

Key Issues in Contemporary Chinese Politics: A Graduate Seminar

Politics 261 • 63793 • Spring 2020
University of California, Santa Cruz
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Instructor's web site: <https://benread.net>
Course web site: <https://canvas.ucsc.edu/>
Course meetings: Mondays, 1:20–4:20pm, on Zoom
Office hours: Mondays 9:00a–10:30a, on Zoom, and by appointment
Date of this syllabus: March 30, 2020. 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, information and internet politics, 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 regularly assigned reading responses.
- Present a reading approximately every other class, as assigned. The presentation should only very briefly summarize the reading in question (if at all), but instead should launch the group on pathways for appreciating and/or critiquing it. Participation and presentations together constitute 25% of the quarter grade.
- Write three critical reading responses, at least two double-spaced pages each (30%). My web site has a page providing guidance for these. The first should be for one of the sessions from weeks 2-4; the second, weeks 5-7; the third, 8-10. On those weeks, turn in your response paper by 9 a.m. on the day of class, sent to the entire class via email attachment (Word or PDF format).
- Students will also submit a final paper (45%). 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, such as a research proposal. 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; 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 will post this on the Canvas site.

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: The field of Chinese politics

Monday, March 30, 2020

- Kevin J. O'Brien, "Studying Chinese Politics in an Age of Specialization," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20/71 (2011), 535-41.
- Marie-Eve Reny, "Review Essay: What Happened to the Study of China in Comparative Politics?," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 11 (2011), 105-135.

Week 2: Institutions and authoritarian resilience

Monday, April 6, 2020

- Andrew J. Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 1 (January 2003): 6-17.
- Minxin Pei. *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), introduction, chapters 1 and 4
- Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (eds.), *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), part of the introduction (pp. 1-15) and chapters 2 and 3.
- Maria Edin. "State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township Perspective." *The China Quarterly* 173 (March 2003): 35-52
- Pierre F. Landry, Xiaobo Lü, and Haiyan Duan, "Does Performance Matter? Evaluating Political Selection along the Chinese Administrative Ladder," *Comparative Political Studies* 51:8 (2018).
- 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 or disregard this; otherwise, read it carefully.]

Further reading

- David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
- Victor C. Shih, "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China," *American Political Science Review*, 106/1 (February 2012), 166-87.
- Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Frank N. Pieke, *The Good Communist: Elite Training and State Building in Today's China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Andrew Hall Wedeman, *Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012)
- Victor C. Shih, *Factions and Finance in China: Elite Conflict and Inflation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

- Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (New York: Harper, 2010).

Week 3: Practices of governance and power

Monday, April 13, 2020

- Vivienne Shue and Patricia M. Thornton, eds. *To Govern China: Evolving Practices of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): introduction (Shue & Thornton), 1 (Perry), 3 (Shue), 4 (Andreas & Dong), 5 (Weller), 8 (Rocca)
- Andrew Mertha, "Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process." *The China Quarterly* (2009): 995-1012.

Further reading

- Luigi Tomba, *The Government Next Door: Neighborhood Politics in Urban China* (Cornell University Press, 2014), chapter 3, "Housing and Social Engineering"

Week 4: Protesters, Civil Society and Their Adversaries

Monday, April 20, 2020

- Diana Fu, *Mobilizing without the Masses: Control and Contention in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), chapters TBA
- Yongshun Cai, *Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), chapters TBA
- Ching Kwan Lee and Zhang Yonghong, "The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundations of Bargained Authoritarianism in China," *American Journal of Sociology* 118(6): 1476-1508, 2013.
- Deng, Yanhua and Kevin J. O'Brien, "Relational Repression in China: Using Social Ties to Demobilize Protesters," *The China Quarterly* 215 (September 2013): 533-52.

Further reading

- Andrew G. Walder, "Unruly Stability: Why China's Regime Has Staying Power," *Current History*, 108/719 (September 2009), 257-63
- Yu Jianrong, "Reassessing Chinese Society's 'Rigid Stability'," translated by Jason Todd, accessed on The China Story web site
- Jessica Teets, *Civil Society Under Authoritarianism: The China Model* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Anthony Spires, "Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China's Grassroots NGOs," *American Journal of Sociology* 117:1, 1-45
- Karla W. Simon, *Civil Society in China: The Legal Framework from Ancient Times to the New Reform Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Timothy Hildebrandt, *Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.)
- Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007)
- Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate: Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture," *Modern China*, 19/2 (April 1993), 108-38.

