INTL 8395 Contemporary Chinese Politics*

Dr. Rongbin Han
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Class Time: Wednesdays, 3:35-6:35 pm (Candler Hall 117)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 pm & by appointment (322 Candler Hall)

* Students need reasonable classroom accommodations, please see me after class. *

Course Description and Objectives
This course introduces students to studies of contemporary China, with an emphasis on the reform era since 1978. There are three primary objectives: 1) to explore important political, cultural and economic trends in contemporary China, with special attention to the evolution of state-society relations; 2) to trace the development of contemporary Chinese studies and expose students to major debates in the field; 3) to promote our understanding of broader theoretical themes like authoritarianism, communist regimes, and development. The course will explore questions such as: How to understand Chinese politics in the lens of state-society relations? What are the major challenges to the authoritarian regime and what are its responses? What can we learn by examining the ongoing socio-political transition in China? How research on contemporary China draws from and informs social sciences?

Books:
(1) Allen Carlson, Mary Gallager, Kenneth Lieberthal and Melanie Manion, Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies (Cambridge University Press, 2010).
(4) Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge University Press, 2006).
(5) Minxin Pei, China’s Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy (Harvard University Press, 2009). [E-version at UGA library]

* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; changes may be made by the instructor when necessary.


(9) **Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor or available online.**

* Students with no previous knowledge on Chinese history and politics, please read the following books. See the instructor for additional suggested readings:


Vivienne Shue, The Reach of the State (Stanford University Press, 1988).


**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria**

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<th>Grading</th>
<th>Final Grade Ranges:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Attendance</td>
<td>A 93-100</td>
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<td>A- 90-92</td>
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<td>B+ 87-89</td>
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<td>• Reading Responses</td>
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<td>B- 80-82</td>
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<td>C+ 77-79</td>
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<td>• Book Review Essay</td>
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<td>D 60-69</td>
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<td>• Research Paper</td>
<td>F 0-59</td>
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*Participation (25%)* You are expected to attend classes regularly and actively engage in class discussion. Absences will be excused only in cases of serious health problems or family emergencies with the appropriate documentation.

*Reading Responses (15%)* Write responses (3 pages, double spaced) to the assigned readings for the weeks of your choice and email them to the class by 5 p.m. three days before the class. The reading response may take a variety of forms, but should include basic ideas and arguments of the readings, and more importantly your own questions, comments, and reflections. You are also welcome to draw on materials outside assigned readings.

*Book Review Essay (20%)* Write a book review of one or more books related to themes discussed in the course. You may choose books outside the list upon consulting with the instructor. In the essay, you shall summarize the argument, compare/contrast the book to course readings and other studies, and offer your own critique. You shall focus on analysis/critique and develop one coherent theme rather than providing a “laundry list” of comments.

*Research Paper (40%)* Write a paper on a topic of your choice upon the approval of the instructor. The paper should start from an empirical or theoretical puzzle, present relevant hypotheses based on theories/perspectives from the course and any other literature. Then discuss how the available evidence supports one hypothesis or another. It can be a full-fledged research paper, or at least something between a research design and a research paper. Students will have the opportunity to present their proposal or paper and solicit feedback from the class before submitting the final paper.
Academic Honesty:
As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 January 10. Course Introduction

Week 2 (January 17). State of the Field?

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 3 (January 24). Doing Research in China
Allen Carlson, Mary Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal and Melanie Manion, Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies (Cambridge, 2010).

Suggested Reading:
Maria Heimer and Stig Thogersen (eds.), Doing Fieldwork in China (University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

Discussants: 1) 2)
Week 4 (January 31). Economic Reform


Suggested additional readings:

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 5 (February 7). Political Stagnation or Deep Reform?


# Young Nam Cho, "From 'Rubber Stamp' to 'Iron Stamps': The Emergence of Chinese Local People's Congresses as Supervisory Powerhouses," *China Quarterly* 171(September 2002): 724-40.


Discussants: 1) 2)
Varieties of Social Activism and State Responses

Week 6 (February 14). The Trauma of Tian’anmen


Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 7 (February 21). Varieties of Social Activism


# Rachel Stern, "From Dispute to Decision: Suing Polluters in China," *China Quarterly* 206 (June 2011): 294-312.


Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 8 (February 28). Media Politics


Suggested reading:


Discussants: 1) 2)
Week 9 (March 7). The Power and Limits of the Internet


# Rongbin Han, “Defending the Authoritarian Regime Online: China's ‘Voluntary Fifty-cent Army’,” *China Quarterly*, 224 (December 2015): 1006-1025.


Suggested reading:

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 10 Spring Break

Week 11 (March 14). Land Politics


Discussants: 1) 2)
Week 1 (March 21). Civil Society, Public Sphere, and Social Capital?


Discussants: 1) 2)

*Fragmented Authoritarianism, Resilient Authoritarianism?*

Week 2 (March 28). Fragmented Authoritarianism?


# Andrew Mertha, “‘Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0’: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process,” *China Quarterly* 200 (December 2009): 995-1012.

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 3 (April 4). Authoritarian Responsiveness


Discussants: 1) 2)
Week 15 (April 11). Authoritarian Resilience or the Coming Collapse?


Suggested readings:


Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 16 & Week 17 (April 18 & April 25) Class Presentation

Please email your proposal or paper to the class before the presentation. Please include in your email your major concerns and the types of comments and suggestions you look for.

**********Book Review Due today (April 25) **********

************ Research Paper due on April 30th by 11:59pm ************