

MAPS/PLSC 31903: Chinese Politics
Winter 2024
University of Chicago

a. General Information

Instructor Information

Name: Jingyuan (Juan) Qian

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Office hours: by appointment ([book an appointment here](#))

Course Information

Lecture time: Wednesdays, 02:30-05:20 pm

Meeting location: 1155 60th St. 289B

Course description

This course takes an in-depth look into Chinese political institutions and behaviors through a comparative perspective. It is divided into four modules. **Module one** overviews the historical development of the Chinese state and explores how its imperial legacies have shaped political norms and practices in the modern era. **Module two** examines the roles and functions of the PRC's major political institutions, including the Party, the central and local bureaucracy, the people's congresses, and the judiciary. We hope to understand how those institutions engage with each other in policymaking and implementation, and when tensions will arise among different agencies. **Module three** looks into three major "paradigm shifts" in modern Chinese politics, namely Mao's socialist transformation in 1949, Deng's reform and opening-up in 1978, and Xi's power consolidation since 2012. We will discuss the political and economic challenges those reforms aim to address, and their effects and consequences. Lastly, **Module four** explores major governance challenges facing the Chinese regime, including corruption, censorship and propaganda, among many others.

Textbooks

Note: The instructor will upload relevant textbook chapters to Canvas. You do not need to purchase your own textbook.

1. Rudolph, Jennifer and Michael Szonyi (eds). 2018. *The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power*. Harvard University Press. (Thereafter "Rudolph")
2. Dreyer, June Teufel. 2019. *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition*. 10th edition. Routledge. (Thereafter "Dreyer")
3. Saich, Tony. 2015. *Governance and Politics of China*. 4th edition. Palgrave Macmillan. (Thereafter "Saich")

Grading Criteria

- **Map Exercise (10%).** This take-home practice aims to familiarize you with China's administrative units & subnational divisions. You will be provided with a blank map of China and be asked to fill out the names of major provinces, regions, and cities. **Due date: Jan 10, 2024.**
- **Two Exams (30% × 2).** There will be two non-cumulative midterms throughout the semester. Each exam will be a close-book, one-hour exam. You will be allowed to bring one *letter-page-size, double-sided* cheat sheet to the exam. A study guide with a list of important questions will be provided to help you prior to each exam.
- **Final Paper (30%).** You will be required to complete a final paper to discuss a particular aspect of contemporary Chinese politics. Requirements for the paper will be provided later in the quarter.

Grading Scale: We will use the University grading scale for this course.

A	94-100
A-	90-93.9
B+	87-89.9
B	80-86.9
B-	77-79.9
C or below	76.9 or below

Email Policy

- The easiest way to reach me outside of the classroom is by email. I will typically respond within 48 hours. If for some reason I have not, please send me a reminder after 48 hours.
- I do not discuss grades over the email. Please schedule an appointment if you have any questions of concerns about your grade.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability

- The University of Chicago believes that a culture of rigorous inquiry demands an environment where diverse perspectives, experiences, individuals, and ideas inform intellectual exchange and engagement. In line with this perspective, this course will explore challenging ideas, unfamiliar arguments, and ways of viewing the world that may differ markedly from our own. Our conversations, both in and out of the classroom, present an opportunity to interrogate our assumptions about the social sciences and each another. This will require an open mind, patience, and mutual respect.
- If at any point you are not treated with respect, or you have concerns about a conversation you have had or witnessed, please reach out to me directly. I also welcome your suggestions for how I might improve efforts to foster an inclusive learning environment in which everyone feels welcome and treated equitably.
- This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a documented need for accommodation should contact Student Disability Services (773-702-6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu) and Juan as soon as possible.

c. Course Schedule

Note: except for the first week, you are expected to read the materials *before* each lecture.

Module One: China's Historical Trajectory (1 Lecture)

Lecture 1: January 3

Historical Development of the Chinese State

Required Readings

- Rudolph. Chapter 7. pp. 58-64.
- Dreyer. Chapter 2-3. pp. 24-75.
- Hui, Victoria Tin-Bor. 2006. *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2. pp. 54-108.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7. pp. 236-283.

Optional Readings

Politics of Premodern China

- Zhao, Dingxin. 2015. *The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1. pp. 29-50.
- Wang, Yuhua. 2022. *The Rise and Fall of Imperial China: The Social Origins of State Development*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1-2. pp. 3-60.
- Peng, Peng. "Governing the Empire: Meritocracy and Patronage in Imperial China." Unpublished Working Paper.

