POLI380: Domestic Politics in Contemporary China
(January 5-April 8, 2021)

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 unpacks and traces the composition and interaction of the governors and the governed.
2. It introduces the state’s toolkit for control and repertories of social resistance. It considers their changes and interactions.
3. It examines the policymaking as a result of 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.

Remote Delivery
This course has been redesigned for remote delivery.

Lectures will be recorded and posted on MyCourses. Rather than uploading a single long lecture, recordings will be uploaded in shorter blocks. You can go through all blocks for each week back to back or take breaks in between each section.

There will be four 30-min live zoom Q&A session at 11:00am on the Tuesdays one week before the due dates of each assignment and exam: Jan 26, Feb 23 and March 23, and Apr 6. If you have questions regarding the readings, lectures, or assignments, join me and raise your questions there. You are also welcome to drop by my virtual office hour every week (Tuesdays, 10-11am). Zoom links to these zoom sessions will be provided via MyCourses.

Conferences, which start on Week 3, will take place via Zoom. These will be held in a “fixed” format, meaning that each conference section will have a block of time to meet each week. All students in the class need to sign up for a conference and “attend” that conference.

All content of this course, including slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor’s intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor’s intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

Learning Outcomes
- identify the formal structure of the Party and government and analyze the informal power distribution across posts and regions
- gain a general understanding of the key theoretical and empirical perspectives surrounding the major political debates in contemporary China;
analytically assess the diverse perspectives employed to analyze current events in contemporary Chinese politics;
practically, be able to identify possible power dynamics behind current events and provide different plausible explanations for them.

Assignments
Conference Participation 10%
Response Essay or News Analysis 54% (18%*3)
Take Home Final Exam (during finals week) 36%

1) Participation (10%)
The participation component for conferences can be fulfilled in two ways (1) by participating in the zoom sessions, or (2) should you not be able to participate in one session, you will need to write a short (500-words max) analysis or reflection of the readings/lectures for the week that you miss the conference. The short analysis is to be submitted to MyCourses by midnight before your next conference date (i.e. you’ll have one week to work on it). Late submissions are penalized by one letter-grade step per day (e.g., an A note submitted one day late becomes an A- note, etc.).

2) Response Essay or News Analysis (18% *3):
Throughout the semester you will write three short essays (max 1,000 words). Deadlines fall on the last Friday of each month at midnight (Jan 29, Feb 26 and March 26). 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 news event (within 6 months) and discuss how what you have learned from this class helps you understand the news.
All essays need to be submitted via MyCourses, under the appropriate assignment. Essays must be turned in on word or pdf. Please follow these guidelines:
- Length: Maximum 1,000 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.
- Format: double spaced, font size 12 (times new roman), using regular margins.
- Title page: In addition to the essay itself, your essay should have a title page with your name, student ID, and word count (excluding bibliography).
- 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.

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. East Asia Forum: analysis from scholars about recent events in the region, including China.
4. Monkey Cage: a blog by political scientists based on their own researches, hosted by Washington Post. The link is to its China segment.
5. All other major news outlet in English language: NYT, Washington Post, BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera.

3) Take Home Exam 36%
During finals week, there will be a 48-hour take home final exam covering the lectures, readings, and conferences. The exam is cumulative and covers materials from the whole semester. The exam is a set of analytical questions. Each question will have a strict word limit for the answers you provide.

In order 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.
- 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.

**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 Chartre 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.
Netiquette:
The University recognizes the importance of maintaining teaching spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all involved. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in contexts such as the following may be cause for disciplinary action:

1. Username (use only your legal or preferred name)
2. Visual backgrounds
3. "Chat" boxes

To maintain a clear and uninterrupted learning space for all, you should keep your microphone muted throughout your class, unless invited by the instructor to speak. You should follow instructors’ directions about the use of the “chat” function on remote learning platforms.

Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1
Jan 5 Introduction
Jan 7: Ideology, Mass Politics, and Power Struggle


Recommend:

Week 2
Jan 12 (New) Politics of Power Struggle


Recommend:

Jan 14 Formal and Informal Governing Bodies #1

Recommend:

Week 3
Jan 19 The Process of Policymaking #1


Recommend:

Jan 21 The Process of Policy Making #2


Recommend:

Week 4
Jan 26 The Building and Transition of The Bureaucracy


Jan 28 A Variety of Local Governments


Recommend:
Week 5

**Feb 2 Agency Control**


**Recommended:**

**Feb 4 Interest Groups**


**Recommended:**

Week 6

**Feb 9 Institutional Foundation of Social and Economic Inequality**


**Recommended:**

**Feb 11 Modes of Resistance #1**


Recommend:

Week 7

Feb 16 Modes of Resistance #2


Recommend:

Feb 18 Modes of Resistance #3


Recommend:

Week 8

Feb 23 Modes of Responses #1


Recommend:
Feb 25 Modes of Responses #2


Recommend:

Friday/Feb 26 midnight: 2ND Response Essay/News Analysis Due

