Key Issues in Contemporary Chinese Politics:
A Graduate Seminar

Politics 261 • Spring 2014
University of California, Santa Cruz
Prof. Benjamin L. Read

Email: bread (at) ucsc (dot) edu
Instructor’s web site: http://benread.net
Course web site: http://ecommons.ucsc.edu/
Course meetings: Merrill 134, Thursdays, 5pm–8pm
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00pm–3:30pm, and by appointment
Date of this syllabus: April 3, 2014. Subject to change; check websites for latest version.

Overview:
The purpose of this graduate seminar is to acquaint students with recent academic research on major topics in the politics of China. We will focus on the present day and the past decade or two, not least because UC Santa Cruz students are fortunate enough to have access to other courses covering earlier eras of the People’s Republic. The seminar addresses topics ranging from the core institutions of the party-state to local politics, economic governance, and state-society interactions in multiple realms. We will consider China in its own terms while also evaluating the relevance of theoretical concepts from various fields in the social sciences, and we will aim to identify opportunities for new research projects.

No knowledge of the Chinese language is assumed, though it is, of course, helpful. Graduate students from all departments and disciplines are welcome. Undergraduates should contact the instructor before enrolling.

Assignments and ground rules:

- Actively help build an enthusiastic, far-ranging, thoughtful, critical and constructive discussion.
- Do the required readings prior to each class session and come prepared to contribute to the conversation. Acquire the readings well in advance of class so as to avoid logistical problems.
- Attend each class session unless unavoidable circumstances make it impossible to do so. Given that we have only ten class meetings, please plan to attend every one and do not schedule things that conflict with class.
- In the event that you are truly unable to attend class, you must 1) email me promptly with a brief explanation; 2) Within the two weeks after the class date in question, submit an extra reading response on the readings for the class you missed. This will not count toward the five regularly assigned reading responses.
- Present a reading approximately every other class, as assigned. Participation and presentations together constitute 20% of the quarter grade.
- Write five reading responses, at least three pages and one thousand words each (40%). My web site has a page providing guidance for these. You may choose the weeks you wish to address, and the first week of class is fair game. On those weeks, turn in your response paper by 9 a.m. on the day of class, via email attachment (Word or PDF format).
- Students will also submit a final paper (40%). Most likely it will present a thorough review of an issue related to the course, drawing on a reasonably wide selection of material, although other formats may be discussed. Please suggest a topic to me before Week 5. The paper should be at least 12 pages in length and turned in both via email and in hard copy; it should be work that you have written this quarter and not used in other classes for academic credit.
Academic integrity:

- Excerpts from UCSC's Policy on Academic Integrity for Graduate Students (http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/graduate_students/): “Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, research fraud, or facilitating academic dishonesty or as further specified in campus policies and regulations, including the Campus Policy on Research Integrity. ... In cases in which academic misconduct has been determined to occur, sanctions may include dismissal, suspension for a specified period, and notation of academic misconduct on a student's transcript, including all external copies, for a specified period.”

- I take academic integrity very seriously and I expect all students to do the same.

- Concerning the use of sources in your writing, and understanding and avoiding plagiarism, the single most thorough (though it is concise) and illuminating discussion I know of is Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008). I strongly recommend that you obtain and read this inexpensive book, both for your own use and for your work as an instructor.

Special accommodations:

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me during my office hours in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY).

Week 1: Conceptualizing and comparing China in political terms

Thursday, April 3, 2014


Further reading


Week 2: Core institutions

Thursday, April 10, 2014

- Susan V. Lawrence and Michael F. Martin, “Understanding China's Political System,” Congressional Research Service report, January 31, 2013 [if you are already familiar with the basics of China's political institutions, just skim this; otherwise, read it carefully.]
- Andrew Hall Wedeman, Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), chapters 1 and 6, pp. 1–14, 142–76
Further reading


**Week 3: Politics at the province/county and city/district level**

**Thursday, April 17, 2014**

- Philip C.C. Huang, “Chongqing: Equitable Development Driven by a ‘Third Hand’,” *Modern China*, 37/6 (November 2011), 569-622

**Further reading**


**Week 4: Politics at the village and neighborhood level**

**Thursday, April 24, 2014**

- Philip Huang, Gao Yuan, and Yusheng Peng, “Capitalization without Proletarianization in China’s Agricultural Development,” *Modern China*, 38/2 (2012), 139-173

**Further reading**

• Benjamin L. Read, Roots of the State: Neighborhood Organization and Social Networks in Beijing and Taipei (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012)

Week 5: Political economy
Thursday, May 1, 2014

Further reading
• Pun Ngai and Jenny Chan, “Global Capital, the State, and Chinese Workers: The Foxconn Experience,” Modern China, 38/4 (2012), 383-410
• Henry Sanderson and Michael Forsythe, China’s Superbank (Singapore: John Wiley and Sons, 2013)

Week 6: Peripheries and Center
Thursday, May 8, 2014
• Thomas M. Mullaney, Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), pages to be announced

Further reading
• Suzanne Pepper, Keeping Democracy at Bay: Hong Kong and the Challenge of Chinese Political Reform (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008)
Week 7: Contention, Civil Society and Their Adversaries

Thursday, May 15, 2014

- Yu Jianrong, “Reassessing Chinese Society’s ‘Rigid Stability’”

Further reading

- Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Week 8: Public Opinion

Thursday, May 22, 2014

- Teresa Wright, Accepting Authoritarianism: State-Society Relations in China’s Reform Era (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010).
- Martin King Whyte, Myth of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), pages to be announced

Further reading


Week 9: Law and Politics

Thursday, May 29, 2014

- Randall Peerenboom, China’s Long March toward Rule of Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pages to be announced
Further reading

- Benjamin L. Read and Ethan Michelson, “Mediating the Mediation Debate: Conflict Resolution and the Local State in China,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52/5 (October 2008), 737-64.

Week 10: Public Policy

Thursday, June 5, 2014

- Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “Incorporating the Peasantry into the System of Social Security: The Paternalistic State and Good Governance at the Local Level”

Further reading