SOSC 1840  Government, Law and Society in China  
(Fall 2023)

Time:  3:00 – 4:20 pm  
Tues. and Thur.  
Tel:  2358-7823  
Venue:  4619  
Instructor: Yongshun Cai  
Office:  2375  
Email: socai@ust.hk  
Office Hour:  3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Tue.  

TA: 
HUANG, Xinzhuo: xhuangcb@connect.ust.hk  
WU, Jinfeng: jwudb@connect.ust.hk

Course description
This course introduces to students the basic knowledge about the operation of the Chinese legal system or legal institutions. It examines how laws are used in the social, economic, and political activities of the Chinese people. The course focuses not on the Chinese laws per se but on how laws are used in people’s daily lives. Examples or cases will be used extensively in the course to illustrate the topics included. Major topics discussed in the course include the interactions between legal institutions and the party-state (i.e., the party and the government), the behavior of legal workers (e.g., judges, police officers), citizens’ use of civil lawsuits and administrative litigation, and some important mechanisms through which citizens or other social actors seek justice in China.

Learning outcomes
After taking this introductory course, students are expected to: (1) know about Chinese legal institutions and their functions; (2): be familiar with the ways legal disputes are resolved in China; (3) understand the mechanisms that can be exploited by citizens or other social actors to seek justice in Chinese society; and (4) be able to analyze basic legal issues in China.

Course requirements:
Students are expected to attend the lectures and complete the assigned readings. Students will be assessed in light of the following criteria:

1. Three pop-up quizzes (6 points each)
   a. The quiz covers what has been discussed in the previous lecture.
   b. Make-up quiz is possible but conditional.
      Asking for a leave in advance is needed in order to take the make-up.
      If you need to take a leave, you need to email Xinzhou at xhuangcb@connect.ust.hk

2. Mid-term exam (41 points; covering Week 1-6)
3. Final exam (41 points; covering Week 7-12)

Lecture notes and reading materials are available at the course (https://canvas.ust.hk/courses).
Lectures

**Week 1  Introduction: law and society in China**

**Week 2  Introduction to legal institutions in China**


**Week 3  Legal workers in China**

   “Judging judges: To help build “the rule of law”, China is demoting judges,” *The Economists* Sep 26, 2015.

**Week 4  Citizens’ use of law in China (I)**

**Week 5  Citizens’ use of law in China (II)**


**Week 6  Suing the government in China**


**Week 7  Law enforcement in China**
Suggested reading:

Xin He, “Debt-Collection in the Less Developed Regions of China: An Empirical Study from a Basic-Level Court in Shaanxi Province,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 206,

**Redress Mechanisms**

**Week 8. Appeals and justice in China**


*(Mid-Term Exam: it covers Lecture 1 to Lecture 6, second class of week 8)*

**Week 9 Petitions and justice in China**


**Week 10 Media and justice in China**


**Week 11 The People’s Congress**


**Week 12 Lawyers in China**


**Week 13 Final Exam**