

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

Supervisor:	Jay Hwang
Title of clinic:	The war of words over COVID-19: US, China and their deteriorating relationship
Number of students:	1-2 students
Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>):	WP
(Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>):	

Research context

The global spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has brought unprecedented challenges to political leaders around the world, putting their governance capabilities and even ruling legitimacy under scrutiny. How narratives of their epidemic prevention/control shape the very subjectivity of the political community in whose name they govern remain under-studied. This research examines the formative effects of such narratives on Chinese identity in relation to its interactions with the United States following the coronavirus outbreak and vice versa. Informed by David Campbell's insight that foreign and security policies are boundary-producing (hence identity-constituting) practices that differentiate "us/in-group" from "them/out-group." The project will argue that prevailing narratives of the pandemic in both countries have greatly naturalized perceived differences between each other. This can be observed not only in the uses of the term "Wuhan pneumonia" or "China virus" by D. Trump, which attributes the initial outbreak to the Chinese government's secrecy and authoritarianism, but also in Chinese government's self-portrayal of effective epidemic control domestically and responsible stakeholder internationally, in a sharp contrast to America's coronavirus failures. The dichotomy is further reified by geopolitical and geoeconomical competition between China and the United States in recent years.

Students' tasks and activities

Please specify the tasks and activities, timeline, the learning aims and how they are assessed, i.e. what the deliverables will be.

Collecting primary sources.