in total):	50%
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Total:	100%

Final grades are based on a total percentage for the term. Grade cut-off points (in terms of percentages) are as follows: A+ (100%), A (95.00 to 99.99%), A- (90.00 to 94.99%), B+ (87.00 to 89.99%), B (83.00 to 86.99%), B- (80.00 to 82.99%), C+ (77.00 to 79.99%), C (73.00 to 86.99%), C- (70.00 to 72.99%), D+ (67.00 to 69.99%), D (63.00 to 66.99%), D- (60.00 to 62.99%), E (50.00 to 59.99%), F (40.00 to 49.99%).

*Tentative Schedule

* Note that during the course it is possible that some of the topics and readings will have their dates changed, or contents altered. I will try to provide as much advance warning of changes as possible.

PART I: ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND TO ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Week 1: Course overview and what is Environmental Geopolitics

Friday January 7: Required Readings

1. O'Lear, S. (2020). Environmental geopolitics: An introduction to questions and research approaches. In *A research agenda for environmental geopolitics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. Chapter 1 in O'Lear, S. (2018). *Environmental geopolitics*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Supplementary

1. Dalby, S. (2003). Environmental geopolitics: Nature, culture, urbanity. *Handbook of cultural geography*, 595-612.
2. Dalby, S. (2014). Environmental geopolitics in the twenty-first century. *Alternatives*, 39(1), 3-16.
3. Dalby, S. (2020). *Anthropocene geopolitics: Globalization, security, sustainability*. University of Ottawa Press.

Week 2: Intimacy, Place, Politics and Violence

Friday January 14: Required Readings

1. Barabantseva, E., Mhurchú, A. N., & Peterson, V. S. (2021). Introduction: Engaging geopolitics through the lens of the intimate. *Geopolitics* 26(2): 343-356
2. Pain, R., & Staeheli, L. (2014). Introduction: Intimacy-geopolitics and violence. *Area*, 46(4), 344-347.

Supplementary

1. Genz, C., Pohl, L., Dobrusskin, J., & Helbrecht, I. (2021). Geopolitical Caesuras as Time-Space-Anchors of Ontological (In) security: The Case of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. *Geopolitics*, 1-24.
2. Tyerman, T. (2021). Everyday borders in Calais: The globally intimate injustices of segregation. *Geopolitics*, 26(2), 464-485.
3. Trogisch, L. (2021). Geographies of fear—The everyday (geo) politics of 'green' violence and militarization in the intended transboundary Virunga Conservation Area. *Geoforum*, 122, 92-102.

Week 3: Underground Geopolitics

Friday January 21: Required Readings

1. Himley, M. (2020). Underground geopolitics: Science, race, and territory in Peru during the late nineteenth century. In *A research agenda for environmental geopolitics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. DeBoom, Meredith J. "Nuclear (geo) political ecologies: A hybrid geography of Chinese investment in Namibia's uranium sector." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 46, no. 3 (2017): 53-83.

Supplementary

1. Flint, C., & Waddoups, M. (2021). South-South Cooperation or Core-Periphery Contention? Ghanaian and Zambian Perceptions of Economic Relations with China. *Geopolitics*, 26(3), 889-918.
2. Ahlborg, H., & Nightingale, A. J. (2021). Chimeras of resource geographies: Unbounding ontologies and knowing nature. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 22-33). Routledge.
3. Malin, S. A., & Alexis-Martin, B. (2020). Assessing the state of uranium research: Environmental justice, health, and extraction. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 7(2), 512-516.
4. Kama, K. (2021). Temporalities of (un) making a resource: Oil shales between presence and absence. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 57-67). Routledge.
5. Zalik, A. World-making and the deep seabed: Mining the Area beyond national jurisdiction. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 412-424). Routledge.

Week 4: Outer Space Geopolitics

Friday January 28: Required Readings

1. Klinger, J. M. (2021). Environmental geopolitics and outer space. *Geopolitics*, 26(3), 666-703.
2. Tait, E. R., & Nelson, I. L. (2021). Nonscalability and generating digital outer space natures in No Man's Sky. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 25148486211000746.

Supplementary

1. Ormrod, J. (2020). Outer space and new frontiers to environmental imaginations. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (pp. 243-61). Cambridge University Press.
2. Sammler, K. G., & Lynch, C. R. (2021). Apparatuses of observation and occupation: Settler colonialism and space science in Hawai'i. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 02637758211042374.
3. Hunter, H., & Nelson, E. (2021). Out of Place in Outer Space?: Exploring Orbital Debris through Geographical Imaginations. *Environment and Society*, 12(1), 227-245.

Week 5: Oceanic Geopolitics

Friday February 4: Required Readings

1. Havice, E. (2021). The environmental geopolitics of allocation: State power and institutional stability in Eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna management. *Political Geography*, 88, 102395.
2. Grundy-Warr, C., & Lin, S. (2020). The unseen transboundary commons that matter for Cambodia's inland fisheries: Changing sediment flows in the Mekong hydrological flood pulse. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 61(2), 249-265.

