

Politics in Contemporary China

GOV 322M (37905)
ANS 322M (32540)

Spring 2024

Time: Monday/Wednesday 1:00-2:30PM
Location: UTC 3.124

Instructor: Dr. Xiaobo Lü

Office Hours: 2:30PM-4PM Monday/Wednesday by appointment at
<https://calendly.com/xiaobolu/spring-2024-office-hours>

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Teaching Assistant: Kenny Miao

Office Hours: 2:00PM-5:00PM Tuesday by appointment at
<https://calendly.com/kenny-miao/30min>

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Course Description:

This course is designed as an introductory course in Chinese politics primarily for upper-level undergraduates with a good background in political/social science, but not necessarily any background on China. The aim of the course is to provide a foundation that will enable the non-specialist to make informed use of China as a case in more general arguments and give the intended China specialist a solid footing from which to pursue more in-depth study of different topics.

This course primarily focuses on domestic politics in post-1978 China. We start the course by introducing the key institutions and players in order to understand the distribution of political power in China. We then detail various forms of political participation by different individuals, which allow us to understand the political logic and consequences of policymaking and selective policy issues in China. We conclude the course by discussing the political reforms implemented in the last three decades and contemplating the potential political developments in the future. The course consists of lectures and in-class discussions in order to enhance students' learning.

Prerequisite:

Six semester hours of lower-division coursework in government.

Course Requirement and Grading:

1.	Four quizzes	15%
2.	News Article Assignment	15%
3.	First in-class midterm exam (Feb. 19)	20%
4.	Second in-class midterm exam (Mar. 27)	20%
5.	Third in-class midterm exam (Apr. 29)	20%
6.	Attendance	10%

Quizzes:

A 10-question closed-book quiz will be administered promptly at the beginning of the class four times throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped from your final quiz score for the semester.

News Article Assignment:

Every student is required to turn in **THREE** news articles relevant to **THREE DIFFERENT WEEKS**. The assignment will be due on the **Sundays BEFORE** the weekly lecture starts. For example, a news article due on Jan. 28 should be related to the weekly lecture (“Who is in charge?”) on Jan. 29 & 31, but should NOT be related to the prior weekly theme (“What’s Mao’s legacy?”) on Jan. 22 and Jan. 24. The instructor will randomly assign the students to three weekly themes for this assignment.

The news article could be in English or Chinese, and it could be old news articles or current news. The news must be fact-reporting from any news outlets instead of journal articles, book chapters, blog posts, or personal opinions.

The grade on the news article is based on two factors: timeliness in submission and relevancy. Each week, the instructor will choose three most relevant news articles, and **the winners will receive one bonus point to their final grade.**

Midterm exams:

THREE closed-book midterm exams will be administered throughout the semester. Each exam has true/false and multiple-choice questions, as well as a few essay questions. All lectures, discussions, and readings will be subject to examination.

Class Guidelines

- 1. NO LAPTOP/CELL PHONE/MOBILE DEVICE USE DURING IN-PERSON SESSIONS!**
- 2. Make-up quizzes & exams will not be accommodated.**

- Under special circumstances and with the approval from the instructor, you might be able to readjust the weights of some of your mid-term exam's grades in the calculation of the final grade. For example, if you miss one midterm exam, the grade of your other two midterm exams will account for 30% instead of 20% of the final grade.

Course Materials:

- The mandatory and optional readings for this course are based on book chapters and articles. The readings are available on Canvas free of charge.
- HBS Case Study: Capitalism and the Party-State: The People's Republic of China at 70 (available at <https://hbosp.harvard.edu/import/1134335> for \$4.75)

For all readings, please click the link on the syllabus on Canvas.

Disclaimer concerning Freedom of Speech

The University of Texas at Austin considers that freedom of academic expression, open discourse, and intellectual inquiry are an integral part of our educational mission. This course calls for candid discussions of potentially sensitive geopolitical and geo-cultural matters. In particular, the content and activities for the course could be deemed sensitive or illegal by non-U.S. governments. While the university makes every effort to provide safe spaces for all instructors and learners, under current circumstances where most learning activities are conducted online, members of the academic community should be aware that privacy cannot be guaranteed.

