



Weiyi Shi, Ph.D.

Weiyi Shi is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California San Diego. Her research focuses on the intersection of international political economy and Chinese politics and explores the implications of China's economic rise.

Help us create:

➤ **COVID-19: getting through with wit & grit**

(See pages 3-4)

Enjoy our other activities:

(See pages 5-11)

“China Inc.”: The Political Economy of China’s Outward Investment

Saturday, September 19, 1:30 PM

By Zoom to persons on SDIS mailing list*

As the expansive reach of China’s multinational firms grows, incorporating diverse assets from Angolan oil to German robotics, so does skepticism about the intent and consequences of China’s brand of global capitalism. This talk unpacks the political economy of China’s outward investment. China’s overseas investment is led by the state - the state manipulates the market to accomplish certain non-market goals (e.g. energy security, technological advancement). However, just because the investment model is state-led, it doesn’t mean Chinese investors are all faithful agents of the state. The combination of non-market objectives and commercial incentives give rise to excessive risk-taking and over-investment by Chinese firms, and the objectives of the state become attenuated in this process. China’s economic spread can be massive, disruptive, and scary, but it is hardly all part of a coherent masterplan by the government.

A link for Dr. Shi’s Zoom presentation will be sent to persons on the SDIS emailing list.

***To be placed on our emailing list contact:**
sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com or
see <https://sdscholars.org>.



The Scholars Notebook is issued monthly during the academic year, except December, by the San Diego independent Scholars (SDIS), a nonprofit organization founded in 1982.

The mission of SDIS is to promote opportunities for active learning and scholarship, both for its membership and for the San Diego community.

Public service activities of SDIS include: (1) monthly public lectures presented during the academic year; (2) discussion groups held in public libraries or online; (3) small grants awarded on a competitive basis for research projects and (4) various cooperative educational and other projects with local organizations.

More information about SDIS and its activities is available at www.sdscholars.org. Questions: sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com

Members may submit a piece to the Scholars Notebook. Email it by the middle of each month to sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com

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You are invited to help create: COVID-19: getting through with wit and grit

The “COVID-19” project is collecting written and visual descriptions of our lives during the current pandemic. These depictions are being compiled as a virtual booklet, which will be archived for posterity and future scholarly analysis. Completion of the booklet will be celebrated by a gala opening and party for SDIS members and friends.

PHASE I of the project, which tested the concept and developed procedures, has been a success. It consists of 11 essays, four humorous pieces, three narratives, four poems, and accompanying illustrations.

We now invite others to join **Phase II**, which aims to collect a wider set of writings, thus enhancing the historical and cultural value of the portrayals to be archived.

Why might I want to participate?

- To communicate with others by sharing my impressions and reading about theirs.
- To explore what I can learn about myself and society, especially when our habitual lifestyles have been disrupted, allowing new viewpoints.
- To counter social isolation by contributing to a cooperative effort, along with interesting people.
- To have fun on a boring day.
- To express myself and record a noteworthy period of my life.

How do I join this effort?

- Before October 1, 2020, email a written (<1200 word) or visual piece as a Word, pdf, jpg, tiff or other appropriate file to sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com



- The format may be prose, poetry, journal, photo, cartoon, artwork or another pertinent medium.
- For details and updates, contact SDIS at the email address above or see <http://sdscholars.org>.

How will the booklet be used?

The booklet will be available primarily to participants and SDIS members. Wider distribution is not envisioned but could be allowed for an individual piece if the author and the SDIS Board approve. A writing may be copyrighted in its author’s name, with permission for use given to SDIS. The booklet will be archived.



COVID-19: getting through...

(continued from pg. 3)

Why conduct Phase II?

Phase I of the “COVID-19” project was initiated by a group of SDIS members as an expression of the organization’s focus on self-expression and scholarship. Consistent with our commitment to community service, Phase II is now being offered to a larger circle of participants.

For Phase II, please invite your family and friends to participate with you in the “COVID-19” project.

Inclusion of family members of various ages, including children and grandchildren, broadens the range of backgrounds and viewpoints represented in the reports. It also offers an opportunity for family communication, despite physical and social distancing.

Similarly, this shared writing project is a way to reach out to old friends or to meet new ones. A further reward is that together we may be able to create a booklet of potential interest to later generations, just as it is helpful for us to read about the Spanish Flu or bubonic plague.

