

Prof. Juan WANG (juan.wang2@mcgill.ca)

Office Hours: Tuesdays (10:00am-12:00pm). To ensure your slot, appointments via this link are encouraged: <http://www.supersaas.com/schedule/WJ-OFFICEHOUR/LEA524>

Teaching Assistant: Mr. Thibault Jacquemont.

POLI380: Domestic Politics in Contemporary China

Thursday/Jan 4-Tuesday/Apr 9, 2024
Thursday/Apr 11 runs a Monday schedule
March 4-8 Spring Break

Course Description

This course examines key political issues in contemporary China, with a focus on *domestic politics*. (POLI 359 focuses on Chinese foreign policy).

It is structured around three interrelated perspectives:

1. It decodes the “party-state” structure.
2. It unpacks the composition of the “state” and “society”, as well as their interactions.
3. It reviews how the party-state exercises control and persuasion, and how societal interests are organized, and resistance is expressed.
4. It examines policymaking shaped by ideology, elite politics, mass participation and resistance, vested interests, and bureaucratic incrementalism, and policy implementation as a reflection of agency problem, propaganda, censorship, and accommodation.

Learning Outcome

- identify the formal structure of the Party and government and the relationship between the party and the state;
- understand ways in which society is controlled and ways in which it can exert influences;
- gain a general understanding of the key theoretical and empirical perspectives surrounding the major political debates in contemporary China;
- engage in informed analysis of current events in contemporary China

Assignments

Conference Participation	10%
Quizzes: MyCourses	10%
Writing Assignments: Response Essay or News Analysis	40% (20% each)
Exam: Take Home during finals week	40%

1) Participation (10%)

You are expected to attend conferences and participate actively and constructively. Medical notes and personal emergencies (with proof) are necessary to be excused in conference participation.

2) Online Quizzes (10%)

After the add/drop period and *until April 11*, you will take quizzes on MyCourses, *at your own time*, related to facts of Chinese Politics. These quizzes are divided into the following groups: 1) Administrative Map 2) Party-State Structure 3) Chinese Society and Organizing Principles 4) Legal

Systems. Quizzes are composed of one-word answer, multiple-select questions, or True/False questions. These are timed quizzes. You are only allowed one attempt for each group. **No late submissions will be counted. No excuses will be accepted.**

3) Writing Assignments: Response Essay or News Analysis (20% *2):

Throughout the semester you will write two short essays (max. 750 words). Deadlines fall on Sundays at **midnight (Feb 25 and March 31)**. They can be in either of the two formats:

A. Response Essay: you will read one “recommended” reading and discuss how it forms a dialogue with required readings.

B. News Analysis: you will analyze a *domestic* news event (within one year) and discuss how what you have learned from this class helps you understand the news. *If you choose this option, you will need to discuss your topic with the TA or me ahead of time for approval.*

All assignments need to be submitted via MyCourses, under the appropriate assignment headings.

Essays must be turned in on word or pdf. Please follow these guidelines:

- Length: Maximum 750 words (title page and bibliographic references do not count towards word limit)
- Reference: Use the author-date in-text reference system and include a complete bibliography (any established bibliographical style but needs to be consistently used).
- Format: double spaced, font size 12 (times new roman), using regular margins.
- Structure: Must include an introductory paragraph: what your chosen focus is (which recommended reading or which news), how you are going to analyze it, and what your main argument will be. If you choose news analysis, an informative exercise would be to try to understand the following: “when” (why is this happening now and not another time?), “who” (why are these people and not others involved in this news story?), and “how” (how did the story unfold and why did it unfold this way?).

Late submissions are penalized by one letter-grade step per day (e.g., an A essay submitted one day late becomes an A- essay, etc.).

Recommended News Sources:

1. [South China Morning Post](#): 南华早报(Hong Kong), purchased by Alibaba in 2015.
2. [Hong Kong Free Press](#), non-profit news outlet.
3. All other major news outlet in English language: NYT, Washington Post, BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera.

4) Take Home Exam 40%

During finals week, there will be a 48-hour take home open-book final exam covering the lectures, ***readings***, and conferences. The exam is cumulative and covers materials from the whole semester. It includes three analytical questions. Each question will have a strict word limit for the answers you provide.

To access the final exam, you will be asked to sign the following Honor Pledge: “I affirm that I will not give or receive any unauthorized help on this exam, and that all work will be my own.”

The exam needs to be submitted via MyCourses, under the appropriate assignment. Exams need to be turned in on word or pdf. Please follow these guidelines:

- Length: each question has a maximum length in words, which will be made explicit in each question. Do not go over the word limit, as content that exceeds the word limit will not be graded.
- Format: double spaced, using regular margins.