Politics of Modern China up to 1949

- Moore, Barrington. 1974. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Penguin University Books. Chapter 4. pp. 162-227.
- Hsu, Immanuel C. Y. 1999. *The Rise of Modern China*. 6th edition. Oxford University Press. Chapters 21-24. pp. 493-618.

Module Two: Contemporary Chinese Political Institutions (4 Lectures)

Lecture 2: January 10 The PRC Political Institutions I: The Chinese Communist Party

Required Readings

- Rudolph, Chapter 1. pp. 11-17.
- Saich. Chapter 4. pp. 85-115.
- Wang, Zhengxu and Dragan Pavlicevic. “Party Chiefs, Formal and Informal Rules and Institutions,” in Zheng and Gore (eds). Chapter 4. pp. 81-98.
- Brødsgaard, Kjeld Erik. “Turning the CCP into an Elite Party,” In Zheng and Gore (eds.) Chapter 2. pp. 33-48.
- Zheng, Yongnian. 2017. “The Party Domination of the State,” in Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (eds.), *Critical Readings of the Communist Party of China*. Brill. pp. 249-278.

Optional Readings

Party Leadership

- Wu, Guoguang. 2015. *China’s Party Congress: Power, Legitimacy, and Institutional Manipulation*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 & 2. pp. 1-53.
- Miller, Alice. 2017. “The CCP Central Committee’s Leading Small Groups,” in *Critical Readings of the Communist Party of China*. Brill. pp. 279-303.

Party Members

- Koss, Daniel. 2018. *Where the Party Rules The Rank and File of China’s Communist State*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. pp. 3-33.
- Ji, Chengyuan and Junyan Jiang. 2020. “Enlightened One-Party Rule? Ideological Differences between Chinese Communist Party Members and the Mass Public.” *Political Research Quarterly*, 73(3). pp. 651–666.
- Tang, Wenfang. 2017. “Same Bed, Different Dreams: The Bifurcation of the Chinese Communist Party,” in Wei Shan and Lijun Yang (eds.) *The Rising Civil Society and State-Society Relations in China*. World Scientific. pp. 123–51.

Lecture 3: January 17
The PRC Political Institutions II:
Bureaucracy and Cadres

Required Readings

- Saich. Chapter 5-6. pp. 116-190.
- 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). pp.1743-1762
- Shih, Victor, Christopher Adolph, and Mingxing Liu. 2012. "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China." *American Political Science Review* 106(1). pp. 166–87.
- Edin, Maria. 2017. "Remaking the Communist Party-State: The Cadre Responsibility System at the Local Level in China," in Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (eds.), *Critical Readings of the Communist Party of China*. Brill. pp. 421–436.

Optional Readings

- Jiang, Junyan. 2018. "Making Bureaucracy Work: Patronage Networks, Performance Incentives, and Economic Development in China." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(4). pp. 982-999.
- Halpern, Nina P. 1992. "Information Flows and Policy Coordination in the Chinese Bureaucracy," in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (eds.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China*. University of California Press. pp. 125-150.
- Zhao, Suisheng. 1994. "China's Central-Local Relationship: A Historical Perspective," in Jia Hao, Lin Zhimin (eds.) *Changing Central-Local Relations in China*. Routledge. pp. 19-34.
- Birney, Mayling. 2012. "Decentralization and Veiled Corruption under China's 'Rule of Mandates.'" *World Development* vol. 53. pp. 55-67.

Lecture 4: January 24
The PRC Political Institutions III:
Lawmaking and the People's Congresses

Required Readings

- Truex, Rory. 2016. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 & 3. pp. 1-14 & 46-74.
- Lu, Xiaobo, Mingxing Liu, and Feiyue Li. 2018. "Policy Coalition Building in an Authoritarian Legislature: Evidence From China's National Assemblies (1983-2007)." *Comparative Political Studies* 53(9). pp. 1380–1416.
- Manion, Melanie. 2015. *Information for Autocrats: Representation in Chinese Local Congresses*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 & 2. pp. 25-77.
- Manion, Melanie. 2017. "'Good Types' in Authoritarian Elections: The Selectoral Connection in Chinese Local Congresses." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(3). pp. 362-394.

Optional Readings

- Manion, Melanie. 2014. "Authoritarian Parochialism: Local Congressional Representation in China." *The China Quarterly*, 218. pp. 311–338.
- (Optional) Truex, Rory. 2020. "Authoritarian Gridlock? Understanding Delay in the Chinese Legislative System." *Comparative Political Studies* 53(9). pp. 1455–1492.
- (Optional) Hou, Yue. 2019. *The Private Sector in Public Office: Selective Property Rights in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, 3, & 4. pp. 1-16 & 43-101.