Eligibility:

SDIS members and the first 30 non-members who register will be accepted. Register by writing to: sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com.

To cover project costs, participants who are not SDIS members are asked to join SDIS with the usual annual dues of \$40 per person or \$55 per couple (page 10), if it is not a hardship. Children are exempted.

We hope that persons who enjoy writing will also find other SDIS activities appealing. Note that ideas for additional cooperative projects or study groups are always welcome.

What might I write about?

(A few examples)

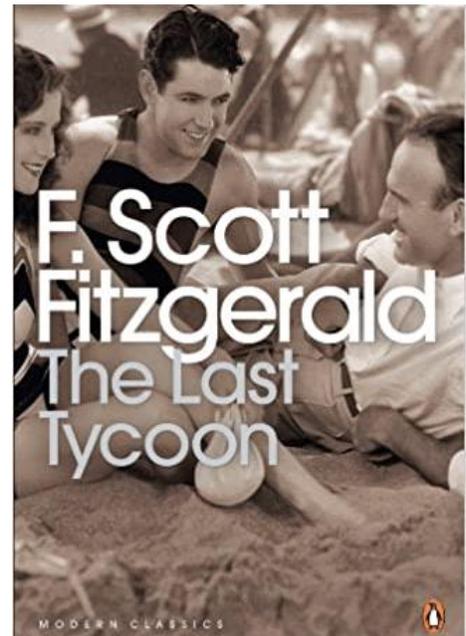
- What do I fear, regret, resent, or mourn?
- Whom do I wish to honor?
- Do I see anything ironic or humorous in the situation?
- Has my life improved in unexpected ways?
- Do I see something beautiful, even during a time of stress?
- What have I learned about myself or society, as a result of unavoidable lifestyle changes?
- How much more Zoom or Facetime can I tolerate?

Reading Experience – a theme-based reading and study group

10:00 a.m. on 3rd Monday of each month.

Summer discussions of this group centered on the theme of “**Friendship.**” The various novels examined were My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante in May, The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay by Michael Chabon in June, Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain in July, and The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt in August.

In September, the theme will switch to “**Hollywood: Behind the Silver Screen**” with The Last Tycoon, an unfinished novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald, published after the author’s early death in 1940 along with his notes for completion. Fitzgerald knew, and based the novel’s leading character on, the legendary studio head Irving Thalberg.



Irving Thalberg



F. Scott Fitzgerald

This Zoom meeting will occur on the Study Group’s usual third Monday morning of the month, in this case Sept. 21, at 10 a.m. Interested participants can enter by acquiring the Zoom link from David Parker parkerd1954@gmail.com

Gerry Horwitz

SDIS Science Group -- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

1:00 p.m., 2nd Friday of each month, via Zoom

The objective of the Science Group, started 24 years ago by Dr. Bea Rose, is to read, learn about and discuss issues related to science. Its recent focus was neuroscience, an interest that now continues in relationship to other topics.

Currently, we are discussing Artificial Intelligence (AI), a subject with issues pertaining to every aspect of our lives, from medicine to art.

This fall we will cover recent AI developments that affect:

- Writing (September),
- Art (October) and
- Music (November).

September's meeting focuses on AI-mediated writing and a new system, GPT-3, touted as the:

"iPhone of AI, opening the door to countless commercial applications" ¹

If prompted with "here is a short story," GPT-3 will write a mediocre story. If prompted instead with "here is an award-winning story," it will write a better one. ²

The capabilities and limitations of GPT-3 and its predecessors, as well as societal implications, will be discussed in our next Zoom meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, September 11.

To obtain the pertinent Zoom link and other information, contact:
Arlene Gilbert (Group leader)
gilbert53@earthlink.net
or T. Ann Hunt (Zoom facilitator)
timothyann@gmail.com

Suggested readings on GPT-3 are:

1. https://www.axios.com/openai-artificial-intelligence-text-language-14308121-1f67-468e-a6db-47558333c8b7.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axiosscience&stream=science
2. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/21355768/gpt-3-ai-openai-turing-test-language>

Two books we've used to initiate discussion are:

- *"Artificial Intelligence: 101 things you must know..."* by Lasse Rouhiainen
- *"Possible Minds: 25 Ways of Looking at AI,"* edited by John Brockman.

