

Chinese Politics¹

Dr. Rongbin Han

(Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:45 - 14:00, Caldwell Hall 102)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 15:00-16:00 or by Appointment

Course Overview

This course introduces students to institutions, reform processes and major events in Chinese political life under the communists since 1949, with special focus on the reform era since 1978. In particular, it will walk students through the economic and political development in China—their causes, patterns, consequences, and implications—in a broader context of transition from socialism. The course will apply concepts and theories in comparative politics to analyze Chinese politics. By taking this class, students are expected to gain substantial knowledge about contemporary China and acquire some basic ability to apply such knowledge to relate to and analyze current affairs concerning China.

Suggested Readings for Students without prior knowledge about China

Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China* (4th Edition) (Macmillan, 2015).

Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China* (2nd edition) (W. W. Norton & Co., 2004).

Useful websites

Online News on China:

<http://www.china.org.cn/>

China Daily:

<http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/>

China Digital Times:

<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/>

EastSouthWestNorth Blog:

<http://www.zonaeuropa.com/weblog.htm>

China Media Project:

<http://chinamediaproject.org/>

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Participation (20%) Please attend class lectures and discussion. Please read and reflect upon assigned readings and students' response papers (see below) before coming to class, and actively engage in in-class or online discussion. You are also encouraged to attend the office hours.

Response paper (10%) Write one response paper (two-page, single spaced) on the date you select. The paper must (1) effectively summarize of ALL assigned readings (not a laundry list); (2) elaborate on one or a few points that interest you the most in a critical but fair fashion; and (3) raise two discussion questions at the end (not two questions for reach reading). **The papers are due 2 days prior to the date you select and will be posted on ELC for all students to read before our meetings (say if you sign up for January 19th, the response paper will be discussing readings assigned for that date and you shall submit it by January 17th 11:59pm).** The response paper writers are also expected to facilitate the discussion as well.

Movie Reviews (10 %) Write two movie reviews on assigned or self-selected movies. The movie review should be introduce the movie properly and relate it specifically to the course materials. It shall be between 800 to 1000 words.

Mid-term (25 %) and *Final* (35%) Detailed instructions will be announced before the exams. In general, there will be two parts. The first part will be a closed book quiz composed of a set of multiple choice and/or "true or false" questions and the second part will be a long essay question.

You have the option to write a research paper instead of taking the final. If you choose this option, please report to the instructor by April 1st with a one-page outline. For the paper, you are expected to **make an argument and to convince readers with your analysis with empirical evidence**. Pay attention to the paper's **organization, the coherence of the analysis and the elaboration of the argument**. Please follow **Chicago citation style** and avoid **grammatical errors**. Watch this video on how to identify a research question: <https://youtu.be/elZ3gPdEENI>.

¹ The syllabus is a general plan for the course; updates and revisions may be necessary.

******* Important Dates *******

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>February 29</u> | <u>Midterm</u> |
| <u>April 29th</u> | <u>Final Exam Part 1: Quiz</u> |
| <u>May 1st</u> | <u>Movie Reviews Due</u> |
| <u>May 2nd</u> | <u>Final Exam Part 2: Essay Due</u> |

Should you choose to write a research paper, do not take the final. Submit your paper topic by April 1st and the full paper by May 9th.

Grade Dispute:

If you have any questions about your exam grade, you shall report to the instructor **within one week** from the time you receive the grade. You need to present a written appeal explaining why you think your grade should be changed. Please also bear in mind that disputing grade may end up with higher, lower or no change in your grade.

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.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.ubs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.ubs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.ubs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Topics and Readings

Week 1 (January 9 & 11) Introduction to the course

Tuesday **Meeting & Greeting**

* Syllabus

Thursday **Why China & China before PRC**

* Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 1-26 or Tony Saich, 1-21.

* Douglas Broom, "[China by Numbers](#)," *World Economic Forum* (June 24, 2019).

Week 2 (January 16 & 18) China before Reform Era

Tuesday **China's Revolution and Its Legacies**

* Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 28-56, 59-83.

Thursday **Watch movie on your own: To Live (1994)**

Understanding Economic Reform and Opening Up

Week 3 (January 23 & 25)

Tuesday ***Industrializing the Countryside and Reforming the SOE***

* Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy*, pp. 55-78, 271-294, 297-328.

Suggested: * Jean C. Oi, "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism," *World Politics* 45:1 (1992), 99-126; * Andrew Walder, "Factory and manager in an Era of Reform," *The China Quarterly* 118 (1989), 242-264.

Thursday ***The Private Sector and FDI***

* Carolyn Hsu, "Cadres, Getihu, and Good Businesspeople: Making Sense of Entrepreneurs in Early Post-Socialist China," *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 35:1 (2006), 1-38

* Mary Gallagher, *Contagious Capitalism* (Princeton University Press, 2005), Chapter 3.