Supplementary

1. Campbell, L. M., Gray, N. J., Zigler, S. B. J., Acton, L., & Gruby, R. (2021). World-making through mapping: Large-scale marine protected areas and the transformation of global oceans. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 425-440). Routledge.

2. Andrews, N., Bennett, N. J., Le Billon, P., Green, S. J., Cisneros-Montemayor, A. M., Amongin, S., ... & Sumaila, U. R. (2021). Oil, fisheries and coastal communities: A review of impacts on the environment, livelihoods, space and governance. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 75, 102009.
3. Gray, N. J., Acton, L., & Campbell, L. M. (2020). Science, territory, and the geopolitics of high seas conservation. In *A Research Agenda for Environmental Geopolitics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

PART II: THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Week 6: Conservation Geopolitics

Friday February 11: Required Readings

1. Massé, F., & Margulies, J. D. (2020). The geopolitical ecology of conservation: The emergence of illegal wildlife trade as national security interest and the re-shaping of US foreign conservation assistance. *World Development*, 132, 104958.
2. Curley, A. (2021). Resources is just another word for colonialism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 79-90). Routledge.

Supplementary

1. Lunstrum, E., & Massé, F. (2021). Conservation and the production of wildlife as resource. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 358-368). Routledge.
2. Ramutsindela, M., Guyot, S., Boillat, S., Giraut, F., & Bottazzi, P. (2020). The geopolitics of protected areas. *Geopolitics*, 25(1), 240-266.
3. Farhadinia, M. S., Rostro-García, S., Feng, L., Kamler, J. F., Spalton, A., Shevtsova, E., ... & Macdonald, D. W. (2021). Big cats in borderlands: challenges and implications for transboundary conservation of Asian leopards. *Oryx*, 55(3), 452-460.
4. Trogisch, L. (2021). Geographies of fear—The everyday (geo) politics of ‘green’ violence and militarization in the intended transboundary Virunga Conservation Area. *Geoforum*, 122, 92-102.

Week 7: Tourism Geopolitics

Friday February 18: Required Readings

1. Mostafanezhad, M., & Norum, R. (2016). Towards a geopolitics of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 61(C), 226-228.
2. Henry, J., & Mostafanezhad, M. (2019). The geopolitics of volunteer tourism. In *Handbook of globalisation and tourism*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Supplementary Readings

1. Hall, C. M. (2017). Tourism and geopolitics: The political imaginary of territory, tourism and space. *Tourism and geopolitics: Issues from central and Eastern Europe*, 15-24.

2. Bhandari, K. (2019). Tourism and the geopolitics of Buddhist heritage in Nepal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 58-69.
3. Henry, J. (2021). The geopolitics of travel blogging. *Geopolitics*, 26(3), 817-837.
4. Miller, J. C., & Casino Jr, V. D. (2020). Spectacle, tourism and the performance of everyday geopolitics. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 38(7-8), 1412-1428.
5. Hall, C. M., & Saarinen, J. (2010). *Tourism and change in polar regions: Climate, environments and experiences* (Vol. 16). Routledge.

Week 8: Toxic Air Pollution

Friday February 25: Required Readings

1. Davies, Thom. "Slow violence and toxic geographies: 'Out of sight' to whom?." *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* (2019): 2399654419841063.
2. Mostafanezhad, M., & Evrard, O. (2021). Chronopolitics of crisis: A historical political ecology of seasonal air pollution in northern Thailand. *Geoforum*, 124, 400-408.

Supplementary

1. Goldstein, J. E. (2020). The volumetric political forest: Territory, satellite fire mapping, and Indonesia's burning peatland. *Antipode*, 52(4), 1060-1082.
2. Mostafanezhad, M., & Evrard, O. (2020). Environmental geopolitics of rumor: the sociality of uncertainty during northern Thailand's smoky season. In *A Research Agenda for Environmental Geopolitics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. Mostafanezhad, M., & Dressler, W. (2021). Violent atmospheres: Political ecologies of livelihoods and crises in Southeast Asia. *Geoforum*.

Week 9: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Friday March 4: Required Readings

Week 10: Climate Change, Security and Adaptation

Friday March 11: Required Readings

1. Mikulewicz, M. (2020). The discursive politics of adaptation to climate change. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(6), 1807-1830.
2. Carton, W., & Edstedt, K. (2021). Making, and remaking, a world of carbon: Uneven geographies of carbon sequestration. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Resource Geography* (pp. 401-411). Routledge.

Supplementary:

1. Chinwe Philomina Oramah, Odd Einar Olsen & Kenneth Arne Pettersen Gould (2021) Assessing the impact of the securitization narrative on climate change adaptation in Nigeria, *Environmental Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/09644016.2021.1970456
2. Mackenzie Burnett, Katharine J. Mach, (2021). A “precariously unprepared” Pentagon? Climate security beliefs and decision-making in the U.S. military. *Global Environmental Change* 70 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102345>.
3. Dalby, S. (2021). Global climate change and security threats. In Handbook of Security and the Environment. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Week 11: COVID-19

Friday March 18: Required Readings

1. Grundy-Warr, C., & Lin, S. (2020). COVID-19 geopolitics: silence and erasure in Cambodia and Myanmar in times of pandemic. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 61(4-5), 493-510.
2. Cole, J., & Dodds, K. (2021). Unhealthy geopolitics: can the response to COVID-19 reform climate change policy?. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 99(2), 148.

