Course Outline

This course will explore the dynamics of political change in post-Mao China through an examination of selected systemic challenges and regime responses. The primary focus will be on processes of institutional development and decay as the Party-State regime evolves from hard to soft authoritarianism. A secondary theme will deal with evolving state-society relations, exploring the regime’s efforts to manage an increasingly diverse and restless society. An important goal of the course will be to introduce students to the major scholarly debates within the contemporary China studies field, as well as to the primary and secondary materials available for empirical research on these questions.

Course Format and Requirements

The course will be organized as a colloquium/seminar centered on each class reading. Responsibility for summarizing and critiquing the readings will be rotated among seminar participants. Grades will be based on the following:

(1) Participation: 20%
(2) 5 reading summary/critiques (2-3 pages): 50%
(3) Biographic Exercise 3-5 pages: 30%

Readings: Posted on Quercus by topic and date.

Topics and Readings:

May 6 Course Introduction/Historical Overview

3. Alice Miller, ‘Valedictory’, China Leadership Monitor, # 57
8. William Overholt, China’s Crisis of Success, Chapter 1.

China: ‘Resilient Authoritarianism’ or “Trapped Transition”?

2. Minxin Pei, “Is China’s Transition Trapped and What should the West do about it?” Centre for Social and Legal Studies, University of Oxford, 2007/
5. Vivienne Shue and Patricia Thornton, To Govern China, Introduction.

Chinese Perspectives on Systemic Challenges


Change as Process: Three Models
2. Kellee S. Tsai, Capitalism Without Democracy, Chapters 2&7, (pp. 17-43; 200-221)

May 14

Village Democracy


May 15

Can the Party Reinvent itself?


May 16

Ideology and Legitimacy: Restoring Orthodoxy?

4. “Internet Commentator”
6. TBA (XJP Thought...)

May 20.
No Class: Victoria Day

May 21

Managing Protest

5. TBA (New Technologies of Repression, Uighur Repression Case)

May 22

Making Law Work

1. Randall Perelboom, China’s Long March to the Rule of Law, preface, PP. 1-23; 558-589.
5. TBA (Readings on July 9 2015)

May 23

Elite Conflict and Institutionalization

1. Susan Shirk, (The Political Logic of Economic Reform (1993), Chapter 4 (“Leadership Incentives.”)

May 27

The 19th CCP Congress: Predictions, Outcomes, Consequences.
3. Elizabeth Economy, China’s Third Revolution, Chapter 1.
4. TBA (Constitutional Change: 2-term limit eliminated, etc.)

May 28

Bio Presentations

May 29

Civil Society and Political Change

4. “China From the Inside” (Video, 2007)
5. TBA (Crackdown)

May 30

Combating Corruption

4. TBA (XJP Anti Corruption Drive)

June 3

Decentralization, Development and Predation


June 4.

China’s Rising Middle Class: Force for Change?
1. Andrew Nathan, “The Puzzle of China’s Middle Class,” 
   Journal of Democracy, 2017
2. Luigi Tomba, “Creating an Urban Middle Class: Social 
3. Benjamin L. Read, “Inadvertent Political Reform via Private 
   Associations: Assessing Homeowners’ Groups in New 
   Neighborhoods,” in Perry and Goldman, Grassroots Political 

June 5

**Media and Political Change**

1. Ashley Esarey, “Cornering the Market: State Strategies for 
   Controlling China’s Commercial Media,” Asian Perspectives, 
   2005.
2. Rebecca MacKinnon, “Networked Authoritarianism in China 
3. Philip Pan, Out of Mao’s Shadow, Chapter 9.
4. Jonathan Haidt, China’s Unruly Journalists, Chapter 1.
5. TBA (Social Credit System)

June 6

**Public Opinion and Value Change in China**

1. Tianjian Shi, “Mass Political Behavior in Beijing,” in Goldman 
   and MacFarquhar, Paradox of China’s Post Mao Reforms.
2. Tianjian Shi, “China: Democratic Values Supporting an 
   Authoritarian System,” in Chu, et. al., How East Asians View 
   Democracy, 2008.

June 11

**China’s Political Economy at the Crossroad**

2. Daniel Lynch, China’s Futures, Chapter 3.
3. TBA

June 12

**Chinese Foreign Policy**

1. Daniel Lynch, China’s Futures, Chapter 4.
2. Ian Johnson, “Will China become Supreme?” NYRB, 
4. Frank Pieke, Knowing China, Chapter 6

June 13

**China’s Periphery**

1. Nathan and Scobell, China’s Search for Security, Chapter
China’s Future

1 William Overholt, China’s Crisis of Success, Conclusion.