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CONTemporary CHinese Politics
Poli380 Fall 2019
(Last Updated on August 4th, 2018)

Lecture Time: Wednesday and Friday 1:05-2:25PM
Location: Arts Building W-215

Conferences: Please check Minerva for time and venues.

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to key issues in contemporary Chinese politics, including both domestic politics and foreign policies. It is organized along the following four sections:

1. A contemporary political history of China
   Why China became communists in the 20th century? How can we understand political changes in contemporary China (1949-present)?
   This section reviews the contemporary political history of China, including the nationalist revolution, communist revolution, Maoist China, Deng’s reform and recent political developments.

2. Domestic politics, authoritarianism and democratization
   Why authoritarianism persists in China? How can we explain the structure of state in China and the formation of domestic political institutions?
   This section introduces the domestic political institutions of China, including formal state institutions, elite politics, central-local relations. And it also engages with the debate about democratization in China.

3. Political sociology and political economy
   How strong and active are societal actors in the political life of China? What are the political economic explanations to the economic miracle in China? What are the negative sides of the Chinese economic models?
   This section discusses major issues in political sociology of China including state-society relations, gender, and minority issues. This section then turns to focus on the political economic model of China and introduces the success and problems in
China’s economic development

4. China and International Relations
   Are China and the U.S. heading to military conflicts? What does the rise of China mean to contemporary international relations?
   This section discusses issues related to China at the international level. We will discuss issues such as the peaceful rise of China, economic interdependence and the expansion of Chinese economy, and the Chinese understanding of contemporary international relations.

Learning Outcome
By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to:
- Understand and explain political outcomes in China.
- Identify stereotypes and misunderstandings related to politics in China.
- Show that they have good understanding of BOTH sides of arguments regarding to any controversial issues related to Chinese politics.
- Have an argument (not just an opinion or a position) in topics related to Chinese politics.
- Defend your argument, and use it to convince your audience.

Prerequisite
-An intro-level course in comparative politics, developing or developed areas (Poli 200-level).

Assignments
Conference attendance and participation: 10%
Preliminary outline of term paper: 10%
Term Paper: 30%
In-Class Quizzes: 5% map quiz
In-Class Exams: 45% (2 exams)

1) Class Attendance (10%)
   Attendance will be taken in conferences, starting from the end of the add/drop period, September 19, 2018. There may be times when you are unable to attend conferences, so, you may miss three conferences over the course of the semester without incurring any penalty. Each absence after these three “free tickets”, however, will result in 1% off in your attendance grade (which is 1% of the whole course).

2) Term Paper (40%)
The Preliminary Outline (10%)
Students are required to submit a two-page preliminary outline for their term paper by the fourth week of the class.
   - The deadline of this outline is October 7 (Sunday), 2018 at 23:59. 1% late penalty per calendar day will be imposed after the deadline.
   - No more than two pages. Double spaced, standard format. Cite external sources
properly (by any format).

- In this preliminary research, you need to:

1. Raise a research question that is related to contemporary Chinese politics.
   - This research question will be the research question of the term paper.
   - In the introduction paragraph, show your audience: why this research question is important? Why we need to care about it?
   - Ask “why” and “how” questions. Don't ask “what” question (i.e. don’t ask about certain facts of Chinese politics, but ask about the reasons and causes behind certain facts).
   - Ask interesting questions. Challenge existing common senses about Politics in China. Try to make your question as counterintuitive as you can.

2. Propose an answer (or an argument) to the question.
   - This argument should answer the research question.
   - Be creative and critical. Don’t repeat the argument that has been done by someone else. Don’t be afraid to challenge existing knowledge about China.
   - For this assignment, you don’t need to prove this argument. Instead, show that this argument is defendable and empirically testable. Then in the final term paper, use empirical evidence and proper methods to prove this argument.

3. Give a brief plan of how you will prove the argument.
   - Show what kinds of data/case/analysis you will need to prove this argument, and how will you find these data/case/analysis.
   - Show at least one counterargument (ideally, the most challenging one to yours), showing that you know the other side of your argument. You don’t need to reject the counterargument now, but be ready to reject it in your final term paper.

This assignment will be marked and returned to you with some comments. Please use this preliminary outline and the comments to develop a final term paper.

