

NEYSUN A. MAHBOUBI

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ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Director, Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations (2023-Present) – Direct project (<https://global.upenn.edu/future-of-us-china-relations/>) which develops recommendations on U.S. policies toward China from “next generation” China scholars and analysts.

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Politics, & Economics (Spring 2025) – Teaching “Policy Task Force on U.S.-China Relations” (Penn Global Seminar & SNF Paideia Program Course)

Lecturer, Department of History (Spring 2024) – Taught “History of U.S.-China Relations”.

Research Scholar, Center for the Study of Contemporary China (2013-2023) – Co-organized (with Jacques deLisle) symposium on “The Future of Chinese Administrative Law” (report at <https://www.theregreview.org/2013/01/29/29-hobbs-chinese-administrative-law/>). Host the CSCC Podcast (<https://cscs.sas.upenn.edu/podcasts>).

University of Pennsylvania, Carey Law School, Philadelphia, PA

Research Affiliate, Penn Program on Regulation (2021-Present) – Co-organized (with Cary Coglianese) series in *The Regulatory Review* on “Comparing Nations’ Responses to COVID-19” (<https://www.theregreview.org/2020/04/20/comparing-nations-responses-covid-19/>). Host the Law & Governance Series (<https://www.pennreg.org/law-and-governance/>).

Lecturer-in-Law (Spring 2016) – Taught “Chinese Law and Legal Institutions”.

Peking University, School of Law, Beijing, China

Jones Day Fellow (Winter 2018) – Research on new developments in Chinese administrative law.

Visiting Scholar (Fall 2015) – Research on Chinese administrative litigation and procedure laws, including field investigations to Shanghai, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou, Wuhan, Changsha, and Xi’an.

Princeton University, School of Public & International Affairs, Princeton, NJ

Visiting Lecturer (Fall 2013) – Co-taught (with Martin Flaherty) policy task force on “Building the Rule of Law in China: Is there a Role for the United States?”, which presented its findings at the Council on Foreign Relations, the State Department, and the White House.

University of Connecticut School of Law, Hartford, CT

Visiting Assistant Professor/Research Fellow (2008-2012) – Taught courses on Administrative Law and Comparative Law. Faculty advisor to the *Connecticut Journal of International Law*.

Yale Law School, New Haven, CT

Tutor-in-Law (2006-2008) – Advised LL.M. candidates on their programs of study and J.S.D. proposals. Founded and organized annual Graduate Programs Works-in-Progress Symposium.

Fellow, The China Law Center (2004-2008) – Research and writing on Chinese administrative law. Led Reading Group on Contemporary Chinese Law.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch, Washington, DC
Trial Attorney (2002-2003) – Attorney General’s Honors Program. Represented the U.S. government in cases challenging the legality of executive and agency actions.

The Hon. Douglas P. Woodlock, U.S. District Court, D. Mass., Boston, MA
Law Clerk (2001-2002) – Prepared draft opinions for cases in the areas of constitutional, administrative, criminal, admiralty, patent, securities, and federal Indian law.

EDUCATION

Columbia Law School, J.D., 2001

- Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar (all years)
- Articles Editor, *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*
- Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans

Princeton University, A.B., cum laude, Politics, East Asian Studies, 1997

- Lyman H. Atwater Prize (for best senior thesis in the Department of Politics)
- Research Grant, George & O'Bie Shultz Fund
- Princeton-in-Beijing Language Program
- Chair, Honor Committee • President, Class of 1997

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Administrative Law in a Time of Crisis: Comparing National Responses to COVID-19 (with Cary Coglianese), 73 *ADMINISTRATIVE LAW REVIEW* 1 (2021) – Forward to special issue exploring different national regulatory responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussed on “A Hard Look” Podcast, Season 2, ep. 2 (July 17, 2020) and ep. 14 (March 19, 2021).

Volumes on Chinese Administrative Law (special editor, with Jacques deLisle), *UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA ASIAN LAW REVIEW* Vol. 16, no. 2 (2021) and Vol. 13, no. 1 (2018) – Two-part series which features original articles by ten leading Chinese professors of administrative and constitutional law.

New Approaches to International Regulatory Cooperation (special editor & introduction, with Reeve T. Bull, Richard B. Stewart and Jonathan B. Wiener), 78 *LAW & CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS* no. 4 (2015).

Suing the Government in China, in Kate Xiao Zhou, Shelly Rigger, and Lynn T. White III, eds., *DEMOCRATIZATION IN CHINA, KOREA, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA? LOCAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES* (Routledge: 2014).