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/) (<https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/>).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment,

sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Senate Bill 212, they are still mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of sexual misconduct covered under Texas Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.

Students with Disabilities:

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. For more information, visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like

anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support.
<http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html>

Religious Holidays:

By UT Austin policy, **you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days** prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Honor Code:

Every student, graduate as well as undergraduate, is expected to adhere to the UT Honor Code. Any violation can result in receiving “0” for the assignment in question as well as being reported to the University.

Grading:

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage Score
A	4.0	94-100%
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	.67	60-63
F	0	59 & below

Weekly Themes:

The Legacy

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: What's Mao's Legacy?

Who Governs? The Institutions & Players

Week 3: Who is in charge?

Week 4: Who is really in charge?

Week 5: A Framework for National Policymaking

Political Behaviors in China

Week 6: Who is getting the top job?

Week 7: How do lower-level politicians get ahead?

Week 8: What? There are competitive elections in China?

Week 9: Can ordinary Chinese citizens exert political influence, if at all?

The Political Logic and Consequences of Policymaking

Week 10: The Political Origins of Economic Development

Week 11: China's Domestic Challenges

Week 12: The Paradox of Governance in China

Political Development in Changing China

Week 13: Why is the Chinese regime resilient (or not)?

Week 14: China in 2022 and Beyond

Week 15: Midterm #3

Lecture Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (Jan. 17): Introduction

- Film Screening (when time permits): **China: A Century of Revolution: Part Two: The Mao Years**

Week 2 (Jan. 22 & 24): What's Mao's legacy?

Class Objective: The Impacts of pre-1978 Chinese Politics

- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: from revolution through reform*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton. (Chapter 4 “The Maoist Era”)
- Ding, Iza and Jeffrey Javed. 2019. Why Maoism still resonates in China today. *The Washington Post*.

Recommended:

- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: from revolution through reform*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton. (Chapter 3 “The Maoist System: Ideas and Governance”)
- Zhou, Xueguang, and Liren Hou. 1999. "Children of the Cultural Revolution: The State and the Life Course in the People's Republic of China." *American Sociological Review* 64 (1):12-36.
- Film Screening: **China: A Century of Revolution: Part Two: The Mao Years**

Week 3 (Jan. 29 & 31): Who is in charge?

Class Objective: Formal Chinese Government Structure

- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: from revolution through reform*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton. (Chapter 6 “The Organization of Political Power and its Consequences: The View from Outside”)
- Lawrence, Susan V. 2013. China’s Political Institutions and Leaders in Charts, *Congressional Research Service*. (pp. 12-19 Only)

Week 4 (Feb. 5 & 7): Who is really in charge?

Class Objective: The Communist Party and Chinese Leadership

- Lawrence, Susan V. 2013. China’s Political Institutions and Leaders in Charts, *Congressional Research Service*. (pp. 1-11 Only)
- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2004. *Governing China: from revolution through reform*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton. (Chapter 7 “The Organization of Political Power and Its Consequences: The View from Inside”)

Recommended:

- Dickson, Bruce J. 2021. *The party and the people : Chinese politics in the 21st century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1 “What Keeps the Party in Power?”

- Manion, Melanie. 1985. The Cadre Management System, Post-Mao: The Appointment, Promotion, Transfer, and Removal of Party and State Leaders." *The China Quarterly*, No.102:203–233.
- Dickson, Bruce J. 2014. "Who Wants to Be a Communist? Career Incentives and Mobilized Loyalty in China." *The China Quarterly* 217: 42-68.
- McGregor, Richard. 2010. *The Party: the secret world of China's communist rulers*. 1st U.S. ed. New York, NY: Harper. (Chapter 1 “The Red Machine: The Party and the State” and Chapter 3 “The Keeper of the Files: The Party and Personnel”)

Week 5 (Feb. 12 & 14): A Framework for Policymaking

Class Objective: Bureaucracy, Legislature, and Policy Making

- Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel Oksenberg. 1988. *Policy making in China: leaders, structures, and processes*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 1: Structure and Process: An Overview)
- Tanner, Murray Scot. 1995. How a Bill Becomes a Law in China: Stages and Processes in Lawmaking. *The China Quarterly* (141):39-64.

