

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

William Joseph, "Studying Chinese Politics," in William Joseph (ed.), *Politics in China: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 1-37.

2. Understanding Rural China: Collectivization and De-collectivization

Jean Oi, *State and Peasant in Contemporary China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), chapter 2, pp. 13-42.

*David Zweig, "Opposition to Change in Rural China: The System of Responsibility and People's Communes," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No. 7 (1983), pp. 879-900.

3. The 1994 Fiscal Reform and its Impact

Toshiki Kanamori, "Fiscal Reform in the People's Republic of China", Asian Development Bank, March 2004.

* Eun Kyong Choi, "The Politics of Central Tax Collection in China since 1994: local collusion and political control," *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 25, no. 97 (2016), pp. 146–159.

4. Rural Development and the abolition of Agricultural Tax

Jingping Liu, "The abolition of agricultural taxes and the transformation of clientelism in the countryside of post-Mao China," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2021, pp. 1-19; DOI: 10.1080 /03066150.2021.1873290

*John James Kennedy, "From the Tax-for-Fee Reform to the Abolition of Agricultural Taxes: The Impact on Township Governments in North-West China," *China Quarterly*, No. 189 (2007), pp. 43-59.

5. Institutions and Economic Growth

a. Linda Y. Yueh, "The Rise of China," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* , 2007, Vol. 18 (2007), pp. 35-43.

b. V. Moiseev, et. al., "Main Factors of Economic Growth of China," pp. 1-5. 2019 3rd International Conference on Education, Management Science and Economics (ICEMSE 2019).

*Li, Hongbin, and Li-An Zhou. 2005. "Political Turnover and Economic Performance: The Incentive Role of Personnel Control in China." *Journal of Public Economics* 89(9–10): 1743–62.

6. Industrial Restructuring in China

Yongshun Cai, *Staget and Laid-Off Workers in Reform China* (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 2, pp. 13-31.

* William Hurst and Kevin J. O'Brien, "China's Contentious Pensioners," *The China Quarterly*, vol. 170 (2002), pp. 345 – 360.

7. Mid-term Exam

Open-book, essay questions (week 1-6).

8. State-business Relations in China

Changdong Zhang, "A Fiscal Sociological Theory of Authoritarian Resilience," *Sociological Theory*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2017), pp. 39-63.

*Dickson, Bruce, "Integrating Wealth and Power in China: The Communist Party's Embrace of the Private Sector." *China Quarterly*, no. 192 (2007): 827–54.

9. Anti-corruption in China

a. Andrew Wedeman, "Growth and Corruption in China," *China Currents*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2012), pp. 1-10.

b. Stanislav Markus, "Oligarchs and Corruption in Putin's Russia: Of Sandcastles and Geopolitical Volunteering," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2017), pp. 26-32.

10. Dispute resolution in China

Yongshun Cai, "Power Structure and Regime Resilience: Contentious Politics in China," *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 38, no. 3 (2008), pp. 411-432.

*Kevin O'Brien, "Rightful resistance in China," *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 1 (1996), pp. 31-55.

11. New Social Media in China

Zhou, Xueguang. 2020. "Social Media and Governance in China." In *Fateful Decisions: Choices That Will Shape China's Future*, eds. Thomas Fingar and Jean C. Oi. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 128–48.

*Yongshun Cai and Titi Zhou, "Online Political Participation in China: Local Government and Differentiated Response," *China Quarterly*, no. 238 (2019), pp. 331-352.

*Xiaokun Wu, "Online public opinion in China: Topics and dynamics of contention," in Lisheng Dong, Kaspeter Kriesi, and Daniel Kubler (eds.), *Urban Mobilizations and new Media in Contemporary China* (UK: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 33-47.

12. Political development of China

Andrew Walder, “China’s National Trajectory.” In *Fateful Decisions: Choices That Will Shape China’s Future*, eds. Thomas Fingar and Jean C. Oi (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020), 335–57.

*An Chen, “Capitalist Development, entrepreneurial class, and democratization in China,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 117, no. 3 (2002), pp. 401-422.

*Wang, Changjiang. 2014. “Transition from a Revolutionary Party to a Governing Party.” In *China’s Political Development: Chinese and American Perspectives*, eds. Kenneth G. Lieberthal, Cheng Li, and Keping Yu. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 73–92. (*Comment by Larry Diamond*, 93-102).

13. Final Exam

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