Lecture 5: January 31

Midterm Exam: 2:30pm-3:30pm

Lecture: 3:30pm-5:20pm

The PRC Political Institutions IV:
The Legal System and the Judiciary

Required Readings

- Dreyer. Chapter 8. pp. 177-201.
- Wang, Jiangyu. “The Party in the Legislature and the Judiciary,” in Zheng and Gore (eds.) Chapter 9. pp. 181-198.
- Wang, Yuhua. 2015. *Tying the Autocrat’s Hands: The Rise of the Rule of Law in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1-3, pp. 1-80.

Optional Readings

- Li, Ling. 2017. “The Chinese Communist Party and People’s Courts: Judicial Dependence in China” in Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (eds.), *Critical Readings of the Communist Party of China*. Brill. pp. 1320–1368.
- (Optional) Ang, Yuen Yuen, and Nan Jia. 2014. “Perverse Complementarity: Political Connections and the Use of Courts Among Private Firms in China.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(2). pp. 318-332.
- (Optional) Wang, Yuhua. 2018. “Relative Capture: Quasi-Experimental Evidence From the Chinese Judiciary.” *Comparative Political Studies* 51(8). pp. 1021-1041.

Module Three: Evolution of Modern Chinese Politics Since 1949 (2 lectures)

Lecture 6: February 7

Mao's Socialist Project: Consequences and Legacies

Required Readings

- Dreyer. Chapter 4. pp. 76-103.
- Saich. Chapter 2 (subsections 2-4). pp. 32-44; Chapter 7 (subsection 1). pp. 191-197.
- Lin, Justin Yifu. 1990. "Collectivization and China's Agricultural Crisis in 1959-1961." *Journal of Political Economy* 98(6). pp. 1228-1252.
- Wang, Yuhua. 2021. "The Political Legacy of Violence During China's Cultural Revolution" *British Journal of Political Science* 51(2). pp. 463-87.

Optional Readings

The Great Leap Forward

- Meng, Xin, Nancy Qian, and Pierre Yared. 2015. "The Institutional Causes of Famine in China, 1959-61." *The Review of Economic Studies*, 82(4). pp. 1568-1611.
- Koss, Daniel. 2018. *Where the Party Rules: The Rank and File of China's Communist State*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7 & 8. pp. 243-308.

The Cultural Revolution

- Zhang, Qi, Dong Zhang, Mingxing Liu, and Victor Shih. 2021. "Elite Cleavage and the Rise of Capitalism under Authoritarianism: A Tale of Two Provinces in China" *The Journal of Politics* 83(3).
- Chen, Yi, Ziyang Fan, Xiaomin Gu, and Li-An Zhou. 2020. "Arrival of Young Talent: The Send-Down Movement and Rural Education in China." *American Economic Review* 110 (11). pp. 3393-3430.

Lecture 7: February 14
From Deng's Reform to Xi's Power Consolidation

Required Readings

- Saich. Chapter 2 (subsections 5-9). pp. 44-64.
- Dreyer. Chapter 5-6. pp. 104-147.
- Shih, Victor. 2022. *Coalition of the Weak: Elite Politics in China from Mao's Stratagem to the Rise of Xi*. Chapter 6-7. pp. 135-184.
- Nathan, Andrew. 2003. "China's Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience". *Journal of Democracy* 14(1). pp. 6-17.
- Shirk, Susan. 2018. "China in Xi's 'New Era': The Return to Personalistic Rule". *Journal of Democracy* 29(2). pp. 22-36.

Optional Readings

The Reform Era: Political Reform

- Pen, Hsiao. 1995. "Separating the Party from the Government," in Carol Lee Hamrin, Suisheng Zhao, and A. Doak Barnett (eds.), *Decision-Making in Deng's China*. Routledge.
- Fewsmith, Joseph. 2021. *Rethinking Chinese Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1-3. pp. 24-108.

The Reform Era: Economic Reform

- Lin, Justin Yifu. 1992. "Rural Reforms and Agricultural Growth in China." *American Economic Review*, 82(1): 34-51.
- Xu, Chenggang. 2011. "The Fundamental Institutions of China's Reforms and Development." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49(4): 1076-1151.
- Lau, Lawrence J., Yingyi Qian, and Gerard Roland. 2000. "Reform without Losers: An Interpretation of China's Dual-Track Approach to Transition." *Journal of Political Economy*, 108(1): 120-143.
- Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*. Cornell University Press. Intro & Chapter 1. pp. 1-72.
- Huang, Yasheng. 1996. "Central-Local Relations in China during the Reform Era: the Economic and Institutional Dimensions." *World Development* 24(4). pp. 655-672.

