PoSc 256: Chinese Politics

Course Description: In this course students will gain 1) an introduction to problems in contemporary Chinese politics and recent literature on Chinese politics via weekly readings and class discussion; and 2) improved research and writing skills via writing and revising a significant research project. Weekly topics have been selected to highlight a diverse range of issues that will introduce students to questions about how China got to be the way it is, the problems China currently faces, and how we may best study China.

Course Requirements:
1. Research Paper. (45%) Each student will write an original research paper that makes a meaningful contribution to the on-going discussion of Chinese politics. Students will consult with the instructor regarding their topic, submit a formal proposal at mid-term, and consult regularly with the class regarding their progress. A first draft of the paper will be available for distribution to the class a few days before December 5 and presented to the class on December 5. Final drafts will be due on the day of the final exam.
2. Critical Reviews (35%) Students will write critical review of each of eight weeks’ reading. Reviews will not exceed three pages and will be due at the start of class each week. Reviews should report the main points of the readings and draw important, creative, interesting, and insightful conclusions about the literature and China.
3. Paper reviews. (5%) Students will write a paragraph or so reviewing each of the papers submitted prior to December 4. These will be presented in class on Dec. 4 and given to both the instructor and the authors of each paper. May be graded pass-fail.
4. Class participation. (15%) Students are expected to have carefully read each week’s reading prior to class, to attend each class, and to make a creative contribution to class discussion.

Miscellaneous Notes:
- All take-home written work will conform to normal academic style, e.g., typed, 10-12 point fonts, standard margins, double-spaced, consistent system of footnotes, bibliography, etc.
- Plagiarism will be severely punished as per university policy.
- Late assignments may be penalized, except for critical reviews which are normally not accepted after the relevant readings have been discussed in class. Advance warning and/or truly tragic or unavoidable circumstances may improve the prospects for mercy.
- Readings marked with an asterisk are recommended. All others are required.

Tentative Schedule

I. Introduction (August 28)

II. History & Culture: Can Confucian tradition sustain human rights? (September 4)


III. Great Leap and Cultural Revolution (September 11)


IV. Reform through June 4 (September 18)

V. China’s Economy (September 25)
*World Bank Office, Beijing, “Quarterly Update” (June 2008) [www.worldbank.org.cn]

VI. Nationalism (October 2)
Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese*
Wang Xiaodong, “Chinese Nationalism Under the Shadow of Globalization” (A
speech delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science 7
Lin Yi, “Ethnicization through Schooling: The Mainstream Discursive Repertoires of
*Ben Xu, “Official and Nonofficial Nationalism in China” Issues and Studies 43:2
(June 2007) 93-128.
*Xu Wu, Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics, and Implications

VII. Farmers (October 9)
119-26.
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 189 (March 2007) 43-59.
Consequences in the Chinese Rural Tax Reform” China Journal 57 (January
2006) 89-106.
(July, 2002) 139-54.
Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, “Accommodating ‘Democracy’ in a One-Party
State: Introducing Village Elections in China” China Quarterly 162 (June, 2000)
465-89.
Tianjin Shi, “Village Committee Elections in China: Institutionalist Tactics for
Democracy” World Politics 51:3 (April 1999) 385-412.
Yang Zhong and Jie Chen, “To Vote Or Not To Vote: An Analysis of Peasants’
Participation in Chinese Village Elections” Comparative Political Studies 35 6
*Kam Wing Chan and Li Zhang, “The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in
Philip P. Pan, Out of Mao’s Chaos: The Struggle for the Soul of the New China (New

VIII. Mid-Term Holiday on October 16 & 17
IX. Media: The Internet (October 23)
Geremie R. Barmé and Sang Ye, “The Great Firewall of China” Wired 5:6 (June,
1997) [http://www.wired.com/wired/5.06/china.html].
*Nina Hachigian, “The Internet and One-Party East Asian States” Washington
Quarterly 25:3 (Summer, 2002) 41-58.
*Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas, Open Networks Closed Regimes: The Impact of
the Internet on Authoritarian Rule (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for
*Yongming Zhou, Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet and Political
Anne-Marie Brady, Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in
Contemporary China (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008) 125-.150,
175-202.
Xu Wu, Chinese Cyber Nationalism, ibid. 17-34, 45-87.

X. Environment (October 30)

XI. Tibet (November 6)
*Tubten Khétsun, Memories of Life in Lhasa under Chinese Rule (New York:

XII. Corruption, Violence and Protest (November 13)
Philip P. Pan, Out of Mao’s Chaos, ibid. 199-234.
Merle Goldman, Political Rights in Post-Mao China (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2007).

XIII. The Future of Chinese Politics (November 20)
Susan Ogden, Inklings of Democracy in China (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002). 353-79.

IV. Thanksgiving Holiday on November 26 & 27

XV. Paper Presentations (December 4)