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Zombie Legal Reform?: Judicial and Administrative Law Development in China under Xi Jinping – Evaluates judicial and administrative law reform in China since the so-called “rule of law” plenum of the 18th Party Congress in 2014, with special consideration given to the impact of top-down political mobilization, the role of legal professionals, and the nature of legal culture.

At the Boundaries of Authoritarian Legality: Revision of China’s Administrative Litigation Law – Evaluates the 2014 and 2017 revisions of the *Administrative Litigation Law*, and subsequent implementation of those changes, as a particularly illuminating case study for understanding the possibilities and limits of “authoritarian legality” in China.

Participation and Accountability in Chinese Administrative Procedure – Examines how many of the procedural rules and accompanying bureaucratic practices associated with U.S. administrative law have been advanced under national and local regulations in China, with special attention to the question of how such rules and practices can reasonably operate in a non-democratic setting.

Suing the Government in China – Considers the impact of lawsuits against Chinese government entities, over the ~35 years since the passage of China’s *Administrative Litigation Law*, in three different respects: as a mechanism for strengthening the application of state law to government action, as a site of autonomous legal development, and as a potential source for political reform.

SHORTER COMMENTARIES

“An American legal scholar returns to China” (<https://thechinaproject.com/2023/08/17/an-american-legal-scholar-returns-to-china/>), *The China Project*, August 17, 2023; reprinted (<https://journals.sas.ac.uk/amicus/article/view/5666/5329>), *Amicus Curiae*, Series 2, Vol. 5, no.2 (2023)

“Is it possible to be optimistic about rule of law in China — Q&A with Neysun Mahboubi?” (<https://thechinaproject.com/2022/06/03/is-it-possible-to-be-optimistic-about-rule-of-law-in-china-qa-with-neysun-mahboubi/>), *The China Project*, June 3, 2022

“Europe’s China Policy Has Taken a Sharp Turn. Where Will It Go Next?” (<https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/europes-china-policy-has-taken-sharp-turn-where-will-it-go-next/>), *ChinaFile*, April 14, 2022

“Pro/Con: Can China sustain its continued economic success given its internal headwinds?”, in Kathleen Day, “China Today” <https://cqpress.sagepub.com/cqresearcher/report/china-today-cqresrre20220408>), *CQ Researcher*, April 8, 2022

“The Future of China Studies in the U.S.” (<https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/future-of-china-studies-us/>), *ChinaFile*, August 27, 2020

“Comparative Administrative Law Matters in the Fight Against COVID” (<https://www.theregreview.org/2020/07/02/mahboubi-comparative-administrative-law-matters-fight-against-covid-19/>), *The Regulatory Review*, July 2, 2020

“The Future of China’s Legal System” (<https://www.chinafile.com/viewpoint/future-of-chinas-legal-system/>), *ChinaFile*, August 11, 2016

RECENT MEDIA APPEARANCES

Radio/Podcasts:

“Blue Beijing skies, fewer foreigners: Returning to China post-Covid lockdowns” (<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2023/07/21/china-visit-covid>), *WBUR Here & Now*, July 21, 2023

“China after COVID: UPenn’s Neysun Mahboubi reports on scholarly exchange in a tightening political space” (<https://thechinaproject.com/podcast/china-after-covid-upenns-neysun-mahboubi-reports-on-scholarly-exchange-in-a-tightening-political-space/>), Sinica Podcast, July 13, 2023

“Spy Balloon Saga Continues, Exposing Tensions Between U.S. and China” (<https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101892198/spy-balloon-saga-continues-exposing-tensions-between-u-s-and-china>), KQED Forum, February 14, 2023

“China will open to the rest of the world after nearly 3 years of closed borders” (<https://www.npr.org/2022/12/27/1145579323/china-will-open-to-the-rest-of-the-world-after-nearly-3-years-of-closed-borders>), NPR Morning Edition, December 27, 2022

“Revisiting ‘Coronavirus and Comparative Administrative Law’” (<https://open.spotify.com/episode/39hyUTn1qCRbtqHLpVM708>), A Hard Look Podcast, March 19, 2021

“Coronavirus and Comparative Administrative Law” (<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5BdjQjYfrQArbFrUn4nlZr>), A Hard Look Podcast, July 17, 2020

Appearance on “The Gist with Mike Pesca” (<https://slate.com/podcasts/the-gist/2020/07/chris-wallace-interviews-trump>), The Gist, July 20, 2020

“Is There Really an Epidemic of Self-Censorship Among China Scholars?” (<https://thechinaproject.com/podcast/is-there-really-an-epidemic-of-self-censorship-among-china-scholars/>), Sinica Podcast, March 14, 2019

