A Polar Silk Road?
a discussion with
Kathryn C. Lavelle
Ellen and Dixon Long Professor of World Affairs

April 12, 2019 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Room LL06, Lower Level, Kelvin Smith Library

Rising temperatures are melting the Arctic ice, opening new shipping routes and prompting world powers to jostle for access and control.

In January of 2018 China released an "Arctic Policy" statement, declaring the "Polar Silk Road" as the third extension of its Belt and Road Initiative, and China as a "Near Arctic State." In the Summer, Russian Liquid Natural Gas was for the first time shipped to China on the northern sea route, bypassing the more expensive (and vulnerable to both the United States and pirates) Suez Canal route. In September, China put into service its first domestically-produced icebreaker, the Xuelong (Snow Dragon) 2, which can break ice up to 1.5 meters thick going in both ahead and astern directions, and operate in temperatures as low as -30 degrees Celsius. It is far more capable than any of the U.S. icebreaking fleet, and led then-Secretary of Defense James Mattis to declare that, "the U.S. has to up its game in the Arctic."

China has also taken steps to create economic development, such as airport infrastructure, ties with Greenland – somewhat similar to its initiatives in other parts of the world. This caused concern especially in Denmark, which controlled Greenland until 2007, and may be one reason the Danish Maritime Fund has created a project to study the Chinese initiative and its implications. CWRU's Professor Kathryn C. Lavelle is part of the research team, focusing her contribution on Chinese trade patterns and how specific industries might benefit from a widening Northeast Passage. Join us as she considers the issues, implications, and uncertainties about this latest effect of climate change.

The Friday Public Affairs Discussion Lunch is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, emeriti and other members of our communities to learn and question each other about public policy issues at the international, national, and local levels. Faculty and other speakers share their research and experience to get beyond the headlines and repetition in the mass media, and the wild rumors of the internet. Lunch is brown bag, but cookies and some beverages are provided by the Center for Policy Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences.

http://fridaylunch.case.edu/