- Question: ensure you make clear which question you are answering.
- Reference: make clear references (endnotes or footnotes) to the articles/books that you are citing.
- Title page: In addition to the exam itself, the exam should have a title page with your name and student ID.

Re-grading Policies

Students who wish to contest a grade for an assignment or exam must do so in writing (by email) providing the reasoning behind their challenge to the grade received within two weeks of the day on which the assignments are returned. The TA who graded the assignment will re-grade your assignment and may raise or lower the grade. If you are still unsatisfied after the re-assessment, you can re-submit the assignment to me (original copy with TA comments), along with your justification. I will then re-evaluate the paper, but also reserve the right to raise or lower the grade. Please also see this [PSSA document](#).

Course and University Policies

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 McGill’s guide to academic honesty for more information).

Special Needs: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Mental Health: Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; many resources (link embedded) are available on-campus, off-campus, and online.

Language: 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.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

Course-Evaluations: End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Copyrights: ©Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that copyright infringements can be subject to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 Jan 4 Introduction

The basics: Susan V. Lawrence & Mari Y. Lee, “China’s Political System in Charts” (*Congressional Research Service*, Nov. 24, 2021) (see MyCourses).

Recommend:

Watch Documentary: [China: a Century of Revolution](#) (reserve) (1911-1949 & 1949-1960). On [Youtube](#)

Week 2

Jan 9: Ideology, Mass Politics, and Power Struggle

-Thomas Bernstein. 2006. "[Mao Zedong and the Famine of 1959-1960: A Study in Wilfulness](#)," *The China Quarterly* (CQ), no. 86 (2006): 421-445.

-Lowell Dittmer. 1978 "[Bases of Power in Chinese Politics: A Theory and An Analysis of the Fall of the Gang of Four](#)." *World Politics*. Vol. 31, no. 1. pp. 26-55

Recommend:

Watch movie "[To Live](#)" (*Huo Zhe* 活着) (call no. 2863) ([Youtube version](#))

Jan 11 (New) Politics of Power Struggle

-Jiangnan Zhu and Dong Zhang. 2016. "[Weapons of the powerful: authoritarian Elite Competition and Politicized Anti-corruption in China](#)." *Comparative Political Studies*.

-Wang Zhengxu and Anastas Vangeli. 2016. "[The Rules and Norms of Leadership Succession in China: From Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping and Beyond](#)," *CJ*, No. 76: 24-40.

Recommend:

Andrew Nathan. 1973. "[A Factional Model for CCP Politics](#)." *CQ*, No. 53.

Week 3

Jan 16 The Building and Transition of The Bureaucracy

-Ezra Vogel. 1967. "[From Revolutionary to Semi-Bureaucrat: The 'Regularisation' of Cadres](#);" *CQ*. No. 29, pp. 36-60.

-Andrew G. Walder. 2016. "[Rebellion of the Cadres: The 1967 Implosion of the Chinese Party-State](#)," *CJ*. Volume 75, Issue, pp. 102 – 120.

Add/Drop deadline: Tue, Jan 16

Jan 18 A Variety of Local Governments

-Jean Oi, 1995. "[The Role of the Local State in China's Transitional Economy](#)," *CQ*, No. 144, pp.1132-1149.

-Ling Chen, 2014. "[Varieties of Glocal Capital and the Paradox of Local Upgrading in China](#)," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2014), pp. 223-52.

Recommend:

Juan Wang. 2005. "[Going beyond Township and Village Enterprises in Rural China](#)," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Issue 14, Vol. 42, pp. 171- 181. (a short-review essay)

Week 4 **Conferences start**

Jan 23 Agency Control

-Ling Li, 2020. "[The 'Organizational Weapon' of the Chinese Communist Party](#)," in Rogier Creemers and Susan Trevaskes eds, *Law and the Party in China* (Cambridge University Press)

-Juan Wang and Yu Mou, 2021. *CQ*. "[The Paradigm Shift in the Disciplining of Village Cadres in China, from Mao to Xi](#)" (Open Access)

Recommend:

Yongshun Cai, Lin Zhu. 2013. "Disciplining Local Officials in China: The Case of Conflict Management," *CJ*. Vol. 70. pp. 98 – 119.

Jan 25 The Process of Policy Making

-Kenneth Lieberthal, Michel Oksenberg. 1988. *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes* (Princeton University Press). Chapter 1. pp. 3-34. (e-copy of this chapter is available in MyCourse)

-Jiying Jiang, 2023. "[Leading Small Groups, Agency Coordination, and Policymaking in China](#)," CJ, Vol. 89.

Recommend:

Jane Duckett. 2018. "[International Influences on Policymaking in China: Network Authoritarianism from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao](#)" CQ

Friday/Jan 26 Online Quizzes Open.

