Political Science 563
Government and Politics of the People’s Republic of China
State University of New York at Albany
Spring 2012

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Monday 5:45-8:35
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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 Monday, May 7. Late papers without university-approved reasons will result in grade reduction.
Readings


All the required readings, including the books above (all under $30 each) and a course pack, will be available at Mary Jane Books. Those marked with “available on-line” can be retrieved by clicking on “Journals - Print and Online” from the Libraries web page and typing in the title of the journal in the search box.

January 23: Introduction

- Course Syllabus

PART I: POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PRC

January 30: Communist Revolution


February 6: Chinese Politics under Mao


February 13: The Reform Era
• Susan Shirk, The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 3-51

PART II: KEY ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POLITICS

February 20: Elite Politics

• Kenneth Lieberthal, Governing China: From Revolution through Reform, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 171-242

February 27: Political Institutions


March 5: Economic Reforms I: A Chinese Miracle?


March 19: Economic Reforms II: Issues and Problems

• Yasheng Huang, Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
March 26: Political Participation


April 2: Social Movements


April 16: Nationalism and National Identity


April 23: External Factors and Chinese Politics


**PART III: CONCLUSION**

April 30: Literature Review Presentations
May 7: The Future of China