Week 5: Information and internet politics

Monday, April 27, 2020

- Margaret E. Roberts, *Censored: Distraction and Diversion inside China's Great Firewall* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Further reading

- Mary Gallagher and Blake Miller, "Who Not What: The Logic of China's Information Control Strategy," manuscript (2019).
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2 (May 2013): 1–18.
- Martin Dimitrov, "The Political Logic of Media Control in China," *Problems of Postcommunism* 64: 3-4 (2017), 121–127.
- Daniela Stockmann, *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Susan L. Shirk, *Changing Media, Changing China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Week 6: Politics at the subnational level

Monday, May 4, 2020

- John A. Donaldson, *Small Works: Poverty and Economic Development in Southwestern China* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011)

Further reading

- Meg Rithmire, "China's 'New Regionalism': Subnational Analysis in Chinese Political Economy." *World Politics* 66, no. 1 (2014).
- Meg Rithmire, *Land Bargains and Chinese Capitalism: The Politics of Property Rights under Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- You-tien Hsing, *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Philip C.C. Huang, "Chongqing: Equitable Development Driven by a 'Third Hand'?", *Modern China*, 37/6 (November 2011), 569-622
- Pierre F. Landry, *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Xiangming Chen, ed. *Shanghai Rising: State Power and Local Transformations in a Global Megacity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)
- Fulong Wu, *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism* (Routledge Contemporary China Series; Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007).
- Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert, "County and Township Cadres as a Strategic Group: A New Approach to Political Agency in China's Local State," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 17/3 (2012), 221-49.

Week 7: Politics at the village and neighborhood level

Monday, May 11, 2020

- Daniel C. Mattingly, *The Art of Political Control in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Further reading

- Lily L. Tsai, *Accountability without Democracy: How Solidary Groups Provide Public Goods in Rural China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Ben Hillman, *Patronage and Power: Local State Networks and Party-State Resilience in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014)
- Graeme Smith, "The Hollow State: Rural Governance in China," *The China Quarterly*, 203 (2010), 601-18.
- John James Kennedy, "Supply and Support for Grassroots Political Reform in Rural China," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 15/2 (2010), 169-90.
- Gunter Schubert and Anna L. Ahlers, *Participation and Empowerment at the Grassroots: Chinese Village Elections in Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2012).
- Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in Village China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- Q. Forrest Zhang and John Donaldson. "From Peasants to Farmers: Peasant Differentiation, Labor Regimes, and Land-Rights Institutions in China's Agrarian Transition," *Politics & Society*, 38/4 (2010), 458-489
- Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization* (3rd edn.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

Week 8: Political economy

Monday, May 18, 2020

- Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016)

Further reading

- Barry J. Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Adaptation and Growth*, 2 edition (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2018).
- Kellee S. Tsai, *Capitalism without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).
- Mary E. Gallagher, *Contagious Capitalism: Globalization and the Politics of Labor in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)
- Roselyn Hsueh, *China's Regulatory State: A New Strategy for Globalization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011)
- Dali Yang, *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004)
- Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Pun Ngai and Jenny Chan, "Global Capital, the State, and Chinese Workers: The Foxconn Experience," *Modern China*, 38/4 (2012), 383-410
- Eric Thun, *Changing Lanes in China: Foreign Direct Investment, Local Governments, and Auto Sector Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Scott Kennedy, *The Business of Lobbying in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
- Henry Sanderson and Michael Forsythe, *China's Superbank* (Singapore: John Wiley and Sons, 2013)
- Margaret M. Pearson, "The Business of Governing Business in China: Institutions and Norms of the Emerging Regulatory State," *World Politics*, 57/2 (2005), 296-322
- William Hurst, *The Chinese Worker after Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Week 9: Public Opinion

Monday, May 25, 2020

- Martin King Whyte, *Myth of the Social Volcano: Perceptions of Inequality and Distributive Injustice in Contemporary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), chapters TBA
- Tang, Wenfang. 2017. Public Opinion and Authoritarian Resilience in China (working paper)
- Li, Lianjiang, "The Magnitude and Resilience of Trust in the Center: Evidence from Interviews with Petitioners in Beijing and a Local Survey in Rural China," *Modern China* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 3-36.

Further reading

- Bruce J. Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival* (Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Teresa Wright, *Accepting Authoritarianism: State-Society Relations in China's Reform Era* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010).
- Melanie Manion, "A Survey of Survey Research on Chinese Politics: What Have We Learned?," in Allen Carlson, et al. (eds.), *Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 181-99
- Wenfang Tang, *Public Opinion and Political Change in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
- Jie Chen, *Popular Political Support in Urban China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

Week 10: Comparisons Outside the PRC

Monday, June 1, 2020

- Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth J. Perry. *Beyond Regimes: China and India Compared* (Harvard University, Asia Center, 2018), introduction and chapters 5 and 6.
- Dimitrov, Martin K., ed., *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), chapters 1, 2, 9, and 11.

- Lily L. Tsai, "Bringing in China: Insights for Building Comparative Political Theory," *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 3 (March 1, 2017): 295–328.
- Maria Repnikova, "Contesting the State under Authoritarianism: Critical Journalists in China and Russia," *Comparative Politics* 51:1 (2018)

Further reading

- Benjamin L. Read, *Roots of the State: Neighborhood Organization and Social Networks in Beijing and Taipei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012)
- Julia C. Strauss, *State Formation in China and Taiwan: Bureaucracy, Campaign, and Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- Dorothy J. Solinger, *States' Gains, Labor's Losses: China, France, and Mexico Choose Global Liaisons, 1980–2000*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).
- Zhang, Yue. *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago, and Paris* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
- William Hurst, *Ruling before the Law: The Politics of Legal Regimes in China and Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).