

International Studies 261

Government and Politics of China

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Course Description:

Students in this course will learn about China's political history and political culture; the effects of its geography on politics; China's traditional political system; the impact of the West on China; China's political elites; the unique roles of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping; the exercise of political power by the Chinese Communist Party, the government, and the military; China's legal system; the impact of economic growth on political change as well as problems it has created; China's current leaders; China's foreign policy; and China's future.

Several general themes will be pursued throughout this course: the uniqueness of China's political history and political culture; China's traditional role in the world viewed in comparison and in contrast to its recent and present role; the "transitional" nature of the Chinese political system (from totalitarianism to authoritarianism); China's successful economic development; the possibilities for the evolution of democracy; Communist Party rule without communism; and China as a new superpower.

Texts: June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition* (5th edition)

Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges*

(These texts are in the Rhodes Bookstore. Other materials assigned are on reserve in Burrow Library.)

Grading: Quizzes will be the objective-type (true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blanks). There will be five or six quizzes during the semester. The lowest quiz grade will be automatically dropped. To make up a quiz you must have a written excuse. Midterm and Final exams are both objective and essay: 50% each. They are in-class, closed-book exams. Some of the questions on the quizzes will likely be on the mid-term and final examinations, so you should review your quizzes before taking either examination. The final examination will be cumulative, but will be approximately 80% on the last half of the course. You are also required to write a book review after reading an outside book of your choice. This book has to have a recent copyright date and must be approved by me. Following is a breakdown of the weight given to each: Quizzes 25%, book review 10%, mid-term examination 30%, final examination 35%.

Week I

Topics: Starting this course we will first ask the question: Why study Chinese politics and the Chinese political system? The answer lies in part in comprehending China's importance in international politics. China is the largest nation in the world by population. China is also the fastest rising nation in the world in terms of economic and military power. In both, China may surpass the United States to become number one in the world within a decade. Alternatively, China may experience internal turmoil and possibly even civil war and fragmentation. If this happens, the implications are also far-reaching. China is likewise interesting because it is a communist country that has successfully made the transition from totalitarianism to authoritarianism and from a planned economic to a market economy. Yet, the political system as well as Chinese politics in general are still in a transition mode.

This week we will examine some of the approaches to studying China and the state of the discipline known as Sinology. We will also look at China's geography and early history as it relates to the development of political culture and political institutions.

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 1

Wang, Romanization of Chinese Names and chapter 1 (pp. 1–6 only)

John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, chapter 1 & 2

Allen Liu, *How China is Ruled*, chapter 1

Quiz #1 will be given the second meeting of this week. It will include a map test.

Week II

Topics: This week we will study the modern history of China with an emphasis on the evolution of political institutions and political culture and ideology (Confucianism, etc.). We will assess China's traditional politics and political system, the impact of the West, the fall of the Ch'ing (Qing) Dynasty and the rise of republican China and the Nationalists.

You should ask and try to answer the following question: Did Chinese history, in particular its political history, influence China to accept communism and thus become a communist country in 1949? Or was communism a foreign belief system and an inappropriate political system for China as the Nationalists claimed? To what extent is China tied to its history in terms of its current view of the world? What is the nature of Chinese nationalism? For example, must a "good" Chinese leader make China bigger in terms of its territory? Finally, is China—even today—a nation in the Western sense? When did this happen? Is China as a nation-state still evolving?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapters 2 and 3

Wang, chapter 1 (pp. 6–14)

Fairbank, *The United States and China*, chapters 5, 7, 8 & 9

Week III

Topics: This week's topics include the rise of communism in China, the formation of the Chinese Communist Party, the role of ideology in Mao's revolution, Mao's victory over the Nationalists, and the formation of the People's Republic of China. China becoming a communist nation was an event of great significance—both to China and the rest of the world. To understand world politics of the 1940s and 1950s, one must grasp the implications of this. To begin one should look at what happened in China that was the prelude and how Mao came to power.

Some of the questions that need to be pondered are: Why did communism appeal to the Chinese masses? Or did it? Was the Chinese Communist Party an indigenous one; or was it created and controlled by the Soviet Union? Was there a genuine revolution in 1949? Did Mao defeat the Nationalists, or did the Nationalists simply lose? What was the significance of the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC)? In retrospect, what mistakes were made?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 4
 Wang, chapter 2
 Fairbank, *The United States and China*, chapter 13
 Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of Communist Takeover*, pp. 5-13.