Suggested: * Feng Chen, "Privatization and its Discontents in Chinese Factories," *The China Quarterly*, no.185 (2006), 42-60.

Week 4 (January 30 & February 1)

Tuesday ***Explaining China's Economic Reform***

* Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy*, pp. 85-111.

* Shu-yun Ma, "Understanding China's Reform: Looking beyond Neoclassical Explanations," *World Politics* 52: 4 (2000), 586-603.

Suggested: * Babriella Montinola, Qian, Yingyi and Barry R. Weingast, "Federalism, Chinese Style: The Political Basis for Economic Success in China," *World Politics* 48:1(1995), 50-81; * Wing Thye Woo "The Real Reasons for China's Growth," *The China Journal* 41 (1999), 115-137.

Thursday **Watch movie on your own: *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1996)** [transcripts available at http://www.tsquare.tv/film/transcript_complete.php]

Also recommended: *Tiananmen: The People Versus the Party* (2019)

Politics and Society in the Reform Era

Week 5 (February 6 & 8) Tiananmen and Its Implications

Tuesday ***Tiananmen and Its Implications***

* Dingxin Zhao, "State-Society Relations and the Discourses and Activities during the 1989 Beijing Student Movement," *American Journal of Sociology*, 105 (2000), 1592-632.

* Andrew Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29 (1993), 1-30.

Thursday ***Why Economic Liberalization Failed to Bring Democracy***

* Kellee Tsai, "Capitalists without a Class," *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (2005), 1130-1158.

* Mary Gallagher, "Reform and Openness," *World Politics* 54:3 (2002), 338-372.

Week 6 (February 13 & 15) Economic Liberalization and Political Reforms

Tuesday *The Deep Reform?*

- * Lowell Dittmer and Guoli Liu (eds.), *China's Deep Reform* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), Introduction.
- * Andrew Mertha, "Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0," *China Quarterly* 200 (2009), 995-1012.
- * Melanie Manion, "When Communist Party Candidates Can Lose, Who Wins?" *China Quarterly* 195 (2008), 607-30.

Thursday *Rural Grassroots Democracy*

- * Tianjian Shi, "Village Committee Elections in China," *World Politics* 51:3 (1999), 385-412.
- * Kevin J. O'Brien and Rongbin Han, "Path to Democracy?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 18:60 (2009), 359-78.
- Suggested:* * Yusheng Yao, "Village Elections and Their Impact," *Modern China*, 39:1 (2013), 37-68.

Week 7 (February 20 & 22)

Tuesday *Engaging Law in China*

- * Mary Gallagher, "Mobilizing the Law in China," *Law and Society Review* 40:4 (2006), 783-816.
- * Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Suing the Local State," *The China Journal* 51(2004), 75-96.

Thursday *Civil Society?*

- * Lily Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China," *American Political Science Review* 101: 2 (2007), 355-372.
- * Jennifer Y.J. Hsu and Reza Hasmath, "The Local Corporatist State and NGO Relations in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 23: 87 (2014), 516-534.
- Suggested:* * Gu Xin, "A Civil Society and Public Sphere in Post-Mao China? An Overview of Western Publications," *China Information* (1993-94), 38-52.

Week 8 (February 27 & 29)

Tuesday *Varieties of Activism*

- * Nathan Beha, Perry, Wasserstrom, O'Brien, Lee & Friedman, and Yang, "China since Tiananmen," *Journal of Democracy* 20:3 (2009), 5-40.
- * Leta Hong Fincher, "China's Feminist Five," *Dissent* 63:4(2016), 84-90.
- Suggested:* * Yuan Yao and Rongbin Han "Challenging, But Not Trouble-Making," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25:98(2016), 292-306.

Thursday Midterm

Week 9 Spring Break

Week 10 (March 12 & 14) Contention and State Response

Tuesday *Protesting Strategies*

- * Kevin J. O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* 49:1 (1996), 31-55.
- * Xi Chen, "The Power of 'Troublemaking'," *Comparative Politics* 41:4 (2009), 451-71.
- * Diana Fu, "Disguised Collective Action in China," *Comparative Political Studies* 50: 4 (2017), 499-527.
- Suggested:* * Kevin J. O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance Revisited," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 40:6 (2013), 1051-62

Thursday Watch movie on your own: Ai Weiwei Never Sorry (2012)

Week 11 (March 19 & 21) Soft Suppression

Tuesday **Policing and Suppression**

- * Zhou Kai and Yan Xiaojun, "The Question for Stability," *Problems of Post-Communism* 61:3 (2014), 3-17
- * Lynette Ong, "Thugs and Outsourcing of State Repression in China," *China Journal* 80 (2018), 94-110.
- * Juan Wang, "Managing Social Stability," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15:1 (2015), 1-25.

