

Chinese Companies in America: Navigating Law, Business, and Geopolitical Risk

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Description

Chinese companies operating in the United States must navigate not only different legal and business systems, but also an increasingly complex political and regulatory environment. Bringing together scholarly research, business and legal practice, this conversation will examine how Chinese companies adapt to U.S. legal institutions, build compliance capacity, manage litigation and regulatory risk, and respond when the expectations of the United States and China pull in different directions. Taking place immediately after the U.S. midterm elections, the discussion will also consider how shifts in American domestic politics—even when China is not a central campaign issue—can influence the broader environment for bilateral relations and cross-border business.

Moderator

Samatha Vortherms

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
University of California, Irvine

Speakers

Ji Li

John & Marilyn Long Chair of Chinese Business and Law
University of California, Irvine

Susan Yang

Managing Director, International and Commercial Banking
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Alex Hao

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Samatha Vorthorns is an associate professor at University of California, Irvine's Department of Political Science and a faculty affiliate at UCI's Long U.S.-China Institute; Philosophy, Political Science, and Economic program; and a Non-resident Scholar at UC San Diego's 21st Century China Center. Her research and teaching cover multiple fields in comparative politics and research methodology, including authoritarian institutions and redistribution, political economy of development, citizenship and migration, Chinese politics, and survey research design. She is currently working on multinational companies and geopolitical risk. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2017 and was a Shorenstein Postdoctoral Fellow in Contemporary Asia at Stanford University's Asia Pacific Research Center. From 2014-2016, she was a Visiting Research Fellow at the National School of Development's China Center for Health Economics Research at Peking University.

Ji Li joined UCI Law in July 2019 as the John S. and Marilyn Long Professor of U.S.-China Business and Law. Prior to this appointment, he was a Professor of Law and a Zhuang Zhou Scholar at Rutgers University, where he also served as a member of the Associate Faculty of the Division of Global Affairs. Li received his Ph.D. in political science from Northwestern University and his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was an Olin Fellow in Law, Economics, and Public Policy. After law school, he worked for several years at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP in New York. His teaching and scholarship cover a broad range of topics, including Chinese law and politics, international business transactions, contracts, comparative law, and empirical legal studies. He has published two books with Cambridge University Press: *Negotiating Legality* (2024) and *Clash of Capitalisms* (2018), both of which examine how Chinese multinational companies, including those owned by the Chinese state, adapt to U.S. legal and regulatory institutions. He is currently working on two book projects that investigate the interactions between China and the international legal order, as well as the ways transnational legal actors are coping with the U.S.-China geopolitical rivalry.

Alex Hao is a partner at the New York office of JunHe LLP, a leading Chinese law firm, and has been practicing law in New York since 2003. With more than two decades of experience in cross-border business transactions and dispute resolution involving China, Alex acts as outside general counsel to Chinese companies doing business in the U.S. and globally, providing insights on best practice and coordinating with local professional advisors. He is an Arbitrator at the American Arbitration Association (AAA-ICDR) and the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC); Chair of the Doing Business in and with Global Markets annual seminar at the Practising Law Institute (PLI); and Co-Chair of the Private International Law Interest Group of the American Society of International Law (ASIL). Alex frequently speaks and writes on China-related legal and business issues. He obtained his J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law and LL.B. from Peking University.

Susan Yang is Managing Director of International and Commercial Banking at East West Bank, where she has held senior leadership positions since 2015. Before joining East West Bank, she spent 13 years at Cathay Bank, ultimately serving as a Senior Vice President. With more than two decades of banking experience, Yang brings expertise in commercial lending, credit risk, financial analysis, and cross-border banking, as well as a practitioner's perspective on the opportunities and challenges facing internationally active companies in the United States.