Week 5 Turn to Society

Jan 30 Representative Bodies

-Kevin O'Brien. 1994. "[Agents and Remonstrators: Role Accumulation by Chinese People's Congress Deputies](#)," Vol. 138, CQ, pp. 359-80.

-Young Nam Cho, 2002. "[From 'Rubber Stamps' to 'Iron Stamps': The Emergence of Chinese Local People's Congresses as Supervisory Powerhouses](#)." Vol. 171, CQ, pp. 724-740.

Recommend:

-Zhang Changdong. 2017. "[Re-examining the Electoral Connection in Authoritarian China: The Local People's Congress and Its Private Entrepreneur Deputies](#)," *China Review*. Vol. 17, No. 1 (2017)

Feb 1 Interest Groups

-David A. Steinberg and Victor Shih, 2012. "[Interest Group Influence in Authoritarian States: The Political Determinants of Chinese Exchange Rate Policy](#)," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 45, Issue 11.

-Angela Huyue Zhang, 2019. "Strategic Public Shaming: Evidence from Chinese Antitrust Investigations," CQ, Vol. 237, pp. 174-195.

Recommend:

-Peter Lorentzen, Pierre Landry, and John Yasuda. 2014. "[Undermining Authoritarian Innovation: The Power of China's Industrial Giants](#)," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 76, No. 1, pp. 182-194.

Week 6

Feb 6 Institutional Foundation of Social and Economic Inequality

-Kam Wing Chan and Li Zhang, 1999. "[The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes](#)," CQ, Vol. 160, pp. 818-855.

-Xie Yu and Wu Xiaogang. 2008. "[Danwei Profitability and Earnings Inequality in Urban China](#)," CQ, Vol.195, pp. 558-581.

Recommend:

Shaohua Zhan, 2017. "[Hukou Reform and Land Politics in China: Rise of a Tripartite Alliance](#)" CJ, Volume 78, pp. 25 -49.

Feb 8 Social Participation

- Tony Saich, 2000. "[Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China](#)," *The China Quarterly*, 161: 228-258.
- Ming Hu et al. 2023. "[Building State-Controlled Volunteering in China](#)," *CQ*. Vol. 256, pp. 854-870.

Recommend:

- Fan Yang et al, 2022. "[State-Enlisted Voluntarism in China: The Role of Public Security Volunteers in Social Stability Maintenance](#)," *CQ*. Vol. 249, pp. 47-67.

Week 7

Feb 13 Resistance: Urban versus Rural Areas

- Juan Wang. 2012. "[Shifting Boundaries between the State and Society: Village Cadres as Activists in Collective Petition](#)," *CQ*. Vol. 211, pp. 697-717.
- Xi Chen. 2019. [The Logic of Fragmented Activism among Chinese State-Owned Enterprise Workers](#), *CJ*. Vol. 81, pp. 58 – 80.

Recommend:

- Wu Zhang. 2015. "[Leadership, Organization and Moral Authority: Explaining Peasant Militancy in Contemporary China](#)" *CJ*. Vol. 73, pp. 59 – 83.
- Shi Fayong and Cai Yongshun. 2006. "[Disaggregating the State: Networks and Collective Resistance in Shanghai](#)," *CQ*, Vol. 186, pp.314-332.

Feb 15 Identities and Activism

- Susan K. McCarthy, 2013. "[Serving Society, Repurposing the State: Religious Charity and Resistance in China](#)," *CJ*. Volume 70, pp. 48 – 72.
- Timothy Hidebrandt, 2012. "[Development and Division: the Effect of Transnational Linkages and Local Politics on LGBT activism in China](#)," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 21, Issue 77, pp. 845-862.

Recommend:

- Di Wang and Sida Liu, 2020. "[Performing Activism: Feminists, Lawyers, and online Legal Mobilization in China](#)," *Law and Social Inquiry*, 45(3): 678-705.

Week 8

Feb 20 Goals of Resistance?

- Kevin O'Brien. 1996. "[Rightful Resistance](#)," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 31-55.
- Lily Tsai. 2015. "[Constructive Noncompliance](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 253-279.

Feb 22 Various Responses: National Level

- Emile Dirks and Diana Fu, 2023. "[Governing 'Untrustworthy' Civil Society in China](#)," *CJ*. Vol. 89.
- Christoph Steinhardt, 2017. "[Discursive Accommodation: Popular Protest and Strategic Elite Communication in China](#)," *European Political Science Review*, Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp. 539-560.

Recommend:

- Elizabeth J. Perry, 2007. [Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?](#) *CJ*. Volume 57, pp. 1 – 22.

Feb 25/Sunday, the first writing assignment due by midnight

Week 9

Feb 27 Response: Local Levels

- Juan Wang, 2015. "[Managing Social Stability: The Perspective of a Local Government in China.](#)" *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 15, pp.1-25.
- Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang. 2013. "[The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundations of Bargained Authoritarianism in China,](#)" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 118, No. 6, pp. 1475-1508.