The Xi Jinping Era: Overview and Predictions

- Zhao, Suisheng. 2016. "Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival." *Journal of Democracy* 27(3). pp. 83-97.
- Fewsmith, Joseph, and Andrew J. Nathan. 2019. "Authoritarian Resilience Revisited: Joseph Fewsmith with Response from Andrew J. Nathan." *Journal of Contemporary China* 28(116). pp. 167-179.
- Pei, Minxin. 2020. "China's Coming Upheaval: Competition, the Coronavirus, and the Weakness of Xi Jinping." *Foreign Affairs* 99. pp. 82-95.

Module Four: Contemporary Political Challenges (2 lectures)

Lecture 8: February 21

Contemporary Governance Challenges I: Problems of Information: Propaganda and Censorship

Required Readings:

- Brady, Anne-Marie. 2009. *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 1. pp. 1-34.
- Huang, Haifeng. 2015. "Propaganda as Signaling." *Comparative Politics*, 47(4). pp. 419-444.
- Roberts, Margaret E. 2018. *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton Press. Chapter 2 & 3. pp. 21-112.
- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expressions." *American Political Science Review* 107(2). pp. 326-343.
- Chen, Yuyu, and David Y. Yang. 2019. "The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World?" *American Economic Review*, 109(6). pp. 2294-2332.

Optional Readings:

Propaganda

- Zhao, Suisheng. 2016. "The Ideological Campaign in Xi's China: Rebuilding Regime Legitimacy." *Asian Survey* 56(6) pp. 1168-1193.
- Fang, Kecheng, and Maria Repnikova. 2018. "Demystifying 'Little Pink': the Creation and Evolution of a Gendered Label for Nationalistic Activists in China." *New Media & Society* 20(6). pp. 2162-2185.
- Wang, Zheng. 2013. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. Columbia University Press. Intro-Chapter 2 & Chapter 5. pp. 1-70 & 95-118.

Censorship

- Gallagher, Mary, and Blake Miller. 2021. "Who Not What: The Logic of China's Information Control Strategy." *The China Quarterly* 248(1). pp. 1011-36.
- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2017. "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument." *American Political Science Review* 111(3). pp. 484-501.
- Huang, Haifeng, and Yao-Yuan Yeh. 2019. "Information from Abroad: Foreign Media, Selective Exposure and Political Support in China." *British Journal of Political Science* 49(2). pp. 611-636.

Lecture 9: February 28
Contemporary Governance Challenges II:
Problems of Political Control

Required Readings:

- Saich. Chapter 12 (subsection 2). pp. 354-363.
- Chen, Gang. "Politics of the Anti-Corruption Campaign," in Zheng and Gore (eds.) Chapter 7. pp. 137-158.
- Chen, Jidong, Jennifer Pan, and Yiqing Xu. 2015. "Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(2). pp. 383-400.
- Distelhorst, Greg, and Yue Hou. 2017. "Constituency Service under Nondemocratic Rule: Evidence from China." *Journal of Politics* 79(3). pp. 1024-1040.
- Lorentzen, Peter L. 2013. "Regularizing Rioting: Permitting Public Protest in an Authoritarian Regime," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8(2). pp 127-158.
- Fu, Diana. 2017. "Disguised Collective Action in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(4). pp. 499-527.

Optional Readings:

Corruption and Anti-Corruption

- Manion, Melanie. 2004. *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong*. Harvard University Press. Chapter 3-5. pp. 84-199.
- Chen, Ting, and James Kai-sing Kung. 2019. "Busting the 'Princelings': The Campaign Against Corruption in China's Primary Land Market." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 134(1). pp. 185-226.
- Lorentzen, Peter L., and Xi Lu. 2018. "Personal Ties, Meritocracy, and China's Anti-Corruption Campaign." SSRN Working Paper.

Peaceful Political Participation

- Brown, Junius. 2021. "Development and Citizenship in the Chinese 'Mayor's Mailbox' System" *Asian Survey* 61(3). pp. 443-472.
- Jiang, Junyan, Tianguang Meng, and Qing Zhang. 2019. "From Internet to Social Safety Net: The Policy Consequences of Online Participation in China." *Governance* 32(3). pp. 531-546.

Protests, Repression, and Contentious Politics

- Xu, Xu. 2021. "To Repress or To Co-opt? Authoritarian Control in the Age of Digital Surveillance." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2). pp. 309-325.
- Fu, Diana. 2017. *Mobilizing without the Masses: Control and Contention in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1-4. pp. 1-88.
- Wang, Yuhua and Carl Minzner. 2015. "The Rise of the Chinese Security State." *The China Quarterly* 222. pp. 339-59.

Final Exam Time: TBD