Television/Video:

“Political Analyst on Blinken's China Visit” (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2023-06-19/political-analyst-on-blinken-s-china-visit-video>), Bloomberg TV, June 18, 2023

“Looking Behind the Scenes: Insights into Today’s Practical Relevance of Comparative Law” (<https://tinyurl.com/compadminlaw>), American University Washington College of Law, Spring 2021

“Supreme Myths: Episode 34” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4i_hSHFTGsc), Supreme Myths, May 12, 2021

“Interview with Neysun Mahboubi” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ku6-Nbob-k>), Liberated Panda, April 17, 2021

Commentator, CGTN and CGTN America (<https://tinyurl.com/neysunplaylistmedia>), 2014-Present

Print:

“China Reopened to Foreign Students. Americans Are Staying Away.” ([link](#)), *The Wall Street Journal*, July 4, 2024

“Two incidents of foreign-related violence in two weeks | Scholars: Non-governmental exchanges should not be overshadowed” ([link](#)), *Voice of America Chinese*, June 29, 2024

“Beijing wants to move on—fast—from Monday’s knife attack” ([link](#)), *Politico “China Watcher” Newsletter*, June 13, 2024

“New Security Measure Curtailing the Study of China Alarm Educators” ([link](#)), *ChinaFile*, Feb 2, 2024

“The barriers to ‘people-to-people exchange’” ([link](#)), *Politico “China Watcher” Newsletter*, Feb 29, 2024

“Penn Global Seminars announces offerings for next academic year, adds several new courses” ([link](#)), *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, February 21, 2024

“China and Russia Claim Moral High Ground Over Palestinian Deaths” ([link](#)), *The Wall Street Journal*, November 8, 2023

“Businessmen, academics biggest beneficiaries when direct US-China flights double come October” ([link](#)), *The Straits Times*, August 28, 2023

“China removes foreign minister Qin Gang” ([link](#)), *Agence France-Presse*, July 26, 2023

“China refuses to say why foreign minister Qin Gang removed” ([link](#)), *Agence France-Presse*, July 26, 2023

“China Puts Out Welcome Mat for Some Americans, Keeps Door Shut for Others” ([link](#)), *The Messenger*, July 10, 2023

“How US farmland became a battleground in the fight against China” ([link](#)), *The Hill*, May 24, 2023

“China rows back after envoy denies sovereignty of former Soviet states” ([link](#)), *The Guardian*, April 24, 2023

“Xi’s ‘peace’ plan for Ukraine: China ‘wins’” ([link](#)), *GZERO*, March 20, 2023

“Chinese leader Xi embarks on ‘intensive’ overhaul as he cements power” ([link](#)), *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2023

“Chinese social media thinks the spy balloon crisis is a lot of hot air” ([link](#)), *Rest of World*, Feb 14, 2023

“Global fallout over China’s ‘spy balloon programme’ widens” ([link](#)), *The Straits Times*, Feb 11, 2023

“China rushes to cap damage over suspected spy balloon as Blinken delays trip” ([link](#)), *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2023

“Global Chinese firms try ‘decoupling’ from China as US business climate turns hostile” ([link](#)), *South China Morning Post*, January 6, 2023

“U.S. to impose new coronavirus testing requirements for travelers from China” ([link](#)), *The Washington Post*, December 28, 2022

“Scholars look at ramifications from ‘zero COVID’ protests in China” ([link](#)), *Penn Today*, Dec 8, 2022

“A more pragmatic Xi Jinping launches a global charm offensive for China” ([link](#)), *The Washington Post*, December 4, 2022

“China Officials Soften Tone on Covid Curbs Amid Protests” ([link](#)), *The Wall Street Journal*, November 29, 2022

“Being there: American researchers extol benefits of returning to China” ([link](#)), *South China Morning Post*, November 27, 2022

“Biden and Xi agree to restore regular communications” ([link](#)), *Medill News Service*, November 16, 2022

“Possible China Covid Reopening Prompts Jittery Markets, Intense Speculation” ([link](#)), *The Wall Street Journal*, November 4, 2022

“China plans to review every single social media comment, sparking more censorship fears” ([link](#)), *South China Morning Post*, June 21, 2022

“Is this the toughest job in diplomacy? Meet the top US envoy trying to reach out to China”, *CNN’s Meanwhile in China Newsletter*, June 17, 2022

“Interview: U.S.-China academic exchange has brought benefits to both sides, says American scholar” ([link](#)), *Xinhua*, June 5, 2022

