University of Victoria
Department of Political Science / Department of History
Fall Term, 2019-20

POLI 371 A01 Chinese Politics (CRN: 12703) / HSTR 365 A01 Topics in East Asian History: Chinese Politics (CRN: 11935)

Meeting schedule: Monday and Thursday, 13:00-14:20
Classroom: COR (Cornett Building) B108

Instructor: Guoguang Wu
Office Hours: Monday 14:30-16:30; or by appointment
Office Location: DTB A335
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Course Description

This course provides an introductory overall investigation of the domestic politics of the People’s Republic of China. Covering the historical continuity and change of Chinese politics from 1949 to the present, the course is organized into two parts, namely, Mao Zedong’s reign with liberation and the proletarian dictatorship (1949-1976), and the post-Mao eras with reform and refreshed repression. Emphases of discussion will be given to: 1) contending theoretical perspectives to understanding contemporary Chinese politics; 2) fundamental political institutions of governing the revolutionary and then the transitional China; 3) the dynamics of revolution, reform, and repression embedded in state-society relations.

It also tries to seize every possible opportunity to consider China as a country case in comparative political perspectives, including comparisons with other communist states, transitional politics in East Asia, authoritarian politics in general, and, in terms of political economy of development, the Global South. The course, accordingly, attempts to investigate Chinese politics in lenses of comparative politics and comparative political economy, dealing with significant issues and emerging phenomena such as revolution, mass mobilization, social control, political legitimacy, liberalization and marketization, democratic transition, globalization, inequality, ethnicity, and social protest, while the central concern is on how contemporary Chinese politics is grounded, operated, evolved, challenged, and transformed in the face of those issues and phenomena.

A student taking this course does not need specialized background knowledge on Chinese politics, but, with the guidance provided by lectures and readings, is expected to experiment imagining of a political system that is perhaps fundamentally different from one in which he/she lives, and seizing of the concepts applicable to comprehending and analyzing the Chinese political system. Questions and comments from students during the lectures are always welcome and encouraged.

Diversity and Free Speech

While the University of Victoria is committed to respecting diversity and human rights, the university also upholds the principle that wide-ranging debate incorporating a diversity of perspectives is the best way to learn. Be prepared to be challenged in this course and be ready to exchange constructively with people who fundamentally disagree with your point of view. Strive to remain curious and open to new ideas. I ask that you remain civil and respectful at all times. Deliberate and repeated hate speech and/or speech that promotes violence can be considered harassment. Please see the University Policy on Harassment: https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0205_1150_.pdf. If you feel you may be experiencing harassment, please consult with the University Ombudsperson (https://uvicombudsperson.ca/), or the Office of Equity and Human Rights (https://www.uvic.ca/equity/).

Requirements and Assessments

A registered student for credits of this course is required to accomplish the following tasks:
1) to attend all lecture meetings and classroom documentary shows;
2) to complete the reading assignments BEFORE each corresponding week’s meetings;
3) to submit two research papers by the stipulated deadlines (see details below in “Papers”).

The scheme for the final grade evaluation is as that follows:

Attendance: 10%
Two papers: 45% X 2 = 90%

Textbook

No required textbook.
Student Access to Reading Assignments

There are two major ways for a student to get access to required reading assignments:

1) The Reservation Desk of the University Library, where one may find hardcopies of readings but the loaned hours are limited;

2) The instructor creates a special weblink, where all required readings can be found online: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-S02fkU0TCeZ2NQdFl0YUJRUWM. When use this link, please note: 1) the indicated dates could be slightly different from the meeting dates of the current syllabus; 2) for respecting copyrights, please DO NOT share the link with anyone else who does not register to this course.

Grading Scale

Will follow the University’s official grading system. See: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html.

Academic Integrity

Please see the University’s academic integrity policy: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

Papers

Each student is required to write two research papers, as the first must deal with a topic relevant to the Mao era and the second, the post-Mao eras. The student is obligated to choose his/her own specific topic of the papers within the above restrictions while consultation with the instructor is encouraged. The length of each paper will be approximately 4,500 words, notes included. Footnotes or endnotes may be used as long as they are consistent, either with bibliography or not.

The first paper is due on October 21 (Monday) by 5:00 pm; the second paper is due on December 6 (Friday) by 5:00 pm.

Each of above hand-ins must be submitted to the instructor electronically via email (to: wug@uvic.ca) in the following way:

1) make your assignment a WORD document, as non-WORD documents will not be marked;
2) name the electronic document of your first paper as Poli 371 P1 Your Last Name or Hstr 365 P1 Your Last name (for example, Poli 371 P1 Trudeau, or Hstr 365 P1 Trump);
3) name the electronic document of your second paper as Poli 371 P2 Your Last Name or Hstr 365 P2 Your Last name (for example, Poli 371 P2 Trudeau, or Hstr 365 P2 Trump);
4) email the instructor your assignment as the attached document.