GENERAL RELATIVITY

10:00 a.m. Wednesdays, biweekly

The General Relativity group has been meeting on a biweekly basis for the last couple of months. At its July 22 meeting, it completed the study of "**Gravity**" by Hartle, in effect completing its long study of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. It was a difficult but exhilarating and enlightening experience.

The group decided to continue meeting on a biweekly basis, with members presenting "special topics" at those meetings. On Aug. 7 **Don Bamber gave a talk on an important paper he wrote about 20 years ago**, dealing with the implications of near certainty, i.e., if "A almost implies B", how can we construct logics that allow us to meaningfully infer near certainty for certain other statements.

On Aug. 19 **Alvin Halpern** presented on the question of whether **quantum mechanical probabilities imply a need to change the underpinnings of classical probability theory**.

Our next meeting, on Sept. 2, will be "potluck" where different members will make short presentations on topics of interest to them. The group will also discuss longer term plans.

Alvin Halpern

COLLOQUY CAFE

1:30 p.m. 3rd Wed of month

This study group, as has been our usual practice, continued meeting monthly during the summer. This year we met through Zoom.

We discussed "**enough**" in May, confronted "**philanthropy**" in June, attacked "**racist**" in July, and struggled with "**motivation**" in August.

We will consider "**divorce**" during our next meeting, Wednesday, September 16 at 1:30 p.m.

Sessions are held the third Wednesday afternoon of each month.

Members Interested in participating should contact Jill Hansen jillhan329@gmail.com for the Zoom link to enter the meeting.

Gerry Horwitz

Inside Politics

A non-partisan discussion of political and societal issues

10:00 a.m., 1st Saturday of each month.

The SDIS Inside Politics study group continued to meet by Zoom all summer. We always meet on the first Saturday of every month, from 10 a.m. until noon. While it is easy to remember the first Saturday of every month, I suggest you mark the dates on your calendar right now so you will not forget. Since the Zoom link (sent to you 2 days before each meeting) will be the same for all meetings, you might also wish to record it in an easily-accessible place on your computer.

Our plans for the fall are actually quite exciting. As you know, our country normally has a presidential election only once every four years, and this is the year. Therefore, each month this fall we will devote a significant amount of time during our Zoom class discussing the upcoming election. Not only is the presidency on the ballot, but every member of the House of Representatives and one third of the members of the U.S. Senate are also on the ballot this year.

Democrats are hoping to capture the Senate and hold onto the House, as well as winning back the Presidency. If they do, the Democrats will then effectively control the executive and legislative branches of the government. The last time that happened, the Dems were able to pass and sign into law Obamacare, which significantly changed the way U.S. citizens are able to access health care in this country.

Republicans, on the other hand, are hoping to hold onto control of the Senate, as well as the Presidency. If they do, the Republicans will undoubtedly succeed in increasing their current 5-4 majority of Republican-appointed judges on the U.S. Supreme Court.

We will discuss all of these political possibilities in our SDIS Zoom “Inside Politics” study group this fall. I hope to see all of you on Zoom.

Al Korobkin akorobk1@san.rr.com

SDIS FILM GROUP

10:00 a.m. 1st Wed. of month



The film group will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, September 2 at 10 am to view *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, a 2019 independent comedy-drama which has been called a modern-day version of the book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which was read by the Reading Experience group this summer. Word-of-mouth enthusiasm propelled it to becoming the highest grossing independent film of 2019. Its hero is a young Down syndrome man who runs away from an assisted living facility to fulfill his improbable dreams. It's definitely a feel-good movie!

June's film was 2019 South Korean black comedy *Parasite*, directed by Bong Joon-ho. It won this year's Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best International Feature Film. In *Parasite*, a lower class impoverished family manipulates its way, member by member, into the home and lives of a wealthy but naïve young family. Social inequality, greed, and class differences are prominent themes. The film has its humorous moments, but it devolves into unexpected darkness. Its title is seen as referring to the lower income family, the needy wealthy family, or to society itself.

In July, the film group watched the 1940 comedy, *The Philadelphia Story*, based on the play by Phillip Barry. Katherine Hepburn had starred in the stage production, having been anathematized as "box office poison" by MGM and other studios, but the success of the Broadway run and her contract with the producers made the play her property to bring to Hollywood and decide final casting choices. She picked Cary Grant as her costar and offered the juvenile role to James Stewart, who took home an Oscar for his performance.

