

# INTL 4361: Chinese Politics

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(Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 12:40-1:30, Sanford Hall 313)

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## I. Overview

### Course Overview

This course provides a comprehensive overview of China's political system and its transformation across different historical periods. We will begin with an examination of China's imperial political structure and follow the trajectory of political development from the late Qing dynasty to the present. Special attention will be given to the Reform Era since 1978, a period marked by profound political and socioeconomic change. In particular, the course will explore the challenges faced by the state during this era, the strategies employed by the Chinese Communist Party to address them, the evolving relationship between the state and society, and the significant political transformation during the Xi Jinping Era.

### Textbooks

There are no textbooks required for this course. However, students without prior knowledge of China are encouraged to read relevant materials on modern Chinese history and political transformations. Suggested readings are listed below:

- Atwill, David & Yurong Atwill — Sources in Chinese History
- Dreyer, June Teufel — China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition
- Fairbank, John King — The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800–1985
- Hsu, Immanuel C. Y. — The Rise of Modern China
- Lieberthal, Kenneth — Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform
- MacFarquhar, Roderick & Schoenhals, Michael — Mao's Last Revolution
- Saich, Tony — Governance and Politics of China
- Shambaugh, David — China's Leaders: From Mao to Now
- Shirk, Susan L. — The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China
- Spence, Jonathan D. — The Search for Modern China

### Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

**Reflection Questions (45%)** Beginning with Module 2, each module will conclude with a set of reflection questions, each worth 3 points. These questions will be presented during the final class of the module, and responses must be submitted before the next module begins. While there is no

specified word count or minimum length requirement, students are expected to engage with the questions thoughtfully and provide original responses in their own words.

***Mid-term (20 %) and Final (20%)*** Both the midterm and final exams will be **closed-book** and consist of **50 multiple-choice questions**. Exams will be administered **in person and in paper** format. Students who answer **40 or more** questions correctly will receive full marks. For scores below this threshold, each correct answer will be worth 0.5 points. The exam will include both single-answer questions (with only one correct option) and multiple-answer questions (with more than one correct option). Exam content will be drawn from both class lectures and assigned readings, with the midterm covering Modules 2 to 8 and the final exam covering the remaining modules.

***Movie Reviews (5%)*** Students are required to watch one China-related film assigned by the instructor during the course, which is worth 5 points. The review should provide a clear and thoughtful introduction to the film and explicitly connect its content to the themes and concepts discussed in the course. It should be between 800 and 1,000 words in length.

***Book Review (10%)*** Each student is required to write one book review of approximately 1,200 words on a self-selected book related to Chinese politics. The chosen book must be at least 150 pages in length. In the review, students are expected to develop a clear argument and support it with analytical reasoning and empirical evidence. Particular attention should be paid to the paper's structure, the coherence of the analysis, and the clarity and depth of the argument. All reviews must follow the Chicago citation style and be free of grammatical errors. To help you get started, please watch this short video on how to identify a research question: <https://youtu.be/elZ3gPdEENI>.

***Bonus 1: Participation (5%)*** Students are expected to attend lectures and participate in class discussions. They are required to complete the assigned readings in advance and actively engage during class. Since participation cannot be evaluated with precise quantitative measures, it will be treated as a bonus component. At the end of the semester, the instructor will reflect on students' overall participation and may award up to 5 bonus points based on classroom engagement, primarily judged by overall impression.

***Bonus 2: Self-Selected Movie Review (5%)*** Students have the opportunity to earn up to 5 bonus points by watching and reviewing a self-selected China-related film. This optional review should follow the same format as the required movie review assignment: it must include a clear and thoughtful introduction to the film and directly relate its content to the course's themes and discussions. The review should be between 800 and 1,000 words in length.

As some systems may not be able to process certain file formats, please upload all materials in **PDF format**.

