
POLS-Y333

Chinese Politics

Course Overview

This course provides an overview of China's political system. We will begin with a brief historical overview of China's political development, with a focus on the period from 1949 to the present. The remainder of the course will examine the key challenges facing the current generation of CCP leadership, such as economic reforms, regime stability, and political reform. Students will also be familiarized with prominent theories of authoritarian politics. Among other topics, we will examine: factionalism, power-sharing, and political purges; corruption; avenues for political participation and representation; public opinion; protest movements and dissidents; co-optation of ethnic minorities; and media and internet control.

Instructor

Jason Wu
Woodburn Hall 360
jywu@iu.edu
Office Hours: Please sign up at <https://calendly.com/jasonywu/meeting>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this class, students should be able to:

- Acquire a detailed understanding of the political cultures, systems, and ideologies of People's Republic of China
- Examine the key political challenges and governance issues confronting the regime and the ruling Chinese Communist Party
- Debate the social and economic impacts of the formal and informal institutions and practices the Party adopts
- Discuss the basic dynamics of Chinese foreign policy toward a variety of countries and regions and on a variety of issues
- Understand and critically evaluate the main theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of Chinese politics
- Compare political cultures, processes and outcomes in China with those in other countries

Requirements, Attendance Policy, and Grading

Students are expected to regularly attend class, contribute to class discussions, and complete the reading assignments. There will also be two midterm exams (September 30 and November 4) and a final exam (December 18).

Students have a choice when it comes to how their attendance grade is evaluated. In this course, they can choose if they would like their attendance in lecture to count towards the final grade. Students who choose to make attendance count will be assessed as follows. Students are permitted to miss up to three class meetings without permission or penalty. If students miss no more than three classes, they will receive +3% on their final grade. If they miss four or more classes, their final grade will be docked by −3%. Absence for illness, university-sponsored activities, or family emergencies will, of course, be excused but only subject to proper written documentation. The default is to not have attendance count. If this option is selected, then whether students attend or not will not affect their final grade.

- Participation: 10%
- Midterm Exam 1: 30%
- Midterm Exam 2: 30%
- Final Exam: 30%

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the guidelines of the IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (<http://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.html>) regarding cheating and plagiarism. Any ideas or materials taken from another source must be fully acknowledged and cited.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Tools such as ChatGPT are becoming important resources in many fields and industries. Accordingly, you are permitted to use such tools to generate content submitted for evaluation in this course, as well as to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these tools may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. You remain responsible for all content you submit for evaluation.

If you include content that was generated, in whole or in part, by Generative AI tools in work submitted for evaluation in this course, you must document and credit your source. For example, text generated using ChatGPT-4 should include a citation such as: "ChatGPT-4. (YYYY, Month DD of query). 'Text of your query.' Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>." Material generated using other tools should be cited accordingly. Failure to do so in this course constitutes failure to attribute under the IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.

Disability Accommodation

Please contact me if you require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability. You should establish your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

Late Policy

Late papers will be penalized by one grade (e.g. A- to B+) every twenty-four hours, with a maximum penalty of 20 %.

Note: Syllabus Subject to Change

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus as we move through the semester - if I make a change, I will post a revised version on Canvas.

Course Outline and Readings

No books are required for this course. The following books are recommended references.

- ☐ Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- ☐ Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform (2nd ed)*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- ☐ Joseph, William A. (ed). 2019. *Politics in China: An Introduction (3rd ed)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ☐ Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China (3rd ed)*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Week 1: Introduction

August 26 - Course Overview

August 28 - Contestation from Within

- Svolik, Milan W. 2013. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, p. 1-18.

Week 2: Comparative Perspectives

September 2 - Labor Day - **No Class**

September 4 - Contestation from Below

- Przeworski, Adam, & Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49(2): 155-183.

Week 3: Historical Background

September 9 - From Imperial China to the Republican Era

- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China*. Chapters 1 & 2, p. 1-58.

September 11 - Revolution and War

- Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 16, p. 356-396.
- (Recommended) Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 17, p. 397-431.

Week 4: The Early People's Republic

September 16 - The Politics of Liberation

- Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 19, p. 460-483.
- (Recommended) Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 20, p. 484-513.
- (Recommended) Mao Zedong. "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship." 30 June 1949. Speech In Commemoration of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China. http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_65.htm

September 18 - The Great Leap Forward

- Dikötter, Frank. 2011. *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-62*, "Preface," "Launching Sputniks," "Steel Fever," "Warning Signs," "The End of Truth," "On the Sly," "Violence."
- (Recommended) Yang, Jisheng. 2012. *Tombstone*, Preface.

Week 5: Crisis and Reaction

September 23 - The Cultural Revolution

- Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen, & Jonathan Unger. 2009. *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization*, Chapter 5, p. 141-168.
- (Recommended) Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen, & Jonathan Unger. 2009. *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization*, Chapter 1, p. 13-40.

September 25 - Reform and Opening

- Chan, Anita, Richard Madsen, & Jonathan Unger. 2009. *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization*, Chapters 10 & 12, p. 267-287 & 309-329.

