

## Historical Perspectives on Contemporary Politics in China: A Senior Seminar

Politics 190t • 42719 • Winter 2018  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
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Instructor's web site: <http://benread.net>  
Course web site: <https://canvas.ucsc.edu/>  
Course meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:20 to 6:55pm, in Merrill 002  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30pm to 4:30pm, in 157 Merrill Faculty Annex, and by appointment  
Date of this syllabus: January 9, 2018. Subject to change; check websites for latest version.

### Overview

Whether through news stories, books, opinion pieces, blogs, think tank reports, social media, or video documentaries, the world is awash with discussion and information about China. Often this fire hose of material focuses on what happened yesterday, what seems new or changed. It sometimes neglects continuities with the past. Of course, the issue is hardly confined to China. To be an informed and thoughtful citizen of the world requires not merely understanding the here-and-now, but grappling with questions about how the present came to be.

This seminar takes an in-depth look at contemporary politics in China by considering historical roots of the present day. (Some readings may also concern other parts of East Asia.) Though China is known for having more than 3,000 years of civilization, we look less to the deep past than to earlier periods of the People's Republic, which is now approaching its eighth decade of existence. The readings have been selected to survey important topics and a range of perspectives on historical influences — and of course to be memorable, important, interesting.

While reading and discussing assigned materials for each class session, students will develop research projects of their own. These could be about topics in China or other places in East Asia. All must explore an issue of contemporary political relevance, delve into its historical background, and make an argument concerning historical continuity or change. Students will find relevant sources, write a bibliography and outline, prepare a draft, critique another student's draft, and ultimately produce a polished 15-page paper.

Students taking this seminar will benefit from prior coursework on China and East Asia, but the class is open to Politics seniors even without such previous study.

### Readings

We'll be reading one book in full. I recommend that you order a copy right away. It is:

- Elizabeth J. Perry, *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, ISBN: 9780520271906).

We'll also be reading most of the following book. You may wish to order your own paperback copy of it, but it's also available electronically through the library system and I'll have it on Canvas too:

- Leta Hong Fincher, *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (London: Zed Books, 2014, ISBN: 9781780329215).

The many other required readings will be available on the course Canvas site.

## 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. 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.
- **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 components and weighting:** As follows, though the exact percentages are subject to adjustment.
  - Reading responses: **15 percent of your grade.** Send your one-paragraph reading response to the entire class via email (not as an attachment, just in the body of the email) by noon on the day of each class for which readings are assigned.
  - Class participation: **20 percent.**
  - Bibliography and outline of research paper: **5 percent.** Deadline: noon, **Sunday, February 4, 2018.** Submit this electronically only (not hard copy), via email attachment, as a Word file, with the filename starting with your surname.
  - Initial 8-page draft of research paper: **15 percent.** Deadline: noon, **Sunday, February 25, 2018.** Submit this electronically only (not hard copy), via email attachment, as a Word file, with the filename starting with your surname. You will send it to the professor and one other student, as assigned.
  - Your comments on another student's first draft: **5 percent.** Deadline: noon, **Sunday, March 4, 2018.** Submit this via email to the professor and to the paper author.
  - Final 15-page research paper: **40 percent.** Deadline: noon, **Monday, March 19, 2018.** Submit the final paper electronically only (not hard copy), via email attachment, as a Word file, with the filename starting with your surname.
  - Note that there will be no final exam in this seminar.
- **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).

## Detailed calendar of class meetings

### Tuesday, January 9: Introduction

- There are no assigned readings for this first class session.

### Thursday, January 11

- Three short items from the online publication, *The China Story*:
  - Nathan Wooley, “Trouble with the Past,”  
<https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2016/forum-managing-the-past/trouble-with-the-past/>
  - Zhu Yujie, “Regulating Old Towns: The Battle for the Tourist Yuan,”  
<https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2016/forum-managing-the-past/regulating-old-towns-the-battle-for-the-tourist-yuan/>
  - Geremie Barmé, “Engineering Chinese Civilization,”  
<https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2013/introduction-engineering-chinese-civilisation/>
- Glenn Tiffert, “Peering Down the Memory Hole: History, Censorship, and the Digital Turn,” 2017

### Tuesday, January 16

- Zeng Xianyi, “Mediation in China — Past and Present,” *Asia Pacific Law Review*, 2009
- James A. Wall, Jr. and Michael Blum, “Community Mediation in the People’s Republic of China,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1991
- Neil Diamant, “Conflict and Conflict Resolution in China: Beyond Mediation-Centered Approaches,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2000

### Thursday, January 18: McHenry Library research retreat. We will meet in one of the group study rooms.

- No assigned readings

### Tuesday, January 23

- Zhang Yue. 2013. *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago, and Paris*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, chapter 2

### Thursday, January 25

- Heilmann, Sebastian, and Elizabeth J. Perry. 2011. *Mao’s Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center. (Chapters 1 and 2)

### Tuesday, January 30

- Heilmann and Perry, *Mao’s Invisible Hand* (Chapters 3 and 5, by Heilmann and Dillon)

### Thursday, February 1

- Joel Andreas and Yige Dong, “‘Mass Supervision’ and the Bureaucratization of Governance in China,” in Shue, Vivienne, and Patricia M. Thornton, eds. 2017. *To Govern China: Evolving Practices of Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 123-152

Tuesday, February 6

- Elizabeth J. Perry, *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), Introduction and chapters 1–2

Thursday, February 8

- Perry, *Anyuan*, chapters 3–4

Tuesday, February 13

- Perry, *Anyuan*, chapters 5–6

Thursday, February 15

- Perry, *Anyuan*, chapter 7 and conclusion

Tuesday, February 20

- Weller, Robert P. 1999. *Alternate Civilities: Democracy and Culture in China and Taiwan*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, chapters 1–2

Thursday, February 22

- Weller, Robert P. 2006. *Discovering Nature: Globalization and Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapters 2 and 5

Tuesday, February 27

- Leta Hong Fincher, *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (London: Zed Books, 2014), introduction and chapters 1–2

Thursday, March 1

- Hong Fincher, *Leftover Women*, chapters 4, 6

Tuesday, March 6

- Shao, Qin. 2013. *Shanghai Gone: Domicide and Defiance in a Chinese Megacity*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, introduction and chapter 2

Thursday, March 8

- Perry Link, Richard Madsen, and Paul Pickowicz, eds. 2013. *Restless China*. Rowman & Littlefield (chapters by Jeremy Brown and Yan Yunxiang)

Tuesday, March 13: Presentations of research

- No assigned readings

Thursday, March 15: Presentations of research

- No assigned readings