

Society and politics in Contemporary China

Winter Semester 2019/2020 3 ECTS

Lecturer:

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Course description

This course provides a concise introduction to the political, economic, and social factors that determine present-day China's government and gives a basic overview of the major political, economic, and social issues relevant to the study of contemporary China. The main purpose of this course is to provide students with a broad, yet subtle understanding of the preconditions, prospects, and risks associated with China's political and social development.

This course introduces various social science disciplines as well as the major theories on how politics, economic development, and social processes work in China. After nearly four decades of rapid economic growth, China is now a major power whose actions can significantly affect other countries. The course covers core issues in contemporary China studies, such as the relation between the Chinese Communist Party and the state, the rapid changes that the economy has undergone, the crucial challenges that people today face as they go about their everyday lives. The central questions throughout the module will be how China has changed over the past decades, how political, economic, and social issues are related to one another, and how we might make sense of recent developments in the PRC under Xi Jinping's rule.

The course is structured thematically rather than historically:

Part 1 discusses, in short, the historical process of the building of a new China's political and socio-economic system, which is very important for further understanding of present-day party-state architecture.

Part 2 examines policy-making and policy implementation and includes analyses of elite politics, central-local relations, government reform, and bureaucratic behavior.

Part 3 explores the political economy, including issues such as an economic system of China, Government involvement in the Chinese economy, economic globalization and government policy, public finance, budget, and public debt, price system and expenditure priority, etc.

Part 4 brings together the legal system of PRC, the role of the military in the political process

Part 5 focuses on the system of education, the cadre system, and public administration as well as demography, health and social problems such as unemployment, the rural-urban income gap, the inadequate provision of social welfare, the exploitation of migrant workers, and new public-health challenges.

Part 6 discusses arts, media, social media and social control, national and religious policy, political consequences of social change in China

Course objectives

Students in this course will acquire the following:

- An understanding of basic political and socio-economic concepts of Modern China, and the ability to critically assess those concepts in light of the Chinese and International context.
- An understanding of the broad issues and changes that shape the societies and characterize the political and economic systems of the Contemporary China.
- A knowledge of the mechanisms used to steer China's development, the system of economic development
- an understanding of the China's political decision making, the structure of most important central and local party and administrative political institutions and bodies;
- A knowledge of main Chinese modern political doctrines and ideas;
- An understanding of the main issues and problems run China's social policy, mass media, demography, urban and rural policy, social unrests

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, although some prior knowledge of the history of China and Asia as well of political institutions will be helpful. No knowledge of the Chinese language is required.

Class Attendance & Discussion

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend class as well as participate in lectures, discussions, and review sessions. Class participation will constitute 20% of the final grade. Each student is allowed a maximum of two (2) and no more than two (2) unexcused absences during the semester. For each unexcused absence thereafter, five (5) points (%) are deducted from your final grade. You are responsible for keeping the professor informed of any situation that prevents you from attending class. Students who have more than 5 unexcused absences will not pass the course

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is taken very seriously in this course. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Evaluation

A:	91 -100%
B:	81 - 90%
C:	71 - 80%
D:	61 - 70%
E:	51 - 60%
F:	0 - 50%

Assessment method

In order to pass this course, the following will be required of the participants:

- Class participation - 20% of final mark
- Essay paper - 30% of final mark.
- Discussion (see Topic 12) — 30% of final mark
- Written examination with open factual questions and a brief essay question (20% of final mark).

Regular, punctual attendance, thorough preparation of reading material, and continuous participation in plenary debates are also expected.

In the case of successful pass of discussion and essay papers test a student can be exempted from the final exam.

Exam review

How and when an exam review will take place will be disclosed together with the publication of the exam results at the latest. If a student requests a review within 30 days after publication of the exam results, an exam review will have to be organized.

Reading list

Students should be prepared to do a fair amount of reading and to confront a number of unfamiliar-looking names and places. If you find yourself confused, or not understanding what we are covering, please do not hesitate to inform me.

Some materials for the course you can find here: www.asian-studies.com

There is no one mandatory textbook for this course. The changing in the contemporary China's politics and society happens so fast that students beside main textbooks should read actual publications in academic journals and newspapers (could be recommended during classes).