- (Recommended) Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*, Chapter 1, p. 23-47.
- (Recommended) Deng Xiaoping. "On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership." August 18, 1980. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*, p. 302-325.
- (Recommended) *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 24, p. 587-614.
- (Recommended) "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China," Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, June 27, 1981 (excerpts).

Week 6: *The Legacy of 1989*

September 30 - **Midterm Exam 1 in class**

October 2 - The Road to Tiananmen

- Spence, Jonathan. 2012. *The Search for Modern China*, Chapter 26, p. 639-665.
- (Recommended) Documentary: "The Gate of Heavenly Peace."
- (Recommended) Desposato, Scott W., Gang Wang, and Jason Y. Wu. 2021. "The Long-Term Impact of Mobilization and Repression on Political Trust." *Comparative Political Studies* 54(14): 2447-2474.

Week 7: *Present Day*

October 7 - Reverting to Reform

- Fewsmith, Joseph. 2009. *China Since Tiananmen*, Chapter 2, p. 48-79.

October 9 - China under Xi Jinping

- Economy, Elizabeth. 2018. *The Third Revolution*, Chapters 1-2, p. 1-54.

Week 8: *Institutions and Competition*

October 14 - China's Political System

- Li, Cheng. 2019. "China's Communist Party State: The Structure and Dynamics of Power" in *Politics in China: An Introduction (3rd ed)*, Chapter 6, p. 201-236.
- (Recommended) The Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party. Available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/18th_cpc_congress/2012-11/16/content_27138030.htm

October 16 - Factional Politics

- Shih, Victor, Christopher Adolph, and Mingxing Liu. 2012. "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China." *American Political Science Review* 106(1): 166-187.

- (Recommended) Shih, Victor. 2008. "'Nauseating' Displays of Loyalty: Monitoring the Factional Bargain through Ideological Campaigns in China." *Journal of Politics* 70(4): p. 1177-1192.

Week 9: Governance and Growth

October 21 - Decentralization and Reform

- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*, Chapter 4, p. 103-137.

October 23 - Challenges of Reform

- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*, Chapter 5, p. 141-183.

Week 10: Growing Pains

October 28 - Local Governance

- Smith, Graeme. 2009. "Political Machinations in a Rural County." *The China Journal* 62: 29-59.

October 30 - Corruption and Anti-Corruption

- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2020. *China's Gilded Age*, Chapter 1, p. 1-22.
- Wang, Erik H. 2022. "Frightened Mandarins: The Adverse Effects of Fighting Corruption on Local Bureaucracy." *Comparative Political Studies* 55(11): 1807-1843.

Week 11: In the Name of the People

November 4 - **Midterm Exam 2 in class**

November 6 - Public Opinion

- Dickson, Bruce. 2016. *The Dictator's Dilemma*, Chapter 5, p. 214-261.

Week 12: Thought Work

November 11 - Ideology

- Wu, Jason Y., and Tianguang Meng. 2023. "The Nature of Ideology in Urban China." *Comparative Politics* 55(3): 473-495.
- (Recommended) Fewsmith, Joseph. 2009. *China Since Tiananmen*, Chapter 4, p. 113-139.

November 13 - Media, Censorship and Propaganda

- King, Gary; Pan, Jennifer; and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2): 326-343.

- (Recommended) Repnikova, Maria. 2017. *Media Politics in China*, Chapter 4, p. 76-107.
- (Recommended) Roberts, Margaret E. 2018. *Censored*.

Week 13: Contention

November 18 - Protest

- Fu, Diana. 2017. "Disguised Collective Action in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(4): 499-527.
- (Recommended) Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.

November 20 - Ethnic and Peripheral Politics

- McNamee, Lachlan, and Anna Zhang. 2019. "Demographic Engineering and International Conflict: Evidence from China and the Former USSR." *International Organization* 73: 291-327.
- "Absolutely No Mercy: Leaked Files Expose How China Organized Mass Detentions of Muslims," *The New York Times*, 16 November 2019. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>. Non-paywalled version available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20191222022035/https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html>.

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

November 25 - No Class

November 27 - No Class

Week 15: Contrasting Identities

December 2 - Nationalism

- Weiss, Jessica. 2013. "Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China." *International Organization* 67(1): 1-35.

December 4 - Contested Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan

- Veg, Sebastian. 2017. "The Rise of 'Localism' and Civic Identity in Post-handover Hong Kong: Questioning the Chinese Nation-State." *China Quarterly* 230: 323-347.

Week 16: Outlook

December 9 - Foreign Policy

- Goldstein, Avery. 2020. "China's Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping: Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance." *International Security* 45(1): 164-201.

December 11 - Main Melodies and Undercurrents

- Xu, Zhangrun. 2018. "Imminent Fears, Immediate Hopes." Available at <http://chinaheritage.net/journal/imminent-fears-immediate-hopes-a-beijing-jeremiad/>
- (Recommended) "Charter 08" petition. Available at <http://www.chinafile.com/library/nyrb-china-archive/chinas-charter-08>.

Final Exam - in our regular classroom on Wednesday, December 18, 10:20AM - 12:20PM.