

**University of Toronto  
Department of Political Science**

Pol. 431Y/2431Y  
Politics and Society in Contemporary China

Summer, 2024  
Mr. Falkenheim

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### **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 alternates between hard and soft authoritarianism. A secondary theme will deal with evolving state-society relations, exploring the regime's efforts to manage an increasingly diverse and restive 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 class readings. Responsibility for summarizing and commenting on the readings will be rotated among seminar participants. Grades will be based on the following:

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|---|------|
| (1) Participation:                          | 20%; |
| (2) 2 reading summary/critiques (5-7 pages) | 50%  |
| (3) Research Exercise 5-7 pages,            | 30%  |

**Readings: Posted on Quercus by topic and date.**

### **Topics and Readings:**

July 2

#### **I: Course Introduction/Historical Overview**

1. Randall Peerenboom, China Modernizes: Threat to the West or Model for the Rest?, Oxford, 2007, Chapter 1.
2. Kaiser Kuo, "Why do Chinese People like their government," SupChina, 2019.

## **II: Problematics, Paradigms, and Hunches: Pekingology Revisited**

3. Joseph Fewsmith, “The Changing Methodology of Beijingology.”
4. Alice Miller, ‘Valedictory’, China Leadership Monitor, # 57
5. Kevin O’Brien, “Studying Chinese Politics in an Age of Specialization,” Journal of Contemporary China, September, 2011.
6. Scott Kennedy, “Overcoming our Middle Kingdom Complex: Finding China’s Place in Comparative Politics,” in Scott Kennedy, Ed. Beyond the Middle Kingdom, Stanford, 2011.
7. Kevin O’Brien, “Speaking to Theory and Speaking to the China Field,” Issues and Studies, December, 2018.
8. Vivienne Shue and Patricia Thornton, To Govern China, Introduction/Chapter 1.
9. William Overholt, China’s Crisis of Success, Chapter 1.
10. Andrew Mertha, “Fifty Years of Engagement: The China Scholar Community and the Study of China,” Engaging China, 2021

July 4

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

1. Bruce Gilley, “Should We Try to Predict Transitions to Democracy? Lessons for China,” (2005)
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/
3. Elizabeth Perry, “Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution,” The China Journal, January, 2007
4. Andrew Nathan, “Authoritarian Impermanence,” Journal of Democracy, 2009.
5. Vivienne Shue and Patricia Thornton, To Govern China, Introduction.
6. Minxin Pei, “China: Totalitarianism’s Long Shadow,” Journal of Democracy, April, 2021.

July 9

### **Chinese Perspectives on Systemic Challenges**

1. David Shambaugh, “Learning from Abroad to Reinvent Itself: External Influences on Internal CCP Reforms,” in Cheng Li, Editor, China’s Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy, pp.283-301.

2. Bruce Gilley and Heike Holbig, "The Debate on Party Legitimacy in China: A mixed quantitative/qualitative analysis," Journal of Contemporary China, March, 2009.

July 11

### **Change as Process: Three Models**

1. Yu Keping, "Ideological Change in and Incremental Democracy in Reform Era China," in Cheng Li, Ed. China's Changing Political Landscape, pp. 44-57.
2. Kellee S. Tsai, Capitalism Without Democracy, Chapters 2&7, (pp. 17-43; 200-221)
3. George Gilboy and Benjamin Read, "Political and Social Reform in China: Alive and Walking," Washington Quarterly, 2008.
4. Andrew Mertha, "Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0," China Quarterly, 2007.
5. Yun Yun Ang How China Escaped Poverty, Selected sections.

July 16

### **Village Democracy and Health Policy: Case Studies of Process**

1. Daniel Kelliher, "The Chinese Debate over Village Self-Government," The China Journal, January, 1997.
2. Tianjian Shi, "Insitutionalist Tactics for Democracy," World Politics, 1999.
3. Lianjiang Li, "The Empowering Effect of Village Elections in China," Asian Survey, 2003.
4. Kornreich. Vertinsky and Potter, "Consultation and Deliberation in the making of China's Health Care Reform"

May 18

### **Can the Party Reinvent itself?**

1. Dickson, "Integrating Wealth and Power in China: The Communist Party's Embrace of the Private Sector," China Quarterly, no. 192 (December, 2007).
2. Stig Thorgersen, "Parasites or Civilisers: The Legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party in Rural Areas," China: An International Journal, September, 2003, pp.200-223
3. Andrew G. Walder, "The Party Elite and China's Trajectory of Change," China: An International Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2004)
4. Patricia Thornton, "The New Life of the Party," The China Journal, 2012.