Thursday **Soft Suppression**

- * Yanhua Deng and Kevin O'Brien, "Relational Repression in China," *China Quarterly* 215 (2013), 533-552.
- * Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang, "The Power of Instability" *American Journal of Sociology* 118:6 (2013), 1475-1508.
- Suggested:* * Rachel Stern and Jonathan Hassid, "Amplifying Silence: Uncertainty and Control Parables in Contemporary China," *Comparative Political Studies* 45: 10 (2012), 1230-1254.

Week 12 (March 26 & 28) Policy Implementation and Experimenting

Tuesday

- * Jie Gao, "Pernicious Manipulation of Performance Measures in China's Cadre Evaluation System," *China Quarterly* 223 (2015), 618-37
- * Christian Göbel, "Uneven Implementation in Rural China," *China Journal* 65 (2011), 53-76
- * Ciqi Mei and Margaret M. Pearson, "Killing a Chicken to Scare the Monkeys? Deterrence Failure and Local Defiance in China," *China Journal* 72 (2014), 75-97
- Suggested:* * Yanhua Deng, Kevin J. O'Brien and Jiajian Chen, "Enthusiastic Policy Implementation and its Aftermath," *China Quarterly* 234 (2018), 506-26

Thursday

- * Sebastian Heilmann, "Policy Experimentation in China's Economic Rise," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 43:1 (2008), 1-26
- * Wen-Hsuan Tsai and Nicola Dean, "Experimentation under Hierarchy in Local Conditions: Cases of Political Reform in Guangdong and Sichuan, China," *China Quarterly* 218 (June 2014), 339-358

Week 13 (April 2 & 4) Media & Cyber Politics in China

Tuesday **Media Politics**

- * Zhou Yuezhi, "Watchdogs on Party Leashes?" *Journalism Studies* 1:4(2000), 577-97.
- * Daniela Stockmann and Mary Gallagher, "Remote Control," *Comparative Political Studies* 44:4 (2011), 436-467.
- * Haifeng Huang, "Propaganda as Signaling," *Comparative Politics* 47:4 (2015), 419-437.

Thursday **Cyber Activism**

- * Ashley Esarey & Xiao Qiang "Political Expression in the Chinese Blogosphere," *Asian Survey* 48 (2008), 752-772.
- * Yuen Yuen Ang, "Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited," *Comparative Politics* 47:1 (2014), 21-40.

Week 14 (April 9 & 11)

Tuesday **State Information Control**

- * Gary King, Jennifer Pan and Margaret Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *American Political Science Review* (2013), pp. 1-18.
- * Rongbin Han, "Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 44:2 (2015), pp. 105-34.
- Suggested:* * Peter Lorentzen, "China's Strategic Censorship," *AJPS* 58:2 (2014), 402-14.

Thursday: Watch movie on your own: **The Wandering Earth (2019)**

Week 15 (April 16 & 18) Authoritarian Resilience

Tuesday **Authoritarian Resilience or Fragile Super Power?**

- * Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 19-34, and 52-64.
- * Cheng Li, "The End of the CCP's Resilient Authoritarianism?" *The China Quarterly* 211 (2012), 595-623.
- * Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14.1 (2003), 6-17.
- * Suzanne Scoggins, "Rethinking Authoritarian Resilience and the Coercive Apparatus," *Comparative Politics* 59: 2 (2021), 309-330.

Thursday **Authoritarian Legitimation**

- * Edward Cunningham, Tony Saich and Jesse Turiel, *Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time*, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation (July 2020).
- * Dingxin Zhao, "The Mandate of Heaven and Performance Legitimation in Historical and Contemporary China," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53: 3 (12, 2009), 416-33.
- * Rongbin Han, "Defending the Authoritarian Regime Online," *The China Quarterly* 224 (2015), 1006-25.
- Suggested:** * Suisheng Zhao, "Foreign Policy Implications of Chinese Nationalism Revisited: The Strident Turn," *Journal of Contemporary China* 22: 82 (2013), pp. 35-53.

Week 16 (April 23 & 25)

Tuesday **China Rise and Its Global Implications**

- * John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History*, 105: 690 (2006), 160-162.
- * Zheng Bijian, "China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs*, 84: 5 (2005), 18-24.
- * Avery Goldstein, "China's Grand Strategy under Xi Jinping," *International Security* 45:1 (2020), 164-201.
- * Anthony H. Cordesman, "[China's Emergence as a Superpower](#)," *CSIS*, August 15, 2023.

Thursday

Happy hour discussion on China rise, Xi Jinping, COVID, and so forth