\*\*\*\*\* **Important Dates** \*\*\*\*\*

August 13 – 19	Drop / Add for undergraduate and graduate level courses
September 1 (Monday)	Holiday: Labor Day
October 6 (Monday) 12:30 pm Eastern	Movie Review Due
October 6 (Monday) 12:40 – 13:30 pm	Midterm Exam
October 31 (Friday)	Fall Break
November 12	Withdrawal Deadline
November 26 - 28 (Wednesday - Friday)	Thanksgiving Break
December 3 (Wednesday)	The Last Day of the Class
December 8 (Monday) 12:30 pm Eastern	Deadline for Bonus Movie Review
December 8 (Monday) 12:30 pm Eastern	Book Review Due
December 10 (Wednesday) 12:00 - 3:00 pm	Final Exam

### **Late Submission Policy**

All assignments (including Reflection Questions, Movie Reviews, and the Book Review) must be submitted on time via eLC. While late submissions are sometimes unavoidable and will still be accepted and graded, they will incur a **20% grade deduction per day** (10% per day with an approved excuse). To avoid penalties, students are strongly encouraged to manage their deadlines carefully and contact the instructor in advance if any difficulties arise.

### **Grade Appeal Policy**

If you have any questions or concerns about a grade received on an assignment, you must contact the instructor within one week of receiving the grade. A written appeal is required, clearly explaining the reasons why you believe the grade should be reconsidered. Please note that a grade review may result in **a higher grade, a lower grade, or no change**.

### **Grading**

Students' final grades will be calculated according to the following scale:

- 94 – 100 A
- 90 – 93.9 A–
- 87 – 89.9 B+
- 84 – 86.9 B
- 80 – 83.9 B–
- 77 – 79.9 C+
- 74 – 76.9 C
- 70 – 73.9 C–
- 60 – 69.9 D
- 59 and below F

## **Changes to the Syllabus Could Occur**

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## **II. Classroom Policies**

### **Academic Integrity and Honesty**

UGA Student Honor Code: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at “[honesty.uga.edu](https://honesty.uga.edu).” Plagiarism refers to the use of another person’s ideas, words, or materials without proper citation, whether intentional or unintentional. This includes—but is not limited to—copying from published sources, classmates, or online platforms. The use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools in any written assignment—including reflection questions, movie reviews, book reviews, and the midterm or final exams—to generate content or ideas is considered plagiarism in this course. Any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (Judicial Affairs) in accordance with university policy.

### **Electronics Policy**

Laptops are permitted in class for note-taking purposes only. Audio or video recording of class sessions is strictly prohibited unless the student has received written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center. Students with such authorization must adhere to the following conditions:

- They understand that recordings are for personal academic use only and may be used only during the specific course for which authorization was granted.
- They acknowledge that faculty members hold copyright interest in their lectures and agree not to infringe upon these rights in any way.
- They recognize that both the instructor and fellow students have privacy rights, and agree not to violate these rights by using the recordings for any purpose beyond their own study.
- They will not release, upload, broadcast, transcribe, or share any part of the recordings in any form. They also agree not to profit financially or allow others to benefit personally or financially from the recordings or any course materials.
- They will permanently delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- They understand that any violation of these terms may result in disciplinary action under the UGA Student Code of Conduct, and/or legal liability under copyright law.

### **Absences**

While in-person attendance is expected for this course, health-related issues—including COVID-19—may affect your ability to attend class. Do not attend class if you are feeling unwell. Excused absences from in-person participation include:

- Illness or a health emergency

- Death of a family member
- Documented disabilities

Students requesting an excused absence must notify the instructor with a brief explanation and, where applicable, provide supporting documentation. Whenever possible, students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of the class they will miss.

### **Diversity, Preferred Name and Pronouns**

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.

### **Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Statement**

FERPA grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at "<https://www.reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/>." FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.

### **Disability Services**

The following is taken verbatim from the [Disability Resource Center](#):

"If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with Accessibility and Testing. Accessibility and Testing can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, by calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://accessibility.uga.edu>"

### ***Mental Health and Wellness Resources***

The following is taken verbatim from the [Syllabus Checklist](#):

"UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](http://sco.uga.edu). Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](http://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](http://sco.uga.edu)

- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](http://healthcenter.uga.edu)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](http://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](http://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: [drc.uga.edu](http://drc.uga.edu)

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.”

