

INTL 8395 Contemporary Chinese Politics*

Dr. Rongbin Han

<hanr@uga.edu>

Class Time: Thursdays, 3:00-5:50 pm (Candler 117)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:00 pm & by appointment (322 Candler Hall)

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 better understanding of broader themes such as state-society relations, authoritarian politics, 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 undergoing socio-political transition in China? How research on contemporary China draws from and informs social sciences?

Recommended Books (You do not have to purchase all of them)

- (1) Allen Carlson, Mary Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal and Melanie Manion, *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). [E-book available at UGA library]
- (2) You-Tien Hsing, *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (Oxford University Press, 2010). [E-book at UGA library]
- (3) Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (The MIT Press, 2007).
- (4) Susan Shirk, *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise* (Oxford University Press, 2022). [E-book at UGA library]
- (5) Zhao Dingxin, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 2004). [E-book at UGA library]
- (6) Maria Repnikova, *Media Politics in China: Improvising Power under Authoritarianism* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). [E-book at UGA library]
- (7) Emily Chua, *The Currency of Truth* (University of Michigan Press, 2023) [E-book at UGA library]
- (8) Elizabeth Economy, *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; changes may be made by the instructor when necessary. *Students need reasonable classroom accommodations, please approach the instructor.*

Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor or available online.

*** Recommended for students wish to learn more about Chinese history and politics:**

Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949* (Stanford University Press, 1971).

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

Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution to Reform*, (W. W. Norton & Co., 2004).

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Final Grade Ranges: A 93-100 A- 90-92 B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82
 C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72 D 60-69 F 0-59

Participation (20%) Please attend classes regularly and actively engage in discussion.

Reading Responses (15 %) Write two responses (each should be 3 pages, double spaced) based on 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.

Movie Review (5%) Write a review (800-1000 words) for the movie you pick for Week 5.

Book Review Essay (20 %) Write a book review of one or more books related to themes discussed in the course. You may consult the instructor for the book. The essay shall summarize the argument, compare/contrast the book to course readings and other studies, and offer your own critique. Focus on analysis/critique and develop one coherent theme rather than providing a “laundry list.”

Research/Policy Paper (40 %) Write a research or policy paper on a topic of your choice upon the approval of the instructor. The research paper can be exploratory in nature or hypothesis-testing. But it should start from an empirical or theoretical puzzle, and then use empirical data to address the puzzle. The end product can be a full-fledged research paper, or a sufficiently developed research design. The policy paper should focus on a policy-related topic. It shall provide a detailed description of the context and importance of the topic/policy challenge, discuss the policy options, and provide policy recommendations with justifications. You will have the opportunity to present their project 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.

Resources

UGA has a vast array of resources to support students facing challenges. Please don't hesitate to speak with me or contact these resources directly. Note that UGA faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault/relationship violence to UGA's Equal Opportunity Office. UGA's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (info below) can speak to students confidentially.

- **Office of Student Care & Outreach** (coordinate assistance for students experiencing hardship/unforeseen circumstances) – 706-542-7774 or by email sco@uga.edu
- **Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)** - 706-542-2273 (during regular business hours)
After Hour Mental Health Crisis: 706-542-2200 (UGA Police—ask to speak to the CAPS on-call clinician)
- **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention** – 706-542-SAFE (The advocates at RSVP can provide student confidentiality).

Some Additional Ground Rules

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may **NOT** make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (August 15). Course Introduction

Suggested readings: Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China* (W. W. Norton & Co., 2004).

Week 2 (August 22). State of the Field & Getting China Right despite the Challenges

Harry Harding, "The Evolution of American Scholarship on Contemporary China," in David Shambaugh, ed., *American Studies of Contemporary China* (M.E. Sharpe, 1993), 14-40.

Elizabeth J. Perry, "Trends in the Study of Chinese Politics," *China Quarterly* 139 (1994): 704-13.

Bruce Gilley, "Paradigms of Chinese Politics," *Journal of Contemporary China* 20: 70 (2011): 517-533.

Kevin O'Brien, "Studying Chinese Politics in an Age of Specialization," *Journal of Contemporary China* 20: 71 (2011): 535-541.

