Course Description

This is a graduate course designed to provide an in-depth survey of the main theoretical, empirical, and methodological approaches to the study of Chinese politics, and to situate these approaches within the broader field of comparative politics. Although familiarity with China’s political history or culture may be helpful and even desirable, it is not a prerequisite. The first part of the course covers the recent political history of China, emphasizing the period after 1949. In the second part of the course, we turn to a closer examination of key issues in the contemporary study of Chinese politics, including elite politics, political institutions, economic reform, political participation, social movements, nationalism, and international factors. Students will be exposed to the key secondary literature on these subjects. Finally, we will conclude with an assessment of the nature and the future of the current Chinese regime. The course aims to prepare interested graduate students not only for further research and teaching about China, but also for research that involves comparison with other cases and on comparative politics more generally.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be determined in the following manner:

- Seminar participation 20%
- Oral presentations 20%
- Take-home midterm 30%
- Literature review 30%

Class attendance and active, informed participation are mandatory. Students must complete the assigned readings prior to the seminar meetings. The oral presentations require each student to analyze and report on a number of assigned readings for a given week. The written assignments will include a mid-term take-home essay exam and a double-spaced 15-20 page literature review surveying and assessing the relative merits of different major approaches and arguments in the study of a particular topic in contemporary Chinese politics. Although this is not a research paper, you need to go beyond the assigned readings for your selected topic as you generate a wide-ranging critical survey of books and articles. You are encouraged to consult the instructor on the topic of your literature review. The literature review is due in the last class of the
semester on Wednesday, December 3. Late papers without university-approved reasons will result in grade reduction.

**Readings**


Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) [Required]


David Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) [Required]


All the required books (under $30 each) are available at Mary Jane Books. The rest of the readings could be found on the course’s Blackboard. Those marked with “available on-line” can be retrieved by clicking on “E-Journals” from the Libraries web page and typing in the title of the journal in the search box.

**August 27: Introduction**

- Course Syllabus

**PART I: POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PRC**

**September 3: Communist Revolution**

September 10: Chinese Politics under Mao


September 17: The Reform Era


PART II: KEY ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POLITICS

October 1: The Leadership

- David Lampton, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014)

October 8: Political Institutions


October 15: Economic Reforms I: A Chinese Miracle?


**October 22: Economic Reforms II: Issues and Problems**


**October 29: Political Participation**


**November 5: Social Movements**


**November 12: Nationalism and National Identity**


November 19: China and the World


PART III: CONCLUSION

December 3: Literature Review Presentations

• Final assignment due