Feb 29 Coercion: National and Local Levels

- Lynette H. Ong. 2018. [Thugs and Outsourcing of State Repression in China](#), *CJ*. Volume 80, pp. 94 – 110.
- Diana Fu, Greg Distelhorst. 2018. [The Grassroots Participation and Repression under Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping](#), *CJ*, Volume 79, Issue, pp. 100 - 122

March 4-8 March Break

Week 10

Mar 12 Back to Institutional Designs: Propaganda

- David Shambaugh. 2007. [China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy](#) *CJ*. Volume 57, pp. 25-58.
- Daniela Stockmann. 2010. "[Who Believes Propaganda? Media Effects during the Anti-Japanese Protests in Beijing.](#)" *CQ*. Vol. 202, pp. 269-289.

Recommend:

- Huang Haifeng. 2015. "[Propaganda as Signaling,](#)" *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 419-444.

Marh 14: Thursday class cancelled. I will be traveling for Association for Asian Studies conference

Week 11

Mar 19 Media as Control and Persuasion

- Maria Repnikova, Kecheng Fang. 2019. "Digital Media Experiments in China: "Revolutionizing" Persuasion under Xi Jinping" *CQ*.
- Daniela Stockmann, Mary E. Gallagher, "[Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China,](#)" *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 44, Issue 4 (2011).

Mar 21 Media as Alliance and Political Space

- Ya-Wen Lei. 2016. "[Freeing the Press: How Field Environment Explains Critical News Reporting in China](#)" *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(1): 1-49.
- Li Jun and Xiaoqin Li, 2017. "[Media as a Core Political Resource: the Young Feminist Movements in China,](#)" *Chinese Journal of Communication*. 10:54-71.

Week 12

Mar 26 China's Political-Legal System

- Juan Wang and Sida Liu, "[Ordering Power under the Party: A Relational Approach to Law and Politics in China,](#)" *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, 6 (1): 1-18.
- Ling Li 2019. "[Political-Legal Order and the Curious Double Character of China's Courts.](#)" *Asian Journal of Law and Society* 6(1): 19-39.

Mar 28 Courts: Judicial Reforms and Conditional Activism

-Minzner, Carl F. 2011. "[China's Turn against Law.](#)" *American Journal of Comparative Law* 59: 935-984.

-Juan Wang and Wenting Liang. 2019. "[Political Resources and Divergent Court Empowerment: Subnational Comparison in China.](#)" *Modern China.*

Recommend:

-Benjamin L. Liebman. 2011 "[The Media and the Courts: Towards Competitive Supervision?.](#)" *CQ*, 28: 833-850.

Who can serve as judges in China? <https://www.chinajusticeobserver.com/a/who-can-serve-as-judges-in-china>

Sunday March 31, the second writing assignment due by midnight

Week 13

Apr 2 Courts and Law as Weapons of the Weak

-Hualing Fu & Richard Cullen, 2008. "[Weiquan \(Rights Protection\) Lawyering in an Authoritarian State: Building a Culture of Public-Interest Lawyering.](#)" *CJ*. 59:111 - 127

-Yuqing Feng & Xin He. 2018. "[From Law to Politics: Petitioners' Framing of Disputes in Chinese Courts.](#)" *CJ*. 80: 130 – 149

Recommend:

Movie: "[The Story of Qiuju](#)" (Call No. PN1997 A1 T49 1990 vol.12)

Kevin J. O'Brien, Lianjiang Li, 2004. [Suing the Local State: Administrative Litigation in Rural China](#), *CJ*. Volume 51, pp. 75 – 96.

Apr 4 Reflections: Nuances

-Bruce Dickson. 2000-2001, "[Cooptation and Corporatism in China: The Logic of Party Adaptation.](#)" *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 4, pp.517- 540.

-Rachel E. Stern and Jonathan Hassid, "[Amplifying Silence: Uncertainty and Control Parables in Contemporary China.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 10 (2012), pp. 1230-1254.

-Sida Liu and Terence Halliday, 2011. "[Political Liberalism and Political Embeddedness: Understanding Politics in the Work of Chinese Criminal Defense Lawyers.](#)" Vol. 45, Issue 4, pp. 831-866.

Week 14

Apr 9 Reflection: Nuances

-Wen-Hsuan Tsai, Nicola Dean. 2015. "[Lifting the Veil of the CCP's Mishu system: Unrestricted Informal Politics within an Authoritarian Regime.](#)" *CJ* , Volume 73, Issue , pp. 158 – 185.

-Minglu Chen, 2022. "['Innocent Young Girls', The Search for Female Provincial Leaders in China.](#)" *CQ*, Vol. 251. Pp. 751-775.