PoSc 6521: Chinese Politics

Course Description: China’s rapid growth reshapes our world and challenges existing theories. In this course students will gain 1) an introduction to problems in contemporary Chinese politics and to recent literature on Chinese politics via extensive reading and discussion; 2) increased skill in comparative politics analysis and critical thinking in general via weekly review essays and class discussion; and 3) 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. (40%) 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 completed draft of the paper will be available for distribution to the class a few days before December 6 and presented to the class on December 6. Final drafts will be due on the day of the final exam.
2. Critical Reviews (40%) Students will write critical reviews on each of ten weeks’ required readings. Reviews will not exceed three pages and will be due at the start of the class where the readings will be discussed. 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 their peers’ papers. These will be presented in class on Dec. 6 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 required readings prior to class, to attend each class, to have one or more critical questions ready at the start of class and to make a creative contribution to class discussion.

Miscellaneous Notes:
- All 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.
- Academic dishonesty 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
   30 August
   Labor Day
   6 September

II. Human Rights & Chinese Culture
   13 September
   Lucien W. Pye, “The State and the Individual: An Overview Interpretation” in *The Individual and the


*Wm. Theodore De Bary and Tu Weiming (eds.), Confucianism and Human Rights ibid.


III. Great Leap and Cultural Revolution 20 September


IV. Economics 27 September


*Martin King Whyte (ed.),* *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Inequality in Contemporary China* ibid.

VII. Intellectuals and Social Thought

18 October

VIII. Internet

25 October
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]

IX. Environment

1 November


X. Tibet 8 November


XI. Religion 15 November


*Ji Zhe, “Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism


XII. Contentious Politics


XIII. Political Change


Minxin Pei, China’s Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 17-44.


Stefan Halper, The Beijing Consensus: How China’s Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the Twenty-

XIV. Paper Presentations

6 December