

Columbia University
CHINESE POLITICS
W4471x
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Fall 2005

Introduction

This course covers the politics of the People's Republic of China, from its foundation in 1949 to the present. Because this a one-semester course and the PRC is getting older and older, not much time can be devoted to pre-1949 China. The course is divided into two parts. The first covers the era of Chairman Mao Zedong's dominance from 1949-1976. The second covers the "reform era," which began in 1978 and is still in progress. There are major continuities between the two periods, such as continued rule by the Chinese Communist Party, but there are also extremely important differences. Under Mao, the major question was how and how rapidly "socialism" could be built. In the reform era, the major question was how much of the socialist edifice needed to be discarded in order for China to develop more rapidly and effectively.

4471 is a lecture course but I strongly encourage discussion during class. Don't be shy about speaking up! Both the TA, Xiaohong Yu, and I will be happy to discuss questions and problems as they arise. Ms. Yu will also hold discussion sessions for undergraduates.

There are no prerequisites for the course. It is designed both for advanced undergraduates and beginning graduate students.

Requirements

1. An in-class midterm will be given on October 20. The final will be of the take-home variety. It will emphasize the materials covered after the midterm, but may also include questions that ask students to tie together major themes of the entire course. The exam will be handed out on the last day of class, December 8, and will be due on Friday, December 16, the day after the in-class final would have been held.

2. Paper.

Undergraduates must write an analysis of 8-10 pages in length of a significant book, i.e. something weightier than a travelogue. The idea is to enable you to pursue a topic in which you are particularly interested but which is not adequately, if at all, covered in the lectures and readings. Examples include the political role of women, the military, foreign relations, the Taiwan issue, and China's national minorities, e.g., Tibetans or Uighurs. Alternatively, students may wish to pursue a topic covered in class by doing further reading.

Memoir literature such as White Swans: Three Daughters of China and fiction such as Ha Jin, The Crazy, provide subjective insight into the Chinese experience and can be used for review.

“Analysis” means that the review should go beyond summarizing the content. You should explain the author’s arguments, major points, findings, and conclusions. Are they persuasive to you in light of what you know about the subject from the course, including the lectures? How successful is the author in conveying h/her message? What failings do you see in the book? That is, even if you have no in-depth knowledge against which to appraise the book, you should be able to say something about thoroughness of coverage and plausibility of findings. We will grade the paper in the light of these criteria.

With regard to finding a good book, I will separately distribute a list of recommended books arranged by topic.

In addition, many of the assigned readings contain bibliographies, including recommended readings. Book reviews in such major journals as China Quarterly, The China Journal, and Journal of Asian Studies provide critiques and therefore guidance as to the quality of the book in question.

b. Graduate students --SIPA, GF, or undergraduates who feel able to do so and wish to earn extra credit-- should write a paper on any topic of 12-15 pages, using a variety of sources. Students without background on contemporary China should focus on secondary literature in books or academic journals.

Those with background should make at least some use of the wide range of translated material that originates from the People's Republic. Such materials include Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Daily Report-China, available since 1996 to Columbia students on the web (until then in paper in Lehman), or journals of translation such as Chinese Law and Government. Those who know Chinese are of course welcome to use Chinese-language materials.

The paper should have a theme, argument, or analytical question. It should not simply be descriptive. You should provide footnotes or endnotes, as well as a bibliography.

Papers are due no later than Tuesday, December 6.

Graduate students interested in doing more in-depth work on Chinese politics may consider taking PS G8471y "Chinese politics in comparative perspective," to be given in the spring of 2006.

Books for Purchase

All required readings are on reserve in the C.V.Starr Library in Kent Hall. The following paperbacks may be purchased at Labyrinth Books, 536 W112th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam):

Yun-han Chu, et.al., eds. The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Bruce J.Dickson, Red Capitalists in China, NY: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, eds., State and Society in 21st - Century China NY: Routledge-Curzon, 2004

Jude Howell, ed., Governance in China, Lanham,MD:Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.

Kenneth Lieberthal, Governing China: From Reform to Revolution, NY: W.W. Norton, 2nd edition, 2004.

Tony Saich, Governance and Politics of China, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd ed., 2004

Dali Yang, Calamity and Reform in China: Rural Society and Institutional Change since the Great Leap Forward, (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996).

