

# Politics of China

Politics 141 • 62069 • Spring 2017  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
Prof. Benjamin L. Read

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Instructor's web site: <http://benread.net>  
Course web site: <https://canvas.ucsc.edu/>  
Course meetings: Tues. & Thurs., 7:10pm to 8:45p, in Engineering 2, room 192  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1pm to 4pm, in 157 Merrill Faculty Annex, and by appointment  
Date of this syllabus: April 5, 2017. Subject to change; check websites for latest version.

## Overview:

China is home to more than one-fifth of the world's people. For well over a century and a half its history has continually intersected with that of the United States in geopolitics, in trade, in war, and in flows of migrants, culture, capital, goods, and ideas. This course aims to help the student acquire an understanding of this country's tortuous political development and its recent rise to global prominence. It devotes six weeks to an overview of China's political history, providing a quick primer on the late imperial state and the Republican Era, then covering the rise to power of Mao's Communist Party, its efforts to transform Chinese society, the Cultural Revolution, and the tensions and achievements of the reform era. It goes on to explore the institutions through which China is governed and several themes of current politics: political participation (including village elections and popular protests), associations and civil society, a state-capitalist form of economic development. We also look at the special regions of Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang. No background in the study of Asia is assumed for this undergraduate course.

## Readings:

The book below is on reserve at McHenry Library, and is also available for purchase at the Bay Tree bookstore and, of course, at online store. I recommend that you acquire a copy right away.

- William A. Joseph (ed.), *Politics in China: An Introduction*, second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, ISBN: 978-0199339426). Be sure to get this edition, and not the first edition.

The many other required readings will be available on the course Canvas site (<http://its.ucsc.edu/canvas/index.html>).

## Assignments and Ground Rules:

- Please read the following carefully before deciding to stay enrolled in this course.
- **Self-introduction:** please send me an email in the first week of class introducing yourself. You may wish to lay out such basic facts as your year in school; college; major; prior courses (if any) in Asian languages, history, or politics; international travel experience (if any); future career interests. I'd also like to know what you're most excited about in school and in your life; any challenges you're facing; and anything else you would like me to know about you. It can be useful for me to know such things, but really I am just curious to know whatever you would like to tell me about yourself.
- **Attendance:** Attending class is firmly required. I'm not indifferent to whether you're there or not. Quite the contrary: it matters a lot to me, and more importantly, to you. Your being there helps you learn and makes the class work. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Good attendance is rewarded with a modest bonus. Unexcused absences will lower your quarter grade. Two percentage points will be deducted from your course grade for every unexcused absence. To put that in perspective, the difference between a B+ and a C+ is ten percentage points. It is entirely possible to fail the course through non-attendance; this has happened before. I am quite understanding about family emergencies, illness or other serious exigencies, and will treat them as excused absences. If you miss class, explain the circumstances via email in advance if possible.

- **Discussion:** Come prepared for class, and contribute actively to class discussion. Participation in class counts for part of your class grade.
- **Reading:** This course involves a substantial amount of reading and you are required to do it. Readings must be completed before the class meeting for which they are assigned (except the first day). Note that although I have strived to make it easy for you to find the readings, it is your responsibility to obtain and read these items. In particular, download the electronic readings ahead of time. I will circulate discussion questions at least 24 hours before class to help guide you and to set the stage for in-class discussion.
- **Email:** You must use and regularly check your official UCSC email account, i.e., the one that AIS sends mail to. Make sure Canvas sends announcements to this account.
- **Grading:** Most assignments are scored on a 0-100 scale, where 90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B, etc. Grades of A minus or higher are reserved for work of exceptionally high quality. The grade of B is for work that is truly good although not great. The grade of C is for minimally acceptable work.
- **Grade weighting:** As follows, though the exact percentages are subject to adjustment.
  - Map quiz (in class, Thursday, April 13, 2017): **5 percent** of course grade
  - Class participation: **20 percent**
  - Pop quizzes: **20 percent**
  - In-class midterm examination (Tuesday, May 2, 2017): **25 percent**
  - Final exam (Thursday, June 15, 2017, 7:30pm to 10:30pm): **30 percent**
- **Accommodations:** UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. We would also like to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. We encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu).