**The Term Paper (30%)**

Use the preliminary outline to develop a term paper about Chinese politics.
- The deadline is November 25 (Sunday) at 23:59. The late penalty is 1% per calendar day.
- No more than 8 pages. Double-spaced, standard format. Properly cite any academic resources. Need external research. Don’t just use required readings from the class.
- Use empirical evidence to support your argument.
- Engage with at least one counterargument (or alternative argument). Debate with it and refuse it with empirical evidence.
- Try to offer some policy suggestions, or offer some policy implications at the end.
- External researches are required. Besides course materials, at least three external academic sources need to be used and properly cited in your paper. Wikipedia is not considered as an academic source.

3) **In-Class Quizzes (5%)**
- Map Quiz (5 points). There will be an in-class map quiz on September 21st (including Chinese provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions, special administrative regions, and China’s neighboring countries).

4) In-class Exams (45 points)
- In class. Please see the course schedule for the date and time.
- IDs and one essay question. Choose one topic out of two options.
- Exam questions can be based on any course materials (the textbook, lectures, required readings, conferences readings and discussions, films watched in class).
- The final exam is not accumulative—only the materials after the midterm will be covered.
- If you miss either exam: only if you are distracted by a serious emergency and cannot attend the exam (some formal proof, i.e. a formal doctor note, is needed), a make-up exam will be offered. The medical proof needs to be submitted to the instructor within one week after the exam date. The instructor will schedule a make-up exam after the required formal proof is received.

Language of Submission
In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Academic Integrity
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Miscellaneous Reminders
A. If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 before you do this.
B. McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill.

Required Texts
(Textbooks are available for purchase at the Parapgraphe bookstore, as well as from 12-hour reserve loan in the library.)
Marc Blecher, China Against the Tides: Restructuring through Revolution, Radicalism and Reform (New York: Continuum, 2010), 3\textsuperscript{rd} Ed.

Class Schedule and Readings
Week 1 class 1: Introduction
- Watch Documentary: *China: a Century of Revolution* Part 1. on Youtube

Week 1 class 2: The traditional form of political change in China (before 1921)
- Blecher, pp. 1-29.

Week 2 class 1: The communist revolution (1921-1976)
- Blecher, pp. 29-62.
- Watch the second part of the BBC documentary: China, A Century of Revolution(1949-1976), Youtube

Week 2 class 2: The economic reform and recent developments
- In class map quiz
- Blecher, pp. 63-91.
- Watch the third part of the BBC documentary: China, A century of Revolution (1976-1997), Youtube.

Week 3 class 1: The structure of the state
- Blecher, pp. 92-108

Week 3 class 2: Elite politics

Conference 1: Watch and discuss the movie “to live” on Youtube.

Week 4 class 1: Corruption

Week 4 class 2: Democratization

Conference 2:

Week 5 class 1: Authoritarian resilience
Week 5 class 2: State accountability

Conference 3: Watch and discuss the movie “Please vote for me” on Youtube.

Week 6 class 1: The political economy of the China model

Week 6 class 2: Environment, inequality, and rural-urban divide

Conference 4: Watch discuss the movie “Under the dome” on Youtube.

Week 7 class 1: The central-local relations in China

Week 7 class 2: In class midterm exam

No conference this week.

Week 8 class 1: Political culture and ideology

Week 8 class 2: State-society relations: State control over society
Conference 5: Reviews of midterm exams.

Week 9 class 1: State-society relations: civil Societies and NGOs

Week 9 class 2: Political Sociology

Conference 6:

Week 10 class 1: Gender and politics

Week 10 class 1: Minority and ethnic politics

Conferences 7:

Week 11 class 1: The Thucydides trap: Are power transition conflicts inevitable?

Week 11 class 1: Is China a revisionist state or a status quo state?

Conference 8. Debate: Are China and U.S. heading towards power transition wars?

Week 12 class 1: Economic engagement and peace

**Week 12 class 1: The trade war: Economic dispute or major power competition?**

**Conference 9.** Debate: Can economic interdependence prevent conflicts or actually causing problems?

**Week 13 class 1: China and International institutions**
- Xuetong Yan. From keeping a low profile to striving for achievement. Chinese Journal of International Politics. 2014

**Week 13 class 1: A Cultural approach: Chinese IR?**

**Conference 10: Review for the final exam.**

**Week 14 class 1: The future—China (and the world) at the crossroad**
- And read the ChinaFile commentary to Campbell and Ratner’s China Reckoning article: http://www.chinafile.com/conversation/american-policy-toward-china-due-reckoning.

**Week 14 class 1: In class FINAL EXAM**
No conference this week.