In August, members were treated to a surrealist gem by Luis Buñuel, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, in which a small upper middle-class group of friends try valiantly to have dinner on their climb up the social ladder but go hungry until the end, when they are arrested over dinner by the narcotics police for selling cocaine. Delphine Seyrig, Stéphane Audran, and Fernando Rey lead the amusing but not-so-charming cast.

Barbara Heckler and Ken Krauss

North County Events Open to SDIS Members:

Even before the pandemic, several SDIS members living in North County found it difficult to attend events in La Jolla because of traffic congestion, time constraints or other factors. To better meet their needs, SDIS has established a cooperative relationship with North County village (NCV), a non-profit grassroots organization that emphasizes interdependent, help-each-other living. The goal of NCV is to make aging at home easier.

NCV and SDIS have agreed to allow each other's members to visit their activities during a trial cooperative period. All NCV events currently are offered on Zoom.



North County Village (NCV)

North County Village Activities for September 2020:

9/4 – Virtual Happy Hour – 4:00
RSVP jek123@msn.com

9/15 – Film Club – *Guess who's coming to dinner* – 3:30
RSVP jek123@msn.com

9/17 – Memoir writing – 2:00
RSVP rigdoncurrie@mac.com

9/23 – Book Club – 3:30 – book TBD –
RSVP jek123@msn.com

September 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	Film 2 Group 10 am	3	4	Inside 5 Politics 10 am
6	7	8	9	10	Artificial 11 Intelligence 1:00 pm	12
13	14	15	General 16 Relativity 10 am	17	18	China 19 Lecture 1:30 pm
20	Reading 21 Experience 10 am	22	23 Colloquy Cafe 1:30	24	25	26
27	28	29	General 30 Relativity 10 am	Oct 1 COVID-19 project Due date		Inside Politics 10 am

Upcoming Monthly Public Lectures

(For the September lecture see page 1.)

1:30 pm, October 17: What's in the Air We Breathe? Vicki Grassian, Ph.D.

Chair of Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, UCSD. Aerosols, defined as solid or liquid particles suspended in air, are important components of the Earth's atmosphere and can travel long distances, impacting the Earth's climate and human health, including viral transmission.

1:30 pm, November 21: Sexuality Across the Lifespan. Erin Castelloe, M.D.

1:30 pm, January 16: TBD.

1:30 pm, February 20: Current Scientific Results on Alzheimer's Disease

Jerold Chun, M.D., Ph.D. Sanford Burnham Prebys Institute

Next SDIS Board Meeting. 10 am October 12 (10 am, 2nd Monday, alternate months)

SDIS New Member Form and Optional Library Card Form

UCSD Library Cards: (Temporarily unavailable until the COVID-19 pandemic abates.)

- If you are 65 or over, affiliation with SDIS entitles you to a discounted UCSD Library card, with Level 2 (graduate student) privileges, except for inter-library loans.
- Your SDIS library card is \$25 with this membership form. SDIS will match your \$25. That is, for cards acquired at this time, UCSD charges SDIS \$50.

Tax-Deductible Contributions to SDIS are encouraged and welcome . Your dues also tax-deductible.

MEMBERSHIP: Dues paid in September through March apply to the current fiscal year (Sept-Sept). Those paid from April through August also apply to the subsequent year.

PLEASE provide ALL information for our Directory. Print, or write very clearly.

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work/Alt Phone: _____

Email: _____

Field(s) of Interest, (maximum of three)

APPLICATION FOR OPTIONAL UCSD LIBRARY CARD

Effective for Academic Year Beginning October 1 (Because of COVID-19, no new cards can be purchased until the library's physical facilities reopen. Indicate interest but do not pay for a card now.)

I assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or overdue materials borrowed on my UCSD/SDIS library card:

Signature: _____ Print Name: _____

PAYMENTS

Make checks payable to SDIS. Please mail entire form with payment(s) to
David E. Parker, 8773 Caminito Abrazo, La Jolla, CA 92037

Tax Deductible SDIS Dues (\$40/single, \$55/couple)	\$ _____
UCSD Library Card (Optional - \$25; do not pay now)	\$ _____
<u>Tax Deductible Contributions</u> (Optional)	
Operations	\$ _____
Helen Hawkins Research Fund	\$ _____
Jane Ford Book Fund	\$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____