Recommended:

- Dickson, Bruce J. 2021. *The party and the people : Chinese politics in the 21st century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3 “How Are Policies Made?”
- Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel Oksenberg. 1988. *Policy making in China: leaders, structures, and processes*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 4: Salient Characteristics of the Structure of Power)
- Mertha, Andrew. 2009. “Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0”: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process. *The China Quarterly* 200:995-1012.

Week 6 (Feb. 19 & 21): Who is getting the top job?

Midterm Exam # 1 will be administrated on Feb.19.

Class Objective: Political Elites and Elite Politics

- Dickson, Bruce J. 2021. *The party and the people : Chinese politics in the 21st century.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2 “How Are Leaders Chosen?” (Only read pp. 53-64)

Recommended:

- Miller, Alice. 2016. “The Road to the 19th Party Congress.” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 51.
- Miller, Alice. 2008. Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics of Chinese Leadership Politics. In *China's changing political landscape: prospects for democracy*, edited by C. Li. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

Week 7 (Feb. 26 & 28): How do lower-level politicians get ahead?

Class Objective: Local Politics and Cadre Promotion

- Kou, Chien-wen and Wen-Hsuan Tsai, “Sprinting with Small Steps Towards Promotion: Solutions for the Age Dilemma in the CCP Cadre Appointment System,” *The China Journal*, No. 71 (January 2014), pp. 153-171
- O'Brien, Kevin J., and Lianjiang Li. 1999. "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China." *Comparative Politics* 31 (2):167-86.
- Chin, Josh. 2021. Xi Jinping’s Leadership Style: Micromanagement That Leaves Underlings Scrambling. *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 15, 2021.

Documentary: The Chinese Major

<http://www.zhaqifilms.com/the-chinese-mayor.html>

Week 8 (Mar. 4 & 6): What? There are elections in China?

Class Objective: Elections and Representation

- O'Brien Kevin and Rongbin Han. 2009. Path to democracy? Assessing village elections in China. *Journal of Contemporary China* 18(60): 359–78.
- Manion, M. (2015). Institutional Design. In *Information for Autocrats: Representation in Chinese Local Congresses* (pp. 25-48). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Film Screening (when time permits): **China From the Inside**

Week 9 (Mar. 18 & 20): How do ordinary Chinese citizens exert political influence?

Class Objective: Political Participation of the Masses

- Dickson, Bruce J. 2021. *The party and the people : Chinese politics in the 21st century.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5 “Do Political Protests Threaten Political Stability?”
- Repnikova, Maria. 2018. “How Chinese Authorities and Individuals Use the Internet.” *Governance in an Emerging New World.* Fall Series, Issue 218. Hoover Institution.

Recommended:

- Li, Lianjiang. 2013. 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 (1):3-36.
- Lei, Ya-Wen. 2012. The Political Consequences of the Rise of the Internet: Political Beliefs and Practices of Chinese Netizens. *Political Communication* 28 (3):291-322.
- Gobel, Christian and Lynette Ong. (2012) “Social Unrest in China,” *European China Research and Advice Network Report.* (Only Executive Summary pp.8-17)

Week 10 (Mar. 25 & 27): The Political Origins of Economic Development

Midterm Exam # 2 will be administrated on Mar. 27.