Sheena Chestnut Greitens and Rory Truex, "Repressive Experiences among China Scholars: New Evidence from Survey Data," *The China Quarterly* 242 (2019): 349-375.

Memos from Dr. Xu Xu and Dr. Rory Truex on Getting China Right.

Suggested Readings: Allen Carlson, Mary Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal and Melanie Manion, *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies* (Cambridge, 2010); Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen (eds.), *Doing Fieldwork in China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 3 (August 29). Economic Reform and Political Economy

Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy* (The MIT Press, 2007), Chapters 3-8, 10, 12, and 13.

Jean Oi, "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China," *World Politics*, 45: 1 (1992): 99-126.

Hehui Jin, Yingyi Qian, Barry R. Weingast, "Regional Decentralization and Fiscal Incentives: Federalism, Chinese Style," *Journal of Public Economics* 89: 9-10 (2005): 1719-1742.

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

Wing Thye Woo "The Real Reasons for China's Growth." *China Journal* 41 (1999): 115-137.

Pearson, Margaret, Meg Rithmire, and Kellee Tsai. "China's Political Economy and International Backlash: From Interdependence to Security Dilemma Dynamics." *International Security* 47: 2 (2022): 135-176.

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 4 (September 5). No Class; Instructor out of town for APSA.

Pick a movie/documentary related to China and watch it. Write a movie review.

Week 5 (September 12). Political Stagnation or Deep Reform (before Xi)?

Kellee Tsai, "Capitalists without a Class," *CPS* 39 (2005): 1130-1158.

Mary Gallagher, "Reform and Openness: Why Chinese Economic Reforms Have Delayed Democracy," *World Politics* 54:3 (2002): 338-372.

Young Nam Cho, "From 'Rubber Stamp' to 'Iron Stamps'," *China Quarterly* 171(2002): 724-40.

Melanie Manion, "When Communist Party Candidates Can Lose, Who Wins?" *China Quarterly*, 195 (2008): 607-30.

Mary Gallagher, "Mobilizing the Law in China," *Law and Society Review* 40:4 (2006): 783-816.

Kevin J. O'Brien and Rongbin Han, "Path to Democracy?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 18:60 (2009): 359-78.

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 6 (September 19). Varieties of Social Activism & State Responses (Since Tiananmen)

Nathan, Beha, Perry, Wasserstrom, O'Brien, Lee& Friedman, and Yang, "China Since Tiananmen," *Journal of Democracy* 20:3 (2009): 5-40.

Kevin O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* 49:1 (1996): 31-55.

Marc Blecher, "Hegemony and Workers' Politics in China," *China Quarterly*, 170 (2002): 283-303.

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

Greg Distelhorst, "The Power of Empty Promises," *CPS* 50:4 (2017): 464–98.

Yanhua Deng and Kevin O'Brien, "Relational Repression in China," *China Quarterly* 215 (2013): 533-552.

Rachel Stern and Jonathan Hassid, "Amplifying Silence," *CPS* 45: 10 (2012): 1230-1254.

Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang, "The Power of Instability," *American Journal of Sociology* 118:6 (2013): 1475–1508.

Extended Reading: Zhao Dingxin, The Power of Tiananmen (University of Chicago Press, 2004);

Daniel Mattingly, *The Art of Political Control in China* (CUP, 2019).

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 7 (September 26). Land Politics

You-Tien Hsing, *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Meg Rithmire, "Land Politics and Local State Capacities: The Political Economy of Urban Change in China," *China Quarterly* 216 (2013): 872–895.

Yongshun Cai, "Collective Ownership or Cadres' Ownership? The Non-agricultural Use of Farmland in China," *China Quarterly* 175 (2003): 662-680.

Rongbin Han, Juan Du, and Li Shao, "Opportunistic Bargaining: Negotiating Distribution in China." *The China Quarterly* 253 (2023): 141–57.

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 8 (October 3). Middle Class, Civil Society, Public Sphere, and Social Capital?

Lily Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China" *APSR*101: 2 (2007): 355-372.