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

INTRODUCTION

Lecture: China in 1949: legacies and challenges

Readings:

Lieberthal, Governing China, pp.39-56. Note: this section, on the Communist rise to power, is part of two chapters on pre-1949 China. It deals with the Communist rise to power.

Students without background on 20th century China should read both chapters in full.

I.THE ERA OF MAO ZEDONG (about 10 lectures)

Lectures: Structure of Party, government, and army
The defining features of Maoism

The take-over campaigns, 1950-1952
 The First Five-Year Plan, 1953-57
 The “100 Flowers” and the Anti-rightist Campaign, 1956-57
 The Great Leap Forward
 Retreat and new socialist offensives
 The Cultural Revolution and the decline of the Maoist regime

Readings:

1. Lieberthal, Governing China, chpts. 3 and 4, plus pp.173-186; 290-294
2. Saich, Governance and Politics, chpt.2
3. Dali Yang, Calamity and Reform, Introduction, chpts.1, 2, 3, and 4
4. Anne Thurston, Enemies of the People, chpt.4. pp.92-131
5. Li Zhenshen-Red Color News Soldier, ed., Robert Pledge. Note: this is a book of photographs made during the Cultural Revolution with an accompanying text. You should look at the pictures and read as much as you can, so as to acquire a visual impression of what went on.

II. THE MAJOR REFORMS, 1978---

Lectures:

1. The political turn to reform, 1977-1978
2. The major economic and social reforms of the 1980: decollectivization, markets, the growth of TVEs; foreign investment; the rise of private business
3. Reform in the 1990s and into the 21st century:
 - a. the Tiananmen interlude of reform on hold
 - b. “The socialist market economy”
4. Biting the bullet of reform of state industry; the rise of urban unemployment
5. New or intensifying problems: inequality, corruption, environmental degradation

Readings:

1. Lieberthal, Governing China, pp. 123-139 and chapters 8 and 10
2. Saich, Governance and Politics, chpts.3, 9, 10
3. Dali Yang, Calamity and Reform, chpt.6

III. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

- #### Lectures:
1. China’s evolving ruling elite
 2. Political conflict; the succession issue
 3. Continuity and change in the major political institutions of party and government
 4. Limited political reform: law, the NPC, village elections

Readings:

- 1.Lieberthal, Governing China, pp.140-167; 186-205; chpt.7
- 2.Saich, Governance and Politics of China, chpts.4, 5, 6
- 3.Yun-han Chu, et.al, eds. The New Chinese Leadership, essays by Lowell Dittmer, Suisheng Zhao, and Yu-Shan Wu
- 4.Gries and Rosen, eds., State and Society, essay by Bruce Dickson
- 5.Howell, Governance in China, essays by Fewsmith, Burns, Zhu, and Jakobson
- 6.Thomas Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China, 206-231

IV.STATE AND SOCIETY: THE QUESTION OF STABILITY

Lectures:

- 1.Social change and the rise of popular assertiveness
- 2.Civil society and NGOs
- 3.Intellectuals and students as a political force; nationalism
- 4.The political role of private business, the newly rich, and the new middle class
- 5.The grievances of the working class
6. The problems of the countryside and the limits of protest
- 7.The regime's capacity to respond: recent developments

Readings:

- 1.Richard Baum, Burying Mao, chpt.11, "The Beijing Spring, April May 1989"
- 2.Saich, Governance and Politics, chpts. 7 and 8
- 3.Yun-han Chu, et.al, The New Chinese Leadership, essays by Lewis and Xue, Solinger, and Oi
- 4.Joseph Fewsmith, China since Tiananmen, "Introduction: State and Intellectuals at the Turn of the Century"; and chpt.5, "The Emergence of Neostatism and Popular Nationalism."
Dickson, Red Capitalists, chpts. 4 and 5
Gries and Rosen, State and Society, chpts. by Shue, Solinger, Weston, Thornton, O'Brien, Gries. Recommended: essays Wright and Mackerras
Howell, Governance in China, essays by Zhang Jing, Howell, Du Jie, Blecher, Ostergaard.
Thomas Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China, chpts. 5 and 6

Concluding Lecture: China's Future: Some Speculations.