### III. Detailed Schedule

#### Module 1: Introduction | Why China Matters? (August 13)

- Readings:
  - Syllabus

#### Module 2: China Before the Republic (August 15 and 18)

- Readings:
  - Cartwright, Mark. 2019. “The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China.” World History Encyclopedia, February 8, 2019.  
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1335/the-civil-service-examinations-of-imperial-china/>
  - Fukuyama, Francis. 1995. “Confucianism and Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (2): 20–33.
  - Tong, Zhichao. 2024. “Designing Confucian Democracy: A Semi-Parliamentarian Framework.” *American Journal of Political Science*. (optional)
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due August 20, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### Module 3: The Republic Era (August 20, 22, and 25)

- Readings:
  - Liu, James T. C., and Erik Zürcher. n.d. “The Early Republican Period,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*,  
<https://www.britannica.com/place/China/The-Chinese-Revolution-1911-12#ref71792>.
  - Young, Ernest P., and Hoklam Chan. n.d. “The Late Republican Period,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*,  
<https://www.britannica.com/place/China/War-between-Nationalists-and-communists#ref214399>.
  - Qiang, Zhang, and Robert Weatherley. “The Rise of ‘Republican Fever’ in the PRC and the Implications for CCP Legitimacy.” *China Information* 27, no. 3 (2013): 277–300.
- Assignments

- Reflection Questions – Due August 27, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 4: Mao's Era | Deepening the Revolution (August 27 and 29)**

- Readings:
  - Mao, Zedong. On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People. February 27, 1957. In *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*.  
[https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5\\_58.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_58.htm).
  - Yufan, Hao, and Zhai Zhihai. "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited." *The China Quarterly*, no. 121 (1990): 94–115.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due September 3, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 5: Mao's Era | The Great Leap Forward (September 3 and 5)**

- Readings:
  - Shen, Zhihua, and Yafeng Xia. "The Great Leap Forward, the People's Commune and the Sino-Soviet Split." *Journal of Contemporary China* 20, no. 72 (2011): 861–880.
  - Peng, Xizhe. "Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces." *Population and Development Review* 13, no. 4 (1987): 639–70.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due September 8, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 6: Mao's Era | The Cultural Revolution (September 8, 10, and 12)**

- Readings:
  - Walder, Andrew G. and Yang Su. "The Cultural Revolution in the Countryside: Scope, Timing and Human Impact." *The China Quarterly* 173 (2003): 74–99.
  - Pye, Lucian W. "Reassessing the Cultural Revolution." *The China Quarterly*, no. 108 (1986): 597–612.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due September 15, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 7: The Reform Era | Rebuilding Political Order (September 15, 17, and 19)**

- Readings:
  - Naughton, Barry. "Deng Xiaoping: The Economist." *The China Quarterly*, no. 135 (1993): 491–514.
  - Yahuda, Michael. "Deng Xiaoping: The Statesman." *The China Quarterly*, no. 135 (1993): 551–72.

- Chinese Communist Party. Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China. Adopted June 27, 1981.  
<https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>.
- Movie Day: September 19 is designated as Movie Day.  
We will watch the first half of the film *To Live* during class. You will also write a review of this film.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due September 22, 12:30 pm Eastern
  - Movie Review – Due October 6 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Module 8: The Reform Era | Rural Reform (September 22 and 24)**

- Readings:
  - Lin, Justin Yifu. "Rural Reforms and Agricultural Growth in China." *The American Economic Review* 82, no. 1 (1992): 34–51.
  - Oi, Jean C. "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China." *World Politics* 45, no. 1 (1992): 99–126.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due September 26, 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Module 9: The Reform Era | Tiananmen and Its Implications (September 26, 29, and October 1)**

- Readings:
  - Nathan, Andrew J. "The Tiananmen Papers." *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2001): 2–48.
  - Zhao, Dingxin. "State-Society Relations and the Discourses and Activities of the 1989 Beijing Student Movement." *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 6 (2000): 1592–1632.
  - Deng, Xiaoping. Address to Officers at the Rank of General and Above in Command of the Troops Enforcing Martial Law in Beijing. June 9, 1989.  
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/deng-xiaoping/1989/5.htm>
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due October 6, 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Midterm Exam (October 6)**

No class on October 3. Please review Modules 2–8 at home before the midterm.