Quiz #2 will be given this week

Week IV

Topics: This week we need to assess Mao's rule of China from 1949 to his death in 1976. Mao, in many respects, was China. Many say Mao was a dictator or an emperor. He was perhaps the ultimate totalitarian. He was also a communist philosopher of unique status. He created the political system that ruled the PRC for more than a quarter of a century. Clearly he left a legacy—good and bad. Yet, much of what he did was quickly undone. Mao was “de-Stalinized” without being demonized very much.

Questions that need to be answered: Was Mao a populist? Was he a dictator? Was he a major contributor to communist ideology? Does this matter? To what extent did he do great harm to China? To what degree did he lose power in the late 1950s? What was his purpose in launching the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution? Were there two Maos (one good and one bad—meaning the early Mao and the later Mao)?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 5
 Wang, chapter 3
 Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, pp. 3-36
 Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, Foreword

Week V

Topics: This week we will examine the organization, power and roles of the Chinese Communist Party and the government of China. We will look at how they work together or how the Party controls the government. These two organizations (the other being the military) constitute two of the three centers of political power in the People's Republic of China. In examining these loci of political power we will also discuss the people who have filled the important positions of power here, their qualifications, their fate, etc.

The riddles in this case are: Why do the Party and the government look, on an organizational chart, almost opposite of how they really work? Why the deception? Which one dominates? Why? Is that always so? Should it be? How do you explain overlapping authority? How do you fit personalities into both or the two together? Has the government recently gained power at the expense of the Party?

Assignments: Wang, chapter 4
Liu, chapter 4
Jurgen Domes, *The Government and Politics of China*, chapter 5

Quiz #3 will be given this week

Week VI

Topics: This week we must examine the role of the military—the third center of political power in the People's Republic of China. You will learn that the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army rose in tandem. Mao said: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." And he meant it, and his career reflects it. The People's Republic of China was created by a military victory of the Red Army over the Nationalist armies. Subsequently, only those with military experience rose to top positions in the Chinese Party and the government. When the Party ceased to function during the Cultural Revolution and People's Liberation Army took over its functions as well as many government responsibilities. The military continues to play a central role in Chinese politics.

Questions you should ask yourselves are: What is the relationship between the Party and the military, historically and now? Was, and is, China a military dictatorship? How do the politics of the military and mobilization campaigns connect? Also, how is the military influencing China's foreign relations? Is China a rising military power? To what degree?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 9
Wang, chapter 8 and 9
Liu, chapter 5
Domes, chapter 6

Week VII

Topics: Review topics in course up to this point.

Assignment: Review readings and notes.

Mid-Term Examination will be given the second meeting of this week

Week VIII

Topics: This week we will look at the Deng era or the politics of Deng Xiaoping. Deng, it is generally perceived, came to power in late 1978. Mao purged him before Mao died in 1976—because Mao thought he was a rightist and didn't trust him and didn't want him to be his successor. (Mao had already disposed of two of his successors—Liu Xiaoyi and Lin Biao.) Zhou Enlai, who might have assumed power, died in early 1976. Hua Guofeng took power upon Mao's demise, but could not hold on to it. Deng was brought back and slowly pushed Hua to the sidelines. Deng then radically changed China. Deng pushed China to the right politically and changed the emphasis in politics from campaigns and mobilization to economic development and making China a world power. He criticized Mao. To understand how he came to power and why he did what he did, we must understand the nature of leadership in China and we will assess that in this context.

Questions that need to be addressed: How was Deng different from Mao in background, temperament and style? Could what Deng did have been predicted? Did Deng want to de-Maoize China? Is he to be considered a hero and Mao a villain, considering his successes? What happened as a result of his death?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 6
 Wang, chapter 5
 Debra E. Soled (ed.), *China: A Nation in Transition*, chapter 3
 A. James Gregor, *Marxism, China, & Development*, chapters 2 & 5

Week IX

Topics: This week we will look at China's economic development, past and present. Economic growth is Deng's biggest claim to fame and not without justification. The economy was mismanaged under Mao and did not perform well. Or did it? In any event Deng made major changes in the economy, including fundamentals. In some ways he changed China, economically speaking, from communism to capitalism (which he calls "socialism with Chinese characteristics"). It has worked. China, as a result of Deng's reforms has experienced miracle economic growth since 1978; in fact, its worst year in terms of growth in the gross national product exceeds our (meaning the United States) best year. At this rate, China will pass the U.S. to become the world's largest economy in a decade or a little more.