## Part I / Introduction: Imperial China, Republican China

### Tuesday, April 4: [First Meeting] Course orientation

- William A. Joseph, "Studying Chinese Politics," in *Politics in China*, pp. 3–26 [partial chapter]
- Arthur Kroeber, "Rising China and the Liberal West," *China Economic Quarterly* (March 2008)

### Thursday, April 6: [Imperial China and the Qing dynasty] Lecture / discussion

- R. Keith Schoppa, "From Empire to People's Republic," in *Politics in China*, pp. 41–53 [partial chapter]
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, preface and pp. 1–18
- Go to "Map and map quiz material" under "Resources" in the Canvas site. Familiarize yourselves with the maps of China, and study the map terms. You may need to make use of the web (even Google Maps) or printed atlases to find some of them. The map quiz will likely require somewhat more preparation than you expect.

### Tuesday, April 11: [1911 Revolution and the Kuomintang] Lecture / discussion

- R. Keith Schoppa, "From Empire to People's Republic," in *Politics in China*, pp. 53–57 [partial chapter]
- John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 235-293

### Thursday, April 13: [Origins and Rise of the Chinese Communist Party] Lecture / discussion [Map quiz]

- R. Keith Schoppa, "From Empire to People's Republic," in *Politics in China*, pp. 57-69 [partial chapter]
- John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 294-341
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 19-30

## Part II / Political History of the People's Republic of China, 1949–1989

Tuesday, April 18: [Socialist Transformation] Lecture / discussion

- Frederick Teiwes, “Mao Zedong in Power,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 72-87 [partial chapter]
- William A. Joseph, “Ideology and China’s Political Development,” in *Politics in China*, chapter 5, pp. 149–174 [partial chapter]
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 31-49 (chapters 2 and 3)

Thursday, April 20: [The Great Leap Forward] Lecture / discussion

- Frederick Teiwes, “Mao Zedong in Power,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 87–96 [partial chapter]
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 51-64
- Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts: Mao’s Secret Famine* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), pp. 130-149

Tuesday, April 25: [The Cultural Revolution (1)] Lecture / discussion

- Frederick Teiwes, “Mao Zedong in Power,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 96–103 [partial chapter]
- Andrew G. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 88-122
- Elizabeth J. Perry and Xun Li, “Rebels: The Workers’ General Headquarters,” in *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 29-69

Thursday, April 27: [The Cultural Revolution (2)] Lecture / discussion

- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 65-76
- Andrew G. Walder, “Bending the Arc of Chinese History: The Cultural Revolution’s Paradoxical Legacy,” *The China Quarterly* 227 (September 2016), pp. 613–631
- Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik and Cui Jinke, “Whodunnit? Memory and Politics before the 50th Anniversary of the Cultural Revolution,” *The China Quarterly* 227 (September 2016), pp. 734–751

Tuesday, May 2: [The End of the Mao Era] Short lecture [In-class midterm exam]

- Frederick Teiwes, “Mao Zedong in Power,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 103–116 [partial chapter]

Thursday, May 4: [Deng Xiaoping and the Early Reforms] Lecture / discussion

- Bruce Gilley, “Deng Xiaoping and his Successors,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 119–129 [partial chapter]
- Maurice Meisner, “The Rise of Deng Xiaoping and the Critique of Maoism,” and “Market Reforms and the Development of Capitalism,” in *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic*, 3rd edition (New York: The Free Press, 1999), pp. 427-482
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 77-88, on decollectivization

Tuesday, May 9: [The Crisis of 1989] Short lecture / film excerpts / discussion

- Film excerpts to be shown in class: “Gate of Heavenly Peace,” 1995
- Bruce Gilley, “Deng Xiaoping and his Successors,” in *Politics in China*, pp. 129–132 [partial chapter, giving a bare-bones overview]
- Richard Baum, “The Road to Tiananmen: Chinese Politics in the 1980s,” in Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 431–467
- Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse*, pp. 89–130

## Part III / Key Themes and Topics in Contemporary Chinese Politics

### Thursday, May 11: [The CCP's Post-1989 Recovery] Lecture / discussion

- Bruce Gilley, "Deng Xiaoping and his Successors," in *Politics in China*, pp. 132–144 [partial chapter]
- William A. Joseph, "Ideology and China's Political Development," in *Politics in China*, chapter 5, pp. 174–188 [partial chapter]
- Evan Osnos, "Born Red," *The New Yorker*, April 6, 2015 [Profile of Xi Jinping]
- Bruce Dickson, "Introduction: The CCP's Strategy for Survival," in *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1–29