“Interview: Xi-Biden video call matters to China-U.S. relations” ([link](#)), *Xinhua*, March 22, 2022

“The best way to stop China from aiding Russia is for the U.S. to help Ukraine” ([link](#)), *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 15, 2022

“As Joe Biden’s ‘Summit for Democracy’ convenes, questions arise about how ‘democracy’ is defined” ([link](#)), *South China Morning Post*, December 8, 2021

“Cold war echoes as Aukus alliance focuses on China deterrence” ([link](#)), *The Guardian*, Sept 15, 2021

“Corruption in China: ex-judges and prosecutors caught breaking rules on conflicts of interest” ([link](#)), *South China Morning Post*, September 5, 2021

“How China's Communists Came to Lead World's Largest Army, Soon Economy, in 100 Years” ([link](#)), *Newsweek*, July 1, 2021

“Beijing Counting on Barristers’ Silence as It Attacks Essex Court, Hong Kong Bar” ([link](#)), *Law.com International*, May 24, 2021.

“China Scholarship in the US Takes a Hit from Strained Ties” ([link](#)), *The Straits Times*, May 10, 2021

“American Students’ Love Affair with China Cools as Political Tensions Rise” ([link](#)), *The Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2021

“Penn Launches U.S.-China Relations Project in Response to Increased International Tensions” ([link](#)), *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, October 4, 2020

“An Ambitious New Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations” ([link](#)), *Penn Today*, September 23, 2020

“These Trump Allies Are Preparing for a New Cold War with China” ([link](#)), *Mother Jones*, April 22, 2019

RECENT PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

“What Are the Implications of the End of Chevron for U.S. Administrative Law?” ([video](#)), Law & Governance Series, Penn Program on Regulation, July 3, 2024

“U.S.-China Relations: Untangling Campaign Rhetoric & Understanding Policy” ([video](#)), 1990 Institute, June 28, 2024

“Roundtable: Digital Governance in China”, Inaugural Conference of the International Association on Regulation & Governance, University of Pennsylvania, June 18, 2024

“Charting China’s Legal Reforms: Outcomes Since the 2014 ‘Rule of Law’ Plenum,” Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, May 10, 2024.

“Legal Development in China since the 'Rule of Law' Plenum” ([video](#)), 21st Century China Center, University of California, San Diego, May 8, 2024

“China's EU Diplomacy: The View from France, Germany, and the United States” ([video](#)), Center for China Analysis, Asia Society Policy Institute, May 8, 2024

“The (Ongoing) Crisis in U.S.-China Relations and Implications for Europe” ([video](#)), Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, April 16, 2024

“The Crisis in U.S.-China Relations and Implications for Europe” Constantine Caramanlis Foundation, Athens, April 15, 2024

“Is the West in a New Cold War with China?” ([video](#)), Delphi Economic Forum, Delphi, April 13, 2024

“Looking at China Ahead of Xi Jinping’s Visit to France,” Asia Society France, Paris, April 8, 2024

“Where Does U.S.-China Scholarly Exchange Go From Here?” ([video](#)), Centre for Comparative and Public Law, HKU Faculty of Law, Hong Kong, January 17, 2024

“The Road Ahead for U.S.-China Academic Exchange,” Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, Beijing, January 10, 2024

Keynote remarks ([video](#)), Long Beach-Qingdao Association Annual Business Luncheon, Long Beach, November 17, 2023

“Where Does U.S.-China Scholarly Exchange Go From Here?” Long U.S.-China Institute, University of California, Irvine, November 15, 2023

“Sino-U.S. Relations and U.S. Domestic Political Factors” ([report](#)), Center for American Studies, Peking University School of International Studies, Beijing, June 28, 2023

“The Past, Present and Future of U.S.-China Legal Exchange” ([report](#)), China Institute for Socio-Legal Studies, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai, June 25, 2023

“China's Zero-Covid Policy: Six Keywords to Understand the Aftermath” ([video](#)), UCLA Center for Chinese Studies, February 22, 2023

“Blank White Papers Flying: Understanding the 2022 COVID-19 Protests in China” ([video](#)), UCLA Center for Chinese Studies, December 2, 2022

“The Crisis in U.S.-China Relations and Implications for Europe” ([video](#)), Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, October 13, 2021

“The Drafting of the U.S. Administrative Procedure Act in Comparative Perspective,” International Workshop on the Common Core of European Administrative Law, Rome, June 25, 2021

“Zombie Legal Reform?: Judicial and Administrative Law Developments after the Fourth Plenum” ([video](#)), Centre for Chinese Law, HKU Faculty of Law, May 6, 2021

