SOSC 4600  Understanding Chinese Politics  
(Syllabus, 2024 Spring)

Lecturer: Yongshun Cai  
Office Hours: Tues. 3:00 -5:00 pm  
(or by appointment)

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Course Description:
This course discusses selected topics concerning contemporary Chinese topics after 1949. It covers major events and developments over the past seventy years, including the creation and dismantling of the commune system, fiscal reform, industrial restructuring, and the rise of new social media. The course aims to introduce to students not only political development in China but also theoretical approaches to analyzing the issues that have influenced social, political, and economic development in China since the Communist Party came to power.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
1) To be familiar with economic and political developments in China after 1949; 2) to understand the causes of major political and economic developments in China; and 3) to understand the dynamics of political development and changes in China and their implications for China’s future development.

Requirements:
1. Class participation and question submission: 20%
All the readings are available on the course Website. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and submit a question on each of the required readings. The comments or questions should be sent to my TA Aidong Li at aliaz@connect.ust.hk before 10:00 am, each Friday.

2. Two open-book in-class assessments (40%): essay questions  
a. Mid-term assessment (20%)  
b. Final assessment (20%)

3. Term paper (research paper)/group project: (40%)  
Each student will need to write a research paper on an issue related to what has been discussed in this course. A joint paper by two students is encouraged, and the two students should agree upon their respective responsibility before they start to work on the paper.

Seminars
Readings with * are optional
1. Introduction

2. Understanding Rural China: Collectivization and De-collectivization
Jean Oi, State and Peasant in Contemporary China (Berkely: University of California Press, 1989), chapter 2, pp. 13-42.

3. The 1994 Fiscal Reform and its Impact

4. Rural Development and the abolition of Agricultural Tax

5. Institutions and Economic Growth


6. Industrial Restructuring in China

7. **Mid-term Exam**  
Open-book, essay questions (week 1-6).

8. **State-business Relations in China**  


9. **Anti-corruption in China**  


10. **Dispute resolution in China**  


11. **New Social Media in China**  


12. Political development of China


13. Final Exam
Open-book, essay questions (week 8-13).