Penalty of Late Submission

A late submission will be penalized by the deduction of one grade for each day of delay, weekend included -- It means that a late submission will get the grade ‘B’ if the submission deserves ‘B+’ according to its academic quality but it is submitted one day after the deadline. Its grade will be ‘B-’ if it is submitted two days after the deadline, and so calculated with more days of delay. The submission with the delay of one week will not be marked.
Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Below * indicates a required reading assignment; others are recommended)

NOTE: Under exceptional circumstances, there may be some changes to the schedule. Students will be informed in advance as a schedule change is expected to emerge.

Sep 5 (Th): Class Introduction

No required reading.

Recommended reading:

PART I The Mao Era: Liberation and Dictatorship

Sep 9 & 12 (M & Th): Ideology and Organization: The Maoist State in the Perspective of Totalitarianism

*It sketches the general picture of political life in Mao’s China with introducing the perspective of totalitarianism, and critically discusses each of the six characteristics of totalitarianism and its application to Maoist politics.*


Sep 16 & 23 (M & M): *Danwei* (Working Unit) and *Qunzhong* (Masses): The Maoist State in the Perspective of Neo-Traditionalism

* With the emphases on the working unit system and the conceptual triplicity of activists-masses-enemies, it compares the perspective of neo-traditionalism with totalitarianism, and considers the strengths and limits of both theories in comprehending Mao’s China.


* It can be tremendously difficult for Canadian students and, actually, even for today’s Chinese students to imagine political life in Mao’s China. This documentary will help by showing you real pictures and lively details of how Chinese people lived in their magic or surreal world under the Great Leader.

Sep 26 & 30 (Th & M): Political Campaign, Class Struggles, Mass Mobilization, and Social Control

* It investigates the political dynamic of Maoist governance with both a general review of political campaigns and in-depth analysis of two cases of campaigns, namely, “Eliminating ‘four evils’” and the Great Leap Forward. It will also analyze how liberation and mobilization are turned to be social control through the unfolding of class struggles.


Oct 3 & 7 (Th & M): Legitimacy, Worship of Personality, and Power Succession

This week we will focus on elite politics and its connection with state-society interactions, and inquire into the myths of political legitimacy, Mao’s personal cult, and leadership power struggles.


PART II Post-Mao Changes: Marketization and Repression

Oct 10 & 17 (Th & Th): The Origins of Rural Reform and the Politics of Rural Governance

[Oct 14, Monday: Thanksgiving, NO CLASS]

Now we come to post-Mao Chinese reforms. This week’s classes will cover three themes: 1) different explanations of the origins of Chinese reforms against the background of post-Mao power succession; 2) the rise of rural reform and the household responsibility system; 3) challenges to post-reform rural governance.


The first paper is DUE on Oct 21 (Monday) by 5:00 pm

Oct 21 & 24 (M & Th): Urban Marketization, Open-Door Policy, and the Politics of Economic Transition

It reviews China’s transition from the state-planning economy through management reform, price reform, ownership reform, and open-door policy; for each of these major programs of urban economic reform, it will discuss the process, the policies, the politics, and the consequences.


**Oct 28 & 31 (M & Th): Administrative Rationalization, Political Liberalization, and Struggles for Democratization**

It studies two waves of post-Mao political reform and the liberal-conservative cycles, investigates social dynamics of political reform, and analyzes why reform came to the Tiananmen tragedy in 1989.


**Nov 4 & 7 (M & Th): The Coercive Machine for Post-Tiananmen Growth: Momentum and Cost, Capacity and Corruption**

Why is the “Chinese miracle” of economic growth since the 1990s? How to understand the so-called “China model” of development? Class discussions will be organized with lectures for outlining the features and impacts, and pros and cons of the domestic mechanism of the rise of China.


[Nov 11, Monday: Remembrance Day / Reading Break, NO CLASS]


*What connects a street carnival in New Orleans, USA and a remote factory in Fujian Province, PRC? And, what impact does a connection of such produce? This documentary pictures Chinese migrant workers’ life in the globalization age and reveals some secrets of China’s prosperity.*

**Nov 18 & 21 (M & Th): Governing Social Discontents: The Politics of Ethnicity, Inequality, Environmental Pollution, and Mass Protests***

*How and why social discontents have grown fast in today’s China with economic prosperity? This week we investigate some deep causes such as corruption, inequality, and social injustice, while highlighting the factors of environmental pollutions and ethnic tensions. The regime’s responses will also be analyzed.*


**Nov 25 & 28 (M & Th): Governing Socioeconomic Change: The Politics of New Sectors, NGOs, Religions, and the Internet***

*Today’s China is so different from Mao’s China, especially in socioeconomic life. The private sector is vital for the economy; NGOs are active in many realms; religions are revitalizing; people are immersed in online activities and social media. Will Chinese politics tame them, or will they change Chinese politics?*


Dec 2 (M): Rice without Rights, Banknotes over Ballots? Political and Institutional Implications of China’s Prosperity

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It will attempt to draw some concluding reflections over Chinese politics in comparative and global perspectives.


The second paper is DUE on December 6 (Friday) by 5:00 pm