Class Objective: The political explanations for China’s economic performance (this topic will not be tested in Midterm #2)

- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2018. “The Real China Model: It’s Not What You Think It Is.” *Foreign Affairs.* June 29, 2018.
- Naughton, Barry. 2010. “China’s distinctive system: can it be a model for others?” *Journal of Contemporary China,* pp.437-460.

Recommended:

- Xu, Chenggang. 2011. The Fundamental Institutions of China's Reforms and Development. *Journal of Economic Literature* 49 (4):1076-1151.

- Cai, Hongbin, and Daniel Treisman. 2006. Did Government Decentralization Cause China's Economic Miracle? *World Politics* 58 (4):505-535.

Week 11 (Apr. 1 & 3): China's Domestic Challenges

Class Objective: The structural challenges that the Chinese society faces

- Chan, Kam Wing. 2019. "China's Hukou System at 60: Continuity and Reform." In *Handbook on Urban Development in China*, ed. June Wang and Thomas Johnson Ray Yep. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Xie, Yu, and Xiang Zhou. 2014. "Income inequality in today's China." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (19):6928-33.
- Zheng, Siqi, and Matthew E. Kahn. 2013. "Understanding China's Urban Pollution Dynamics." *Journal of Economic Literature* 51 (3):731-72.

Recommended:

- Cheng, Tiejun, and Mark Selden. 1994. "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System." *The China Quarterly* 139:644-668.
- Davis, Deborah and Wang Feng, eds., *Creating Wealth and Poverty in Postsocialist China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). (Chapter 1: "Poverty and Wealth in Postsocialist China: An Overview.)
- Linster M. and Yang, C. (2018), "China's Progress Towards Green Growth: an international perspective", *OECD Green Growth Papers*, No. 2018/05, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Week 12 (Apr. 8 & 10): The Paradox of Governance in China

Class Objective: Strength and limitations of governance

- Pei, Minxin. 2006. *China's trapped transition: the limits of developmental autocracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 5: "China's Mounting Governance Deficits")

- Yang, Dali L. 2004. *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. (Chapter 8: Institutions of Horizontal Accountability and Good Governance)
- Manion, Melanie (2016) Taking China's anticorruption campaign seriously, *Economic and Political Studies*, 4:1, 3-18

Recommended:

- Smith, Graeme. 2010. The Hollow State: Rural Governance in China. *The China Quarterly* 203:601-618.
- Wedeman, Andrew Hall. 2012. *Double paradox: rapid growth and rising corruption in China*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (Chapter 1 and Chapter 4)
- Manion, Melanie. 2004. *Corruption by Design: Building clean government in mainland China and Hong Kong*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 5: "Anticorruption Campaigns as Enforcement Mechanism".)

Week 13 (Apr. 15 & 17): Why is the Chinese regime resilient (or not)?

Class Objective: Factors contributing and undermining China's regime resilience.

- Nathan, Andrew. 2003. Authoritarian Resilience. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1), pp. 6-17.
- Gilley, Bruce. 2003. The Limits of Authoritarian Resilience. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1), pp. 18-26.
- Tang, Wenfang. 2018. The "Surprise" of Authoritarian Resilience in China, *American Affairs*, February 20.

Recommended:

- Pei, Minxin. 2006. *China's trapped transition: the limits of developmental autocracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 2: "Democratizing China?")
- Li, Eric X. 2013. "The life of the party: the post-democratic future begins in China." *Foreign Affairs* Jan.-Feb. 2013.
- Huang, Yasheng. 2013. Democratize or Die. *Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2013.
- Shambaugh, David. 2015. The Coming Chinese Crackup. *Wall Street Journal*, March 6, 2015.

Week 14 (Apr. 22 & 24): China in 2022 and Beyond

Class Objective: The prospect of democratization in China—a bottom-up perspective

In-class Simulation: Xi's China at a crossroad

- HBS Case Study: Capitalism and the Party-State: The People's Republic of China at 70
- Film Screening: **Please Vote for Me**

Week 15 (Apr. 29): Midterm #3

Midterm Exam #3 will be administrated on Apr. 29.