Gu Xin, "A Civil Society and Public Sphere in Post-Mao China? An Overview of Western Publications," *China Information* (1993-94): 38-52.

Tony Saich, "Negotiating the State," *China Quarterly* 161(2000): 124-41.

Jessica Teets, "The Emergence of Consultative Authoritarianism in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24:91 (2015), 158-175.

Bruce Dickson, *Red Capitalists in China* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapter 1.

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 9 (October 10). Media Politics

Daniela Stockmann and Mary Gallagher, "Remote Control," *CPS* 44:4 (2011): 436-467.

Maria Repnikova, *Media Politics in China* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), Parts I & II.

Emily Chua, *The Currency of Truth* (University of Michigan Press, 2023), Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5.

Extended Reading: Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008);

Daniela Stockmann, *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 10 (October 17) Cyber Politics

Ashley Esarey and Xiao Qiang "Political Expression in the Chinese Blogosphere," *Asian Survey* 48 (2008): 752-772.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan and Margaret Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *APSR* 107: 2 (2013): 326-343.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan and Margaret Roberts, "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument," *APSR*111:3 (2017): 484-501.

Rongbin Han and Li Shao, "Scaling Authoritarian Information Control," *Political Research Quarterly* 75:4(2022), 1345-1359.

Mary Gallagher and Blake Miller, "Who Not What: The Logic of China's Information Control Strategy." *The China Quarterly* 248(2021): 1011-36.

Rachel Stern, Benjamin Liebman, Margaret Roberts, and Alice Wang. "Automating Fairness?" *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 59 (2021): 515-53.

Eddie Yang and Margaret E. Roberts, "The Authoritarian Data Problem." *Journal of Democracy* 34:4 (2023): 141-50.

Extended Reading: Rongbin Han, *Contesting Cyberspace in China* (Columbia UP, 2018); Margaret Roberts, *Censored* (Princeton UP, 2019).

Discussants: 1)

2)

Week 11 (October 24). Chinese Nationalism

Suisheng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31:3 (1998): 287–302.

Jessica Chen Weiss, "Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China," *International Organization* 67: 1 (2013): 1-35.

Rongbin Han, "Patriotism without State Blessing: Chinese Cyber Nationalists in a Predicament," in *Handbook of Dissent and Protest in China*, ed. Teresa Wright (Edward Elgar, 2019).

Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing," *International Security* 41: 3 (2017): 7–43.

Rongbin Han, "Cyber Nationalism and Regime Support under Xi Jinping: The Effects of the 2018 Constitutional Revision." *Journal of Contemporary China* 30: 131 (2021): 717–33.

Recommended Movie: Warrior Wolf 2

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 12 (October 31). Fragmented Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Responsiveness?

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," *Comparative Politics* 31:2 (1999): 167-86.

Maria Edin, "State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China," *China Quarterly* 173 (2003): 35-52.

Andrew Mertha, "'Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0': Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process," *China Quarterly* 200 (2009): 995-1012.

Chen Jidong, Jennifer Pan and Yiqing Xu, "Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China," *American Journal of Political Science* 60(2): 383–400.

Lily Tsai, "Constructive Noncompliance," *Comparative Politics* 47:3(2015): 253–79.

Peter Lorentzen, "China's Strategic Censorship," *American Journal of Political Science* 58:2 (2014): 402–14.

Discussants: 1) 2)

Week 13 (November 7). Authoritarian Resilience or the Coming Collapse?

Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* 14.1 (2003): 6-17.

Cheng Li, "The End of the CCP's Resilient Authoritarianism?" *The China Quarterly* 211 (2012): 595-623.

Wenfang Tang, *Populist Authoritarianism* (Oxford University Press, 2016), Chapter 1.

Suzanne Scoggins, "Rethinking Authoritarian Resilience and the Coercive Apparatus," *Comparative Politics* 53:2 (2021): 309-330.

Elizabeth Economy, *The Third Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapters 1 & 8.

Ashley Esarey and Rongbin Han, eds. *The Xi Jinping Effect* (U.Washington Press, 2024), Chapter 1.

Discussants: 1) 2)