Questions: Did Deng perform miracles in making China grow so fast economically? What are the implications of this for domestic politics? For foreign relations? What risks did he take? Is China's experience a model, particularly when looking at what happened to reform in the Soviet Union? Can communism be reformed using Deng's approach, or is the gap between economic modernization and political change (meaning the lack of it) so big that China is about to explode with revolution? What is China's future economically?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 7
William Overholt, *The Rise of China*, chapters 1 and 2
Ted Fishman, *China, Inc.* Introduction, chapter 2, 6, 7, 8

Week X

Topics: This week we will study the "Jiang era" or China under a "third generation" of Chinese leaders and the Hu Jintao era or the "fourth generation." We will look at the individuals, their careers, their policies and try to discern how they carried on Deng's reforms and how altered them. Assuming Deng transformed the People's Republic of China from a totalitarian system to something else (perhaps a traditional authoritarian system but one with some democratic trappings) we need to try to define the political system now. We will look at evidence that China has changed and may be democratizing, or isn't. That means looking at such areas as local politics where some say democracy begins or is really practiced (though others say that decentralization of political power was a sine qua non for economic development and Deng decentralized power only for that reason), social mobility, the growth of a middle class, technology (especially the use of the internet).

Questions need to be entertained: What about a "fourth generation" of leaders. To what extent has political power moved from the center to the provinces and to local government? Has this helped create democracy? Does it lead to the danger that China will fragment and disintegrate? Judging from the third and fourth generations, where is China heading? What are the problems for the next generation of leaders?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 8
Lam, chapter 1, 2, and 3

Week XI

Topics: This week we will endeavor to pick out the most serious problems that threaten China, especially that relate to its politics (which some would say all do). Some say that the worst are the failure of the country to close the gap between economic and political modernization, or to democratize. Others say there has been too much decentralization of political authority. Some say the Communist Party has no credibility. Some say that the party and government cannot manage the economy in its present form. Some cite social problems such as crime. Some cite global influences and Westernization. Some say corruption and money politics. Some even say bad leaders, religious influence, and the desire of the United States to see China fail.

Questions: Can you sort out the questions that are serious from those that are not and those that are not questions at all? Can you say what the government has done so far that is functional and what is dysfunctional? Can you justify China looking for models or not? What if China splits apart?

Assignments: Lam, chapters 4 and 5

Week XII

Topics: This week we will look several seemingly non-political issues that relate to politics in the People's Republic of China. First we will look at dissent and human rights. Both are big issues and big problems. We will also view China's minorities and their problems and the issue of minority rights (including racial minorities, women and other minorities). Finally, we will examine environmental, health and demographic issues. We need to look at China's legal system in view of these problems.

The main questions to think about are: How bad is China's human rights situation? In what ways? Has it improved under Deng? How does the human rights problem affect China's relations with other countries, especially the United States? What is the status of China's minorities? Women? Religions? Environment? Will these matters affect China's political modernization? Its relations with other countries? Will its environmental problems soon cause the nation's health to be effected? Economic growth?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapters 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13
John F. Copper, "Peking's Post-Tiananmen Foreign Policy: The Human Rights Factor," *Issues and Studies*, October 1994.

Week XIII

Topics: China's foreign defense policy. We will focus on China's foreign policy record since 1949, the foreign policy decision-making process, current foreign policy issues and relations with other nations of the world— particularly the U.S., Russia and Japan. We will also look at China's military policies since 1949, defense spending, China's role in Asia, and the impact of the end of the Cold War on China's relations with other countries and international organizations.

Questions that need to be addressed are: Is China becoming a hegemonist or aggressive country? Does this put it at odds with the United States, Japan, Russia, India or Southeast Asia? Does China intend to project military power? How does it intend to exert global influence? Will China cooperate in arms control? Does China think in terms of blocs? Balance of power? What is its view of the international system? To what extent is the U.S. a challenge to China?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 14
 Lam, chapter 5
 Richard Bernstein and Ross Monroe, *The Coming Conflict with China*, chapter 1

Week XIV

Topics: The final week is for summing up and for asking and answering questions about the future of China politically. We need to discuss "Greater China" and assess and try to predict Beijing's relationship with other Chinese nations or political entities: Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Singapore and the Overseas Chinese. We need to consider some of the special problems China is facing now and how it will resolve them. China's rise needs to be put in the context of world politics.

Questions: Is China democratizing? Asian-style democracy? Is the notion of "Greater China" meaningful? How do Taiwan's relations with China differ from Hong Kong's and Macao's? Singapore? Is the 21st century the "China century"? Why? Or why not?

Assignments: Dreyer, chapter 15
 Lam, chapter 7

We will discuss your book review this week also.