Chinese Politics

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

Useful websites
Online News on China: http://www.china.org.cn/
China Daily: http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/
China Digital Times: http://chinadigitaltimes.net/
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 each 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/etZ3gPdEENI.

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

- **February 29** Midterm
- **April 29th** Final Exam Part 1: Quiz
- **May 1st** Movie Reviews Due
- **May 2nd** Final Exam Part 2: Essay Due

*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](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](https://www.ubs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga)) or crisis support ([https://www.ubs.uga.edu/info/emergencies](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](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

**Week 2 (January 16 & 18) China before Reform Era**
- **Tuesday** China’s Revolution and Its Legacies
- **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*

Thursday *The Private Sector and FDI*

Week 4 (January 30 & February 1)
Tuesday *Explaining China’s Economic Reform*

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*

Thursday *Why Economic Liberalization Failed to Bring Democracy*
* Kellee Tsai, “Capitalists without a Class,” Comparative Political Studies 39 (2005), 1130-1158.
Week 6 (February 13 & 15) Economic Liberalization and Political Reforms

Tuesday **The Deep Reform?**
* Andrew Mertha, “Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0,” *China Quarterly* 200 (2009), 995-1012.

Thursday **Rural Grassroots Democracy**
* Kevin J. O’Brien and Rongbin Han, “Path to Democracy?” *Journal of Contemporary China* 18:60 (2009), 359-78.

Week 7 (February 20 & 22)

Tuesday **Engaging Law in China**

Thursday **Civil Society?**

Week 8 (February 27 & 29)

Tuesday **Varieties of Activism**

Thursday **Midterm**

Week 9 Spring Break

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

Tuesday **Protesting Strategies**

Thursday **Watch movie on your own: Ai Weiwei Never Sorry (2012)**
Week 11 (March 19 & 21) Soft Suppression
Tuesday  **Policing and Suppression**

Thursday  **Soft Suppression**

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

Thursday
* 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**

Thursday  **Cyber Activism**
**Week 14 (April 9 & 11)**

**Tuesday State Information Control**

**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.

**Thursday Authoritarian Legitimation**

**Week 16 (April 23 & 25)**

**Tuesday China Rise and Its Global Implications**

**Thursday**

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