Political Science 314
Chinese Politics and Foreign Policy
Spring 2020
Tuesday, 4:00-6:40 p.m., Bolton B92

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Final exam: Friday, May 15, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to China’s politics in the modern period. We will focus on top leaders, political institutions, and policies under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule.

We begin by reviewing the historical background, from the late Qing Dynasty, through Nationalist Party rule, civil wars, and the Japanese invasion, to the CCP takeover in 1949. In the area of foreign relations, this period is often called China’s “century of humiliation.”

We then analyze the main stages in the history of CCP rule: the Mao Zedong period, 1949-1976; the Deng Xiaoping period, 1977-1994; and the rule of the so-called third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation leaders, Jiang Zemin, 1995-2002, Hu Jintao, 2002-2012, and Xi Jinping, 2012-present. How did political institutions and government policies evolve through these successive periods? We will concentrate on three main policy areas: economic development policies; society, culture, and civil liberties; and ethnic minority relations and foreign policies. This will include detailed coverage of watershed events, such as the CCP takeover of China’s state and society in the years after 1949; the Korean War of 1950-1953; the “Great Leap Forward” Famine of 1958-1962; the “Cultural Revolution” of 1966-1976; Deng Xiaoping’s market reforms, starting in 1979; and the Tiananmen Square Uprising of 1989.

There are a number of important factors that explain policy developments over time: the ideologies and preferences of China’s top leaders; CCP and state political institutions; the size and structural characteristics of China’s society and economy; the interests of important factions or interest groups, such as national or regional CCP leadership networks, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), large state enterprises, and more recently, public opinion as well as private or “quasi-private” businesses; and the international environment, including relations with great powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union, regional developments in East Asia, and trends in the international economy. Our goal is to assess the interaction and the relative importance of these factors in determining policy developments over time.

We will also discuss important current issues, such as China’s present and future economic performance; the prospects for democratization and improved human rights; conditions in restive regions such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong; and China’s rise to
superpower status, and its changing relations with the United States, Japan, India, Taiwan and other countries.

All along, we will be trying to assess how well general theories of comparative politics help to understand Chinese politics.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on class participation (8.4%), the best two of three quizzes (10.8% each), one short research paper (35%), and one final exam (35%). There will be no make-up quizzes, although one quiz may be dropped. No make-up exams can be given without a medical excuse. Class participation grades will be based on attendance and a scheduled, five-minute oral class presentation, and will benefit from day-to-day participation in class discussion.

To check your understanding of the material and your preparations for the exams, you should see me or the teaching assistant in office hours at least once before the research paper is due and once before the final.

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Students are responsible for completing and representing their work honestly, for citing sources appropriately, and for respecting others’ academic endeavors.

**Research Paper**

The research paper will analyze alternative explanations or causes for a watershed event during the Mao Zedong period (1949-1976). Students may choose to write on one of the following three events: China’s decision to intervene in the Korean War; the origin or onset of the Great Leap Forward; or the origin or onset of the Cultural Revolution. In each case, *why did Mao Zedong make the decision to initiate* the event—to enter the Korean War or to launch the Great Leap Forward or the Cultural Revolution?