### **Midterm Review (October 8)**

### **Module 10: The Reform Era | Urban Reform and FDI (October 10, 13, and 15)**

- Readings:



- Chan, Kam Wing, and Li Zhang. "The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes." *The China Quarterly*, no. 160 (1999): 818–55.
- Walder, Andrew G. "Factory and Manager in an Era of Reform." *The China Quarterly*, no. 118 (1989): 242–64.
- Hsu, Carolyn. "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, no. 1 (2006): 1–38.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due October 20, 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Module 11: The Reform Era | Political Participation: Village Elections (October 20 and 22)**

- Readings:
  - O'Brien, Kevin J., and Rongbin Han. "Path to Democracy? Assessing Village Elections in China." *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no. 60 (2009): 359–378.
  - Yao, Yusheng. "Village Elections and Their Impact: An Investigative Report on a Northern Chinese Village." *Modern China* 39, no. 1 (2012): 37–68.
  - Hillman, Ben. "The End of Village Democracy in China." *Journal of Democracy* 34, no. 3 (2023): 62–76.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due October 24, 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Module 12: The Reform Era | Political Participation: Protest, Bargaining, and State Repression (October 24, 27 and 29)**

- Readings:
  - O'Brien, Kevin J. "Rightful Resistance." *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (1996): 31–55.
  - Deng, Yanhua, and Kevin J. O'Brien. "Relational Repression in China: Using Social Ties to Demobilize Protesters." *The China Quarterly*, no. 215 (2013): 533–52.
  - Han, Rongbin, Juan Du, and Li Shao. "Opportunistic Bargaining: Negotiating Distribution in China." *The China Quarterly* 253 (2023): 141–57.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due November 3, 12:30 pm Eastern

### **Module 13: The Reform Era | The Propaganda System (November 3, 5 and 7)**

- Readings:
  - Shambaugh, David. "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy." *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007): 25–58.
  - Han, Rongbin. "Defending the Authoritarian Regime Online: China's 'Voluntary Fifty-Cent Army.'" *The China Quarterly* 224 (2015): 1006–25.

- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2 (2013): 326–43.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due November 10, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 14: The Reform Era | Political Selection (November 10 and 12)**

- Readings:
  - Whiting, Susan H. “The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grass Roots: The Paradox of Party Rule.” Chapter. In *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era*, edited by Barry J. Naughton and Dali L. Yang, 101–19.
  - Liu, Hanzhang. “Meritocracy as Authoritarian Co-Optation: Political Selection and Upward Mobility in China.” *American Political Science Review* 118, no. 4 (2024): 1856–72.
  - Choi, Eun Kyong. “Patronage and Performance: Factors in the Political Mobility of Provincial Leaders in Post-Deng China.” *The China Quarterly*, no. 212 (2012): 965–81.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due November 14, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 15: Xi’s Era | The Rise of Xi Jinping (November 14, 17, and 19)**

- Readings:
  - Shirk, Susan L. 2022. “The Rise and Fall of Collective Leadership.” In *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*, 81–118. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Shirk, Susan L. 2018. “The Return to Personalistic Rule.” *Journal of Democracy* 29 (2): 22–36.
  - Lee, Sangkuk. 2017. “An Institutional Analysis of Xi Jinping’s Centralization of Power.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 26 (105): 325–36.
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due November 21, 12:30 pm Eastern

#### **Module 16: Xi’s Era | The Xi Jinping Effect (November 21, 24, and December 1)**

- Readings:
  - Esarey, Ashley, and Rongbin Han, eds. *The Xi Jinping Effect*. University of Washington Press, 2024. Chapters 1, 7, and 8
- Assignments
  - Reflection Questions – Due December 3, 12:30 pm Eastern
  - Book Review – Due December 8 12:30 pm Eastern
  - Movie Review (Bonus) – Due December 8 12:30 pm Eastern

**The Final Class (December 3)**

There are no required readings or assignments. Any questions regarding China or the final exam will be addressed during class.

**Final Exam (December 10)**

Please review Modules 9 to 16 on your own before the final.