Two most important readings are:

- Dreyer, June (2019). *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition*. 2019. ISBN 978-1138501522

At the end of each chapter you can find a good list of suggestions for further reading

- Heilmann, Sebastian. *China's Political System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016. ISBN 1442277351

Students interested in getting a head-start may find the following introductory books useful (in alphabetical order):

- Joseph, William A. (ed.). *Politics in China: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014
- Naughton, Barry J. *The Chinese Economy: Adaptation and Growth* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018.
- Abrami, Regina, William Kirby, and F. Warren McFarlan. *Can China Lead*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2014.
- Cavolo, Mario. *China, the Big Lie*. Long River Press, 2014.

- Gescher, Jeanne-Marie. *Becoming China*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.
- Kynge, James. *China Shakes the World*. Hachette UK, 2010.
- Lewin, Arie Y., Martin Kenney, and Johann Peter Murmann. *China's Innovation Challenge*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Pettis, Michael. *Avoiding the Fall*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.
- Pieke, Frank. *Knowing China: A Twenty-First Century Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Classes schedule

Part	Topics
Part 1	1. China's traditional political culture. 2. Nationalism and Revolution in China 3. Rebuilding China's political power
Part 2	4. The Party-state system and political Institutions of Modern China
Part 3	5. Political Economy of Modern China
Part 4	6. The legal system of PRC 7. Military in political process
Part 5	8. The system of education, the cadre system and public administration 9. Governing China's Society: Demography, Health
Part 6	10. Arts, mass media, social media and social control 11. National and religious policy. Political consequences of social change
Dicussion	Policy process and administrative modernization

1. China's traditional political culture.

- 1.1. Introduction. Political culture and its Asian implementation
- 1.2. China's matrix for domestic politics and neighboring countries
- 1.3. The model of «Center» - «Periphery»

Reading

Dreyer, Chapter 1, pp. 24-46

2. Nationalism and Revolution in China

- 2.1. Chinese model for nationalism and warlordism
- 2.2. Chinese model for «communism»
- 2.3. Power Centralization and building and authoritarian rule
- 2.4. Maoism as a model of political culture in China
- 2.5. Rebuilding the system of power consolidation
- 2.6. Soviet model for China: inspiration and drawbacks
- 2.7. Mass campaigns and «purges» as a system of restructuring of society

Reading

Dreyer, Chapter 3, pp. 76-104

3. Rebuilding China's political power

- 3.1 China reinvent itself: new political models of Deng Xiaoping era
- 3.2. Political realignment and policy readjustment in 90-2000's
- 3.3. Types of reaction to political turmoil: Tiananmen demonstration, Tibet and Xinjiang's riots
- 3.4. Changing Central - Local relationship and the Fourth generation in Power

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 4, pp.104-135

4. The Party-state system and political Institutions of Modern China

- 4.1. How China is governed: The structure of Party and administrative bodies of Contemporary China
- 4.2. The era of Xi Jinping, government reform, and bureaucratic behavior
- 4.3. The Chinese communist Party: organization, hierarchy and principles of leadership
- 4.4. The Central government, the control over regions, local administration and central–local relations.
- 4.5. The «China dream» and the meaning of anti-corruption campaign
- 4.6. Center of power and elite politics
- 4.7. Formal and informal methods of exercising a power

Reading

Dreyer, Ch.6, pp. 135-148

Heilmann, Ch. 2.1-2.5, p.46-94, chapter 2.7, pp. 99-105, ch. 3, pp. 153-190

5. Political Economy of Modern China

- 5.1. The transition from Soviet model and Maoist economic policy to market economy
- 5.2. The Party governance over economics and the problems of market economy
- 5.3. Financial system of Modern China and the problem of Renminbi stability
- 5.4. Government involvement in the Chinese economy
- 5.5. Economic globalization and government policy
- 5.6. «Administrative market» and informal rules
- 5.7. Public finance, budget and public debt
- 5.8. Price system and expenditure priority
- 5.9. Decentralized economic policies and regional disparities

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 7, pp.148-177

Heilmann, Ch. 2.8, pp. 105-111 and Ch. 4, pp. 193-238

6. The legal system of PRC

- 6.1. The peoples' congress and the Political Consultative Conference
- 6.2. The model of «social harmony» and legal system
- 6.3. Modernization of the legal model in 90-2000's
- 6.4. The Trial process, mediation and petitions
- 6.5. The Penal System, public prosecutors, courts and judges
- 6.6. Regulations and law-making

