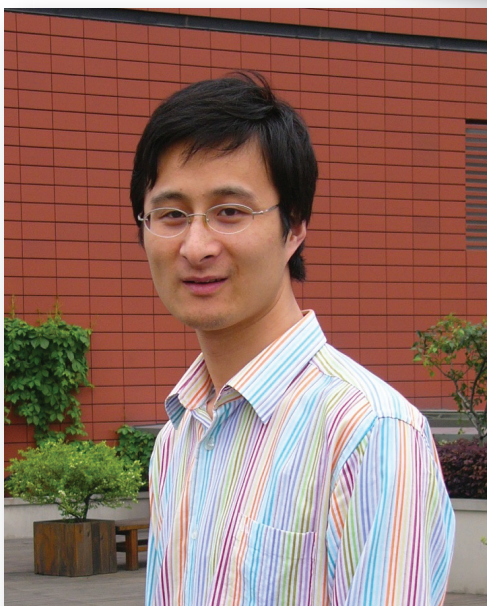


## Graduate Forum on Asia



### *The South China Sea Disputes: Phenomena and Essence*

**Qiang Cao**

Visiting Scholar

School of Politics and Global Studies

Tuesday, April 19th

Noon to 1:30 | COOR 6615

Over the past few years, the South China Sea (SCS) disputes have become a hotspot and dominated the headlines of newspapers. Actually, in Asia, there are plenty of territorial disputes. However, among these disputes, the SCS disputes are quite special and more complicated. First of all, the disputes, involving China (Mainland and Taiwan) and five countries in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia), are not bilateral but multilateral. Not only China and Southeast Asian countries have controversies, but also among the ASEAN countries themselves they have different claims. Secondly, the disputed waters are not an isolated area. Conversely, the SCS is one of the world's most important sea lanes, both for civilian and military vessels. This means the potential conflicts in this area will definitely affect the international waterways and global shipping. Last but not least, the disputes will also affect the geopolitical security in this area. The out-of-control of SCS disputes may cause regional arms race and even military collisions, which may eventually break and reconstruct the current existing global order founded and led by US. So in this sense, similar to the crisis in Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, the SCS disputes can be seen as a challenge from an emerging power (China) against the existing international order. Meanwhile, from the historical perspective, the SCS disputes also can be seen as a challenge from China as a traditional land power against US as a great sea power. In the history of human beings, this is not rare. From Carthage vs Rome to Napoleon's France vs Great Britain, this kind of collision is almost an eternal subject of human history and to some extent, inevitable.

**Qiang Cao** is currently a visiting scholar in the Dept. of Politics at ASU. Before that, he served in the Center for Chinese and American Studies at Nanjing University in China as a research associate. He mainly concentrated on the intelligence studies, international relations theory as well as the South China Sea issues. He has published several articles and academic reviews in these areas of which the representative one is "A Review of Taiwan Issues in the South China Sea Disputes: On the Current Situation and the Pathway of the Cooperation between Chinese Mainland and Taiwan in the South China Sea". He is currently working on the history, especially the background, reasons and the enlightenment of the rising of US sea power.