5. Baogang Guo, 'A Partocracy with Chinese Characteristics: Governance Reform under Xi Jinping,' Journal of Contemporary China, 2020.
6. Minxin Pei, "Rewriting the Rules of the Chinese Party-State: Xi's Progress in Reinventing the CCP," China Leadership Monitor, #60 (2019)
7. Kjeld Erik Brodsgard, 'Turning the CCP into an Elite Party,' in Zheng and Gore, The CCP in Action, 2020.

July 23

### **Ideology and Legitimacy: Restoring Orthodoxy?**

1. Feng Chen, "Rebuilding the Party's Normative Authority: China's Socialist Spiritual Civilization Campaign," Problems of Post-Communism, Nov.-Dec., 1998.
2. Anne-Marie Brady and Wang Juntao, "China's Strengthened New Order," Journal of Contemporary China, 2009,
3. Daniel Bell, "From Marx to Confucius: Changing Discourse on China's Political Future," Dissent, 2009.
4. "Internet Commentator"
5. Central Document # 9 (2013)
6. Minxin Pei, "Ideological Indoctrination under Xi Jinping," China Leadership Monitor, #59 (2019)
7. Maria Repnikova and Kecheng Fang, "Authoritarian Participatory Persuasion 2.0: Netizens as Thought Work Collaborators in China," Journal of Contemporary China, 2018.

July 25

### **Elite Conflict and Institutionalization**

1. Susan Shirk, (The Political Logic of Economic Reform (1993), Chapter 4 ("Leadership Incentives."))
2. David Shambaugh, "The Dynamics of Elite Politics During the Jiang Era," China Journal, January, 2001.
3. Richard Daniel Ewing, "Hu Jintao: The Making of a Chinese General Secretary," China Quarterly, March 2002
4. Evan Osnos, "Born Red," The New Yorker, April 6, 2015
5. Cheng Li, "Leadership Politics in the Xi Jinping Era"
6. Susan Shirk, "Return to Personalistic Leadership," Journal of Democracy, 2016.
7. Nimrod Baranovitch, "A Strong Leader for a Time of Crisis: Strongman Politics as a Collective Response to Regime Weakness," Journal of Contemporary China, (2021)
8. Roger Garside Coup: Great Leap to Freedom, University of California Press, 2021

9. Richard McGregor, "Interview re: "Xi Jinping: The Backlash" (Lowy, 2020)

July 30

### **Managing Protest**

1. Murray Scot Tanner, "Cracks in the Wall: China's Eroding Coercive State," Current History, September, 2001.(PDF)
2. Jianying Zha, "Enemy of the State," The New Yorker, April 23, 2007.
3. Teresa Wright, "The Chinese Democratic Party and the Politics of Protest in the 1980s-1990s," China Quarterly, No. 172 (December, 2002).
4. James Tong, "Anatomy of Regime Repression in China," Asian Survey, November-December, 2002.
5. Zhen Jianghua, "The Perilous Life of a Young Activist in China."
6. Xu Zhiyong, "Dear Chairman Xi, It's Time for You to Go," (2021)
7. Peter Lorentzen, "Designing Contentious Politics in Post-1989 China,," Modern China, 2017
8. Chen Xi, Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism, Introduction
9. Sheena Greitens, "Domestic Security under Xi Jinping," China Leadership Monitor, (2019)
10. Suzanne Scoggins, "Rethinking Authoritarian Resilience and the Coercive Apparatus," Comparative Politics, January, 2021.

August 1

### **The China Model: Governance Innovation**

1. Daniel Bell, "Chinese Democracy Isn't Inevitable," The Atlantic, May 29, 2015.
2. Lance Gore, "The Communist Party-Dominated Governance Model of China: Legitimacy, Accountability and Meritocracy," Polity, 2018.
3. Rory Truex, "Consultative Authoritarianism and Its Limits," Comparative Political Studies, 2017.
4. Diana Fu and Greg Distlerhorst, "Grassroots Participation and Repression under Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping," China Journal, (2018).
5. Baogang He and Mark Warren, "Authoritarian Deliberation,"

**The ‘Puzzle’ of Popular Support**

1. Andy Nathan, “Culture, Complicity and Identity: Why Public Support for the CCP Remains High After 2020,” Center for Advanced China Research, January, 2021.
2. Cunningham, Saich and Turiel, “Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time,” Harvard Ash Centre Working Paper, (July, 2020)
3. Jean-Pierre Cabestan, “The State and Digital Society in China: Big Brother Xi is Watching You,” Issues and Studies, (March, 2020)
4. Wenfang Tang, “The ‘Surprise’ of Authoritarian Resilience in China,” American Affairs Journal, 2017.

August 8

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