Politics of Contemporary China

POSC 264 – Fall 2018
(M & W 9:50-11:00am)
(F 9:40-10:40am) Willis 204

Instructor: Kent Freeze
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Office Hours: Mon. 2-4pm & Thurs. 2-4pm and by appointment.

Course Description

The last thirty years have brought dramatic economic, social and political changes to China. Within the space of a single generation, China has gone from an impoverished, agrarian country to a rapidly modernizing urban one. This course examines the reforms in China over the past thirty years, as well as the prominent issues and challenges faced by the country today. For the first part of the course, we will discuss economic reforms in China, and the challenges inherent in its rapid economic transition. We will then examine political behavior, institutional reforms, and the prospects for democratization since the 1980s.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Classroom discussion and participation will be a critical component of our classes. To facilitate insightful and interesting discussions, you are required to complete the assigned readings before each class and contribute to class discussions. Generally the reading load will be around 150 pages per week. In addition to the two required books, readings will be made available electronically on Moodle. I also encourage you to pay attention to current events related to China in the news, which we will discuss in class.
Grading

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Class Participation and Attendance 10%
- 2 Response Presentations (15% Each) 30%
- Background Knowledge Quiz 5%
- Research Project 55%
- Total 100%

Geography and Factual Knowledge Quiz - 5%

On the second Monday in the term, you will complete a short geography/factual knowledge quiz. This quiz is to help you learn various individuals/policies/locations that will be useful as background knowledge for the course.

Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation - 10%

Attendance and participation is required. You are expected to have completed the readings for the day, and to engage with your peers in various in-class activities.

Two Short Response Presentations - 30% (15% each)

In these short presentations, you will be asked to respond to the readings/documentaries in the syllabus in a 10 minute (max) presentation at the start of class. Your presentation will be graded on the extent to which you exhibit understanding of the arguments contained in the course readings/documentary, have a clear argument/thesis in your presentation, and an appropriate presentation style that effectively communicates your thesis. These presentations will be spread across the course of the term.

Research Project - 55%

Please refer to the handout for a full description of this assignment. You have two options for your research project: A group project paper examining political or economic challenges in China, OR an individual research paper on a topic of your choice. Presentations for these projects will be held on the last day of class in the term.

Course Policies

Grading Policies

I will assign grades using the following scale: A (93.33), A- (90), B+ (86.67), B (83.33), B- (80), C+ (76.67), C (73.33), C- (70), D+ (66.67), D (63.33) D- (60) F (Below 60). I do not...
round your final grade up or down (so if you receive a 93.327, you will receive an A- for a final grade).

Here are several important details regarding my policy on course grades

1. I will not receive grade complaints if more than two weeks have passed after the assignment has been returned. Before I review your grade you must first:
   - Wait 24 hours.
   - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
   - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not to vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”

   The second grade, whether higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.

2. Late assignments are not tolerated. Your grade will be lowered 5 points for each day it is late (the exception is for the reading questions/comments, which will not be accepted if late). That is if the assignment is due on Wednesday and you complete it on Thursday, the highest grade you can make is 95. If you complete it on Friday, the highest grade possible will be a 90. And so forth.

3. The ONLY acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time ONLY if you communicate with me BEFORE the assignment is due and you provide DOCUMENTATION of the circumstance.

Electronics in Class Policy

You are welcome to bring digital equipment (laptop, ebook reader, etc.) to class. However, I expect you to be responsible in your use of electronic equipment: please avoid visiting social networking sites, or otherwise browsing the internet on sites unrelated to the course. I would also recommend you read through the discussion (including comments), [Computers in the Classroom](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/) to think about the possible pros and cons of using computers in a classroom setting. Individuals who abuse this privilege will be asked to turn off their computer. Please turn off all cell phones during class.

Academic Honesty

You are expected to abide by fundamental standards of academic honesty. A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: [https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/). All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources!
Disability-Related Accomodations

It is the policy of Carleton College to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (during the 1st week of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at http://apps.carleton.edu/disabilityservices/.
Course Schedule

Readings should be completed prior to class. I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule. I will alert you to any changes made in class, via email, and I will post the updated syllabus on Moodle.

Part I: The Economic Model

Sept. 10: Introduction

- We will review the syllabus and answer any questions you may have.

Sept. 12: Reform in the 1980s


Sept. 14: Reform in the 1990s


Sept. 17: The Nature of Chinese Capitalism

- Geography and Factual Knowledge Quiz at the start of class!

Sept. 19: Explaining China’s Economic Growth


Part II: The Political Model

Sept. 21: Political Institutions


Sept. 24: The National People’s Congress

Sept. 26: Political Meritocracy


Sept. 28: A Confucian Alternative?


Part III: Holding it Together

Oct. 1: Village Elections


Oct. 3: Civic Culture in China


Oct. 5: Attitudes toward Economic Inequality


Oct. 8: Ethnic Relations and Policy


Oct. 10: Migration and Hukou Policy

Part IV: Documentaries + Tiananmen

Oct. 12: Wukan Protests - no class

- Six episode (25min each) Al-Jazeera Documentary on the Protests (Available electronically).

Oct. 17: The Petition System

- Watch the documentary “The Chinese Mayor”. (Available electronically through the library. Also on Amazon Prime if you happen to have it.).

Oct. 19: Tiananmen

- Watch the documentary “Gate of Heavenly Peace”. (Available electronically).

Oct. 22: People’s Republic of Amnesia


Oct. 24: People’s Republic of Amnesia


Part V: Xi Jinping’s China

Oct. 26: Xi Jinping


Oct. 29: China and the Internet


Oct. 31: The Chinese Economy under Xi Jinping


Nov. 2: The Environment

Nov. 5: Foreign Policy


Nov. 7: Anti-Corruption Campaign


Part VI: Looking Forward: Visions of China’s Future

Nov. 9: Attitudes Towards Political Reform


Nov. 12: Political Reform


Nov. 14: Closing Thoughts

- No reading – Presentations.