Students will analyze and evaluate the following four types of explanations or causes: 1) leadership ideology (beliefs about the most important goals for China, and about the best or most appropriate means of achieving those goals); 2) the leader’s desire to maintain or increase personal political power or glory; 3) internal influences, pressures, or threats, whether emanating from within the CCP regime, from organized interest groups, or from public opinion; and 4) foreign influences, pressures, or threats. For each potential cause, how would it be expected to influence Mao Zedong’s decision? Reason logically. Don’t bend the theories to fit the facts. In formulating your theory of how each cause would be expected to influence Mao’s decision, reason in a purely hypothetical manner. If a given cause seems likely to explain Mao’s decision, explain why and how. If a given cause seems unlikely to explain Mao’s decision, explain why and how.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion, papers should have the following two main sections: a theory section, which explains the logic of each of the four causes, and discusses how each is expected to influence the watershed event; and an evidence section, in which each explanation or cause is evaluated by looking for historical evidence of whether it influenced the watershed event in the way predicted by the theory associated with each cause. The introduction should state which events you are explaining, briefly introduce the four potential causes, and give a roadmap of how the rest of the paper is organized. The conclusion should briefly summarize the findings about the impact of
each of the four causes; assess the relative importance of the four causes and how well they fit together to explain Mao’s decision; and, given any limitations or weaknesses of your research, suggest how your research might be improved. (In actually writing the paper, it is usually easiest to write the introduction last. The introduction is the framing or marketing of the paper, so it is difficult to know what to emphasize before the rest of the paper is finished.)

Reminder: You are explaining the origins or onset of one of the three watershed events. Don’t get bogged down in the details of what happened after the events began. These are reasonably well covered in the assigned readings and lecture notes. What happened as the events unfolded is only relevant insofar as it provides evidence about their origins.

For evidence, students may consult and cite the assigned course readings and lecture notes, as well as other sources. Academic journal articles can be found using the following search engines available on the UWM libraries website: Historical Abstracts; History Reference Center; or, usually most usefully, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts. (Look under “Databases A-Z” at http://guides.library.uwm.edu/az.php.) Search by specifying both the watershed event and names or phrases related to explanations or causes. Many books on the three events are also available in Golda Meir Library. You can search for both biographies of Mao Zedong and general histories of modern China (preferably those published within the last 20 years), and then read the section on the chosen watershed event. Limit searches to UWM holdings (“Books & Media (UWM”).

Papers should be five to seven pages long, including citations of sources. In total, students should cite at least five sources that are either published books or academic journal articles. (Any standard format of citation is acceptable.) Students must also summarize their research questions, theories, and evidence or findings using PowerPoint (five to eight slides total—two slides to cover the four causes and their associated theories, and the remainder on evidence and conclusions). A good approach is to write up the PowerPoint slides at the beginning, and then use them as an outline for the paper. After the paper is finished, the slides can be modified as necessary to fit more closely with the final form of the paper. Both the research paper and the summary PowerPoint slides are due at the beginning of class on March 3.

Readings
The following textbook is available from online booksellers and from UWM’s online bookstore <http://uwm.booksbyecampus.com/>:


Other, shorter readings listed below are available on the course D2L site. References are listed in full at the end of the syllabus.
Course Schedule
The following schedule is subject to modification. Try to finish each day’s reading before class.

Weeks 1-3 (1/21, 1/28, 2/4): Introduction. Background Information about Chinese History and Modern China. The Imperial System and the Late Qing Dynasty. The Republic: The Nationalist Party and Its Challengers.
Quiz: 2/4.
Reading: Joseph, chapters 1-2; Fukuyama.
Recommended fiction: Buck; Lu.
Recommended movie: “The Last Emperor.”

Research papers due: 3/3.
Suggested reading: Browse further in Chung and Halliday; Dikötter, chapter 28; Chang.
Recommended memoir: Cheng.
Recommended fiction: Link.
Recommended movie: “To Live.”

Note: No class on 3/17 due to spring break.
Reading: Joseph, chapter 4, and pp. 182-197, 214-234, 558-560; Beja; Zhao (1998); Li.
Suggested reading: Bo; Zheng and Chen; Dotson.
Recommended fiction: Qiu (2000); Qiu (2010).

Quiz: 3/24.
Suggested reading: Naughton.


Quiz: 4/14.
Suggested reading: Chan.

Final Exam: Friday, May 15, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

**Required and Suggested Readings Available on the Course D2L Site**


Recommended Literature Available in Golda Meir Library
Buck, Pearl S. (1958) The Good Earth. New York: Washington Square Press. (Published in many different editions, all fine.)