Reading

Dreyer, Ch 8, pp. 177-201

Heilmann, Chapter 2.10 and 2.11, pp. 125-146

7. Military in political process

- 7.1. Changing the role of military in post-Mao era
- 7.2. Party control over military
- 7.3. Army as guarantor of domestic stability
- 7.4. The system of PLA organization
- 7.5. Defense policy and decision-making

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 9, pp. 202-226

Heilmann, Ch. 2.12, pp. 145-158

8. The system of education, the cadre system and public administration

- 8.1. The drive for egalitarianism and return to expertise in the post-Mao China
- 8.2. The system of secondary schools and Universities
- 8.3. The Search for academic excellence and education of the new generation of professionals.
- 8.4. Education as a part of «soft power» in China

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 10, pp. 226-250

Heilmann, Ch. 2.9, pp. 112-125

9. Governing China's Society: Demography, Health

- 9.1. Health and Healthcare system
- 9.2. Demographic issues in present-day China
- 9.3. «Social management»
- 9.4. Problems of labor forces, retired and system of pensions
- 9.5. Environmental issues, pollutions
- 9.6. Rural Society, Urbanization and assimilation
- 9.7. Gender policy in Modern China
- 9.8. Social organizations and Trade Unions

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 11, pp. 202-227

Heilmann, Ch. 5.1.-5.5, pp.242-274

10. Arts, Media, Social networks and Social Control

- 10.1. The Party control over information, arts and mass media
- 10.2. Artists, arts and Society in China
- 10.3. Modern china's art gaining popularity
- 10.4. Background culture in China
- 10.5. The commercialization of China's media.
- 10.6. Media firms and entrepreneurs
- 10.7. The media and public opinion
- 10.8. Internet, access to information and Social media

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 12, pp. 272-294

Heilmann, Ch. 5.6, pp. 274-280

11. National and Religious policy. Political consequences of social change

- 11.1. China's minorities and minority policy
- 11.2. China's religious groups
- 11.3. The model of «One country — two systems» and its implementation
- 11.4. Tibet and Xinjiang and problem of autonomy
- 11.5. Hong Kong and Macao as Special Administrative regions
- 11.6. The potential for social unrest
- 11.7. Social unrest in Hong Kong in 2010's

Reading

Dreyer, Ch. 13, pp. 294-327

Heilmann, ch. 2.6. pp, 94-99, ch. 5.7-5.9, pp, 281-297

12. Policy process and administrative modernization

This is a discussion (not a lecture), so students should be prepared to discuss all the below-mentioned questions:

- Policy making in China: who leads and who subdue?
- Media policy and Social security
- Party control over society and social reaction
- Food safety, rural transformation
- Disaster management
- Internet security
- Innovation policy
- Mega- projects in China. «One belt- One road»
- Industrial policy and investments

Reading

Heilmann, ch, 6, pp. 298-396

Question for discussion in essays:

- Foundations of Communist Party rule

- The main futures of policy making in China: processes and outcomes
- Distinctive features of the policy process
- Administrative modernization and economic deregulation
- The control over society in China
- Internal security and justice
- Public security and political stability in China
- State pensions for the rural population
- Macroeconomic control
- The Idea of «Chinese dream»: meaning and perception
- Managing the impact of the global financial crisis
- Public budgets
- The role of local government financing platforms
- Media policy: Controlling social media
- Infrastructure policy in Modern China
- Industrial policy and labor resources
- The problems of the stability of Chinese economics
- Party regulation of economic model in 2010's
- Innovation policy and struggle for technological leadership
- Environmental policy: Curtailing urban air pollution
- Food safety: Preventing health risks
- Disaster management: Contingency planning and rescue programs
- Urbanization policy: Experimental urban concepts
- Internet security: National IT independence and China's cyber policy
- Education policy: Popularization and improvements in vocational training
- The meaning of mega-projects (China's South-to-North Water Transfer Project, etc.)
- The Hong Kong unrests of 2014 and 2019
- "One country - two system policy" and its implementation
- Strengths, weaknesses, and special characteristics of Chinese policy making
- Perspectives on China's political development
- Problems of erosion of the party-state and restorative efforts
- The underlying fragility of the Chinese political order
- Scenarios for the future political development
- Authoritarianism, economic liberalism and power stability in China
- The impact of the initiative "One belt One Road" for domestic and international policy
- Is China a possible developmental model for other countries?