

CP² Week 1: State of the Field

Dr Chao-Yo Cheng

Welcome to CP²

- ▶ Logistics and introduction
 - Module organization
 - Weekly syllabus
 - Assessment
 - Communication

- ▶ Lecture and discussion: "China and comparative politics"

Module organization



- ▶ Every Thursday 6-8:30pm
- ▶ Rm 353, Malet Street
- ▶ In-person lecture and seminar discussion
- ▶ **Question:** Final week in Chinatown?

Weekly syllabus

- ▶ **Week 1:** State of field
- ▶ **Weeks 2-5:** The Party-state
 - From empire to nation-state
 - Structures of the party-state
 - Informal politics and factionalism
 - Central-local relations and local governance
- ▶ **Weeks 7-10:** Governance and development
 - Coercion and control
 - Co-optation and representation
 - Social protection and redistribution
 - State-led development (Guest Speaker: Dr Xin Han)
- ▶ **Week 11:** China as a method

Assessment

- ▶ Learning journal (30%)
 - Complete a 1,000-word essay (max) about a published peer-reviewed political science article
 - Answer two questions to explore how China is being examined in comparative perspective
 - More details coming in Week 2
- ▶ Final essay (70%)
 - Complete a 3,000 essay about a substantive question in relation to Chinese politics, using all provided materials through the module
 - Key is to demonstrate a solid understanding of class materials
 - More details coming in Week 6

Moodle and student support

- ▶ Moodle
 - Background readings
 - Additional resources
 - Weekly videos and readings
 - Lecture slide decks
- ▶ Office hours: Every Friday 3-5pm via Teams (or by appointment)
- ▶ Send administrative inquiries to the School via Ask
- ▶ Study support services provided by the Faculty and College

Ground rules

- ▶ In-person attendance is compulsory
- ▶ Students should finish all readings and be prepared to discuss them
- ▶ Take advantage of small-class size to build a fruitful working relationship with the module convenor
- ▶ Consult module convenor or the Study Skills team to learn about strategic academic reading
- ▶ Self-care is essential and stay close communication with module convenor and the College

Any questions before we proceed?

Introduction

- ▶ About Chao-yo
- ▶ About you: Please tell us your name, program/year, any relevant modules in Politics or other subject areas you have done, and what you would like to learn from this module

Again, any questions before we proceed?

Week 1: State of the Field



Three generations of China scholars during the Cold War (Harding 1984)

- ▶ 1st generation (1960s)
 - Focus on descriptive study and rely heavily on (limited) official data, such as Communist doctrine, policy, and organizational tables; many scholars completed their work in Taiwan
 - Research is mostly speculative and tentative (and yet suffering from over-generalization and under-conceptualization)
- ▶ 2nd generation (1970s)
- ▶ 3rd generation (1980s)

Three generations of China scholars during the Cold War (Harding 1984)

- ▶ 1st generation (1960s)
- ▶ 2nd generation (1970s)
 - Aim to be conceptual and rely heavily on Red Guard materials to get behind-the-scene insights
 - Start to disaggregate China by moving to subnational comparison
- ▶ 3rd generation (1980s)

Three generations of China scholars during the Cold War (Harding 1984)

- ▶ 1st generation (1960s)
- ▶ 2nd generation (1970s)
- ▶ 3rd generation (1980s)
 - Engage more with comparative politics literature while utilizing the accumulation of empirical description of the Chinese regimes contributed by China scholars from previous generations
 - China's Reform and Openness provides new materials and research opportunities

New generations of China scholars after the Cold War (Shambaugh 2023)

- ▶ The first three generations of China scholars more or less "completed" the field transition from area studies to political "science"
- ▶ China has also been used more generally to tackle broad theoretical puzzles in comparative politics and political economy
 - The understanding of Chinese politics has in general moved from "totalitarianism" to "authoritarianism"
 - Modern China studies have gradually moved away from the typical "cultural trap"
- ▶ Scholars have also been trained to use cutting-edge methods and rigorous research design
- ▶ However, two recent events have changed the research landscape: One is the abolition of the term limits for the Chinese president; one is the escalation of the geopolitical tension between the US and China; the consequences are profound

“Bringing in China” (Tsai 2017)

- ▶ Many political scientists have under-utilized or ignored the theoretical relevance of the study of Chinese politics
- ▶ And yet China can contribute to the general political science research in many different ways
 - Using China to generate new research questions (by specifying the scope condition or conceptual equivalence)
 - Using China to test the the scope of existing findings based on another country (e.g., the United States)
 - Using China to demonstrate innovative methods of data collection combined with strong research design (e.g., King, Pan and Roberts 2013)
- ▶ There exist many opportunities of theory building, in particular for the literatures on authoritarian governance, political development, and political economy of development

“Bringing in China” (Tsai 2017)

- ▶ Many political scientists have under-utilized or ignored the theoretical relevance of the study of Chinese politics
- ▶ And yet China can contribute to the general political science research in many different ways
- ▶ There exist many opportunities of theory building, in particular for the literatures on authoritarian governance, political development, and political economy of development
 - Tsai seems to find China studies that can produce new research agenda more valuable, implicitly speaking. What do you think?
 - Which topic do you find most intriguing? And are any of these questions relevant to the country you are most familiar with (e.g., United Kingdom)?
 - Why does the question of "bringing in China into comparative politics" matter? What do you think?

► Authoritarian political development

- Quasi-democratic institutions in China (e.g., political parties, elections and legislatures)
- Role of media and the Internet; censorship and propaganda
- Legacies of revolution and colonialism for state-building

► Political behavior of (economic) development

- "Participatory" development and civic engagement and non-electoral participation
- Strategic use of the law and formal institutions
- Intermediaries and informal institutions

- ▶ "Governance on the Cheap" – how do political leaders extend the reach of the state over local officials and citizens without formal bureaucratic institutions?
- ▶ "Voluntary compliance"
- ▶ "Institutional theories of political behavior"

Discussion: “Why China’s Reforms Have Delayed Democracy” (Gallagher 2002)

- ▶ Which general theoretical puzzle did Gallagher attempt to speak to? (Hint: It is about Lipset)
- ▶ Why is the case of "Reform and Openness" in China interesting or puzzling?
- ▶ How did Gallagher dismiss conventional wisdom about the political implications of FDI liberalization and market reform? What is her alternative theory? How did her theory speak to the general theory of economic modernization and regime change?
- ▶ Did Gallagher highlight the importance of culture in her argument? If not, why do you think that is the case? Do you agree with her?

See you next week!