“U.S.-China Relations and the Biden Administration” ([video](#)), Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania, April 21, 2021

“Comparative Regulatory Approaches to COVID-19,” Symposium on COVID-19 and International Law, *Florida Journal of International Law*, University of Florida Levin College of Law, April 9, 2021

“The Impact of the EU-China CAI and RCEP” ([video](#)), Trade, Investment and Development Program, American University Washington College of Law, April 7, 2021

“New Perspectives on US-China Relations: Human Rights, Law & Democracy” ([video](#)), Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations, University of Pennsylvania, October 19, 2020

“Comparative Law, Covid 19, and Racial Justice” ([video](#)), Annual Meeting of the American Society of Comparative Law, October 17, 2020

“TikTok and Tech Export Restrictions” ([video](#)), International Trade and Investment Law Society, American University Law School, October 7, 2020

“COVID-19 and Comparative Administrative Law” ([video](#)), ABA Section of Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice, October 2, 2020

“Introducing The Penn Project on the Future of US-China Relations” ([video](#)), Penn Global China Program, University of Pennsylvania, September 1, 2020

“Judicial and Administrative Law Reform after the Fourth Plenum,” Conference on China’s Legal Construction Program at 40 Years, University of Michigan Law School, October 13, 2019

“The Present Crisis in U.S.-China Relations,” Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, Beijing, September 11, 2019

“China’s Specialized Administrative Courts,” Conference on Courts, Law, and Politics in Asia and the US, University of Pennsylvania Law School, April 5, 2019

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Asia Program, July 2024-Present

Project Leader (with Susan Jakes, Robert Daly, and Jing Qian), China Working Group, Aug 2023-Present

Project Leader (w/Rogier Creemers), Transatlantic and European Dialogue on China, March 2022-Present

Co-host (with Victor Shih, Mary Gallagher, Margaret Lewis, Sida Liu, Iza Ding, and Alex Wang), Zhengfawei 政法委 (<https://twitter.com/Zhengfawei80>), February 2021-Present

Co-moderator (with Susan Rose-Ackerman), Yale Law School Listserv on Comparative Administrative Law (current membership of 540 senior and junior scholars from 40 countries), 2008-Present

Selection Panelist, Schwarzman Scholars from Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, July 2024

Host, U.S.-China Experts Chat (<https://uscnpm.org/us-china-experts-chat/>), May 2022-November 2023

Host, Out of Eden Walk China Chats (<https://soundcloud.com/out-of-eden-walk/sets/china-chats>), February 2022-August 2023

Co-host (with Chen Dingding), U.S.-China Dialogue (<https://www.youtube.com/@us-china-dialogue>), September 2021-September 2022

Co-organizer (with Shen Kui), U.S.-China Scholars Dialogue Group, July 2020-June 2021

Visiting Faculty, Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, Beijing, September 10-16, 2019

Visiting Faculty, Tilburg Law School, Tilburg, The Netherlands, April 15-20, 2018

Faculty, Aresty Institute of Executive Education, The Wharton School (UPenn), June 2017-October 2019

Co-organizer (with Ma Huaide), International Conference on Administrative Regulation and Administrative Licensing ([report](#)), China University of Politics & Law, Beijing, December 17-18, 2016

Co-organizer (with Tom Ginsburg and Wang Xixin), Workshop on Chinese Judicial Reform, University of Chicago Center in Beijing and Peking University Law School, Beijing, December 15-16, 2016

Delegate, China-U.S. Legal Experts Dialogue (organized jointly by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Department of State), Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Beijing, October 15, 2015

Co-organizer (with China University of Politics & Law), International Conference on Administrative Law, China University of Politics & Law, Beijing, June 15, 2014

Co-organizer (with Russell Weaver and Cheng-Yi Huang), 9th Administrative Law Discussion Forum, Institutum Iurisprudentiae, Academia Sinica, Taipei, June 10-11, 2014

Co-organizer (with Richard Stewart), Symposium on “New Approaches to International Regulatory Cooperation” ([report](#)), NYU Law School, February 27-28, 2014

Advisor on Chinese administrative law, Administrative Conference of the United States, 2013-2016

Organizer, Program on Chinese Administrative Law (week-long academic and professional exchange featuring visiting delegation of leading Chinese administrative law professors), ABA Section of Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice, Washington, DC and Philadelphia, October 20-27, 2012

Co-chair, Int’l Committee, ABA Section of Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice, 2012-2016

Consultant, China Administrative Law & Procedure Project, The Asia Foundation, 2011-2014