Supplementary

1. Mayer, M., Bichler, B. F., Pikkemaat, B., & Peters, M. (2021). Media discourses about a superspreader destination: How mismanagement of Covid-19 triggers debates about sustainability and geopolitics. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 91, 103278.
2. Bollyky, T. J., Murray, C. J., & Reiner, R. C. (2021). Epidemiology, not geopolitics, should guide COVID-19 vaccine donations. *The Lancet*.
3. Cole, J., & Dodds, K. (2021). Unhealthy geopolitics? Bordering disease in the time of coronavirus. *Geographical Research*, 59(2), 169-181.

PART III: REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Week 12: The Caucasuses

Friday March 25: Required Readings

1. Koch, N., & Tynkkynen, V. P. (2021). The geopolitics of renewables in Kazakhstan and Russia. *Geopolitics*, 26(2), 521-540.
2. Laruelle, M. (2015). The US Silk Road: geopolitical imaginary or the repackaging of strategic interests?. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 56(4), 360-375.

Supplementary

1. Valizadeh, A., & Sadeghi, M. (2021). The Convention on the Legal Regime of the Caspian Sea and Iran's Position in the South Caucasus Energy Geopolitics. *Central Eurasia Studies*, 14(1), 153-176.
2. Peña-Ramos, J. A., Bagus, P., & Amirov-Belova, D. (2021). The North Caucasus Region as a Blind Spot in the “European Green Deal”: Energy Supply Security and Energy Superpower Russia. *Energies*, 14(1), 17.

3. Spatharou, A. (2001). Geopolitics of Caspian oil: The role of the integration of the Caspian region into world economy in maintaining stability in the Caucasus. In *The politics of Caspian oil* (pp. 20-50). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Week 13: Polar Geopolitics

Friday April 1: Required Readings

1. Avango, D., & Roberts, P. (2017). Heritage, conservation, and the geopolitics of Svalbard: writing the history of arctic environments. In *Arctic Environmental Modernities* (pp. 125-143). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
2. Dodds, K. (2021). Geopolitics and ice humanities: Elemental, metaphorical and volumetric reverberations. *Geopolitics*, 26(4), 1121-1149

Supplementary

1. Powell, R. C., & Dodds, K. (Eds.). (2014). *Polar geopolitics?: Knowledges, resources and legal regimes*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. Dodds, K., & Hemmings, A. D. (2013). Britain and the British Antarctic Territory in the wider geopolitics of the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean. *International Affairs*, 89(6), 1429-1444.
3. Kruse, F., Nobles, G. R., de Jong, M., van Bodegom, R. M., van Oortmerssen, G. G., Kooistra, J., ... & Dee, M. W. (2021). Human–environment interactions at a short-lived Arctic mine and the long-term response of the local tundra vegetation. *Polar Record*, 57
4. Salazar, J. F., & Dodds, K. (2020). Geosocial polar futures and the material geopolitics of frozen soils. *Thinking with soils: Material politics and social theory*, 123-140.

Week 14: Middle Eastern Geopolitics

Friday April 8: Required Readings

1. Hoffmann, C., & Matin, K. (2021). Beyond Anarchy and Capital? The Geopolitics of the Rojava Revolution in Syria. *Geopolitics*, 1-6.
2. Gürcan, E. C. (2019). Extractivism, neoliberalism, and the environment: Revisiting the syrian conflict from an ecological justice perspective. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 30(3), 91-109.

Supplementary

1. Hoffmann, C. (2018). Environmental determinism as Orientalism: The geo-political ecology of crisis in the Middle East. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 31(1), 94-104.
2. Feitelson, E., & Tubi, A. (2017). A main driver or an intermediate variable? Climate change, water and security in the Middle East. *Global Environmental Change*, 44, 39-48.
3. Selby, J., Dahi, O. S., Fröhlich, C., & Hulme, M. (2017). Climate change and the Syrian civil war revisited. *Political Geography*, 60, 232-244.
4. Selby, J. (2019). Climate change and the Syrian civil war, Part II: The Jazira's agrarian crisis. *Geoforum*, 101, 260-274.

Week 15: The South China Sea

Friday April 15: Required Readings

1. Atanassova-Cornelis, E. (2021). Japan, China and the territorial disputes in the China Seas: The uncertain dynamics of Asian-Pacific geopolitics. In *Maritime and Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea* (pp. 116-136). Routledge.
2. Wong, A. (2021). How Not to Win Allies and Influence Geopolitics. *Foreign Aff.*, 100, 44.

Supplementary

1. Roy MA, S. (2021). The Strategic Impact of China's Artificial Islands in the South China Sea and their Influence on US and China Relations.
2. Pasandideh, S. (2021). Do China's New Islands allow it to militarily dominate the South China Sea?. *Asian Security*, 17(1), 1-24.
3. Zhao, S. (2018). China and the South China sea arbitration: Geopolitics versus international law. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 27(109), 1-15.