

International Lecture Series 2022

China's Global Rise – Contesting the Liberal World Order?



Tue, June 15, 2022 9–10 a.m. Eastern time / 3–4 p.m. Berlin time via Zoom
Registration link: https://uni-due.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_v5NgSyf_S_Ow7CRx4HbLaw

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How Discourses of Order Create Disorder:

Comparing the US 'Rules Based Order' and China's 'Community of Common Destiny'

The United States and China have each articulated their own concept of international order. The US refers to a “rules-based order” that, it claims, has existed since the end of World War II and has provided peace and prosperity to the globe ever since. China proposes a concept called the “community of human destiny” (人类命运共同体). It is easy to poke holes in these visions. The US “rules-based order” is ahistorical and empirically inaccurate. China’s “community of human destiny” is conceptually incoherent and contradictory. But they share an important feature: while both embrace ideas of inclusiveness, in fact both rest on a concept of in-group exceptionalism. Social Identity Theory tells us that in-group exceptionalism is often related to out-group denigration and thus inter-group conflict. This talk explores the exceptionalisms at the heart of these visions of order and speculates about how these visions might contribute further to US-China conflict.

Alastair Iain Johnston is a professor in the Government Department at Harvard University. He is the author of *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, 1995) and *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000* (Princeton, 2007), as well as articles on strategic culture, socialization theory, and identity and foreign policy.



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