### Tuesday, May 16: [Structures of Governance] Lecture / discussion

- Cheng Li, "China's Communist Party-State: The Structure and Dynamics of Power," in *Politics in China*, pp. 192–223
- Richard McGregor, "The Keeper of the Files: The Party and Personnel," in *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), pp. 70–103
- A debate in the pages of *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2013):
  - Eric X. Li, "The Life of the Party"
  - Yasheng Huang, "Democratize or Die: Why China's Communists Face Reform or Revolution"

### Thursday, May 18: [The Politics of China's Economy] Lecture / discussion

- David Zweig, "China's Political Economy," in *Politics in China*, chapter 8
- James Fallows, "China Makes, the World Takes," *The Atlantic* (July/August 2007), <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200707/shenzhen>
- Leslie T. Chang, *Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009), pp. 3–58
- Michael Wines, "China Fortifies State Businesses to Fuel Growth," *New York Times* (August 30, 2010)

#### Optional further reading and viewing:

- Documentary: "We the Workers," (2017) trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndY1294mVDk>
- Documentary: "Plastic China," (2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3Oz7Yp40EY>
- Arthur R. Kroeber, *China's Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016

### Tuesday, May 23: [Media, Internet, and Public Opinion] Lecture / Discussion

- Evan Osnos, "The Forbidden Zone," *The New Yorker* (July 20, 2009) [on Hu Shuli and Caijing magazine]
- Rebecca MacKinnon, "China's Networked Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* (April 2011) vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 32–46
- Michael Wines, "China's Censors Misfire in Abuse-of-Power Case," *New York Times*, November 17, 2010 [About the "My father is Li Gang" affair]
- Bruce Dickson, "Generating Support," chapter 5 of *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 213–259

### Thursday, May 25: [Contention and Civil Society] Lecture / discussion

- William Hurst, "Urban China: Change and Contention," in *Politics in China*, chapter 10
- Andrew G. Walder, "Unruly Stability: Why China's Regime Has Staying Power," *Current History* (September 2009), pp. 257–263
- Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 94–149

Tuesday, May 30: [Local Elections and Democracy] Lecture / discussion

- John James Kennedy, “Rural China: Reform and Resistance,” in *Politics in China*, chapter 9
- Bruce Dickson, “Defining Democracy,” chapter 6 of *The Dictator’s Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party’s Strategy for Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 260–299
- Luigi Tomba, “What Does Wukan Have To Do With Democracy?” *Made in China*, issue 4 (2016)

**Optional further reading:**

- Kevin J. O’Brien and Rongbin Han, “Path to Democracy? Assessing Village Elections in China,” *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 18 No. 60 (June, 2009), pp. 359-378
- Jacques deLisle, “What’s Happened To Democracy In China? Elections, Law And Political Reform” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (April 2010)

Thursday, June 1: [The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region] Lecture / discussion

- Sonny Shiu-hing Lo, “Hong Kong,” in *Politics in China*, chapter 17
- Sebastian Veg, “Legalistic and Utopian: Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement,” *New Left Review* 92 (March/April 2015), pp 54–73

Tuesday, June 6: [Xinjiang and Tibet] Lecture / discussion

- *The Economist*, “Who is Chinese? The Upper Han,” November 19, 2016
- Gardner Bovingdon, “Xinjiang,” in *Politics in China*, chapter 16
- Robert Barnett, “Tibet,” in *Politics in China*, chapter 15
- Evan Osnos, “The Next Incarnation,” *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010

Thursday, June 8: [Perspectives on the Future] Discussion

- Arthur Kroeber, “Here Is Xi’s China: Get Used to It” (December 2014)
- David Shambaugh, “The Coming Chinese Crack-up” (March 2015)
- Tim Heath, “No, China’s Not about to Collapse” (March 2015)
- “Is Mao Still Dead?” *ChinaFile*, February 2015 [A series of short posts]

**Final exam: Thursday, June 15, 2017, 7:30pm–10:30pm**

- Note that the final exam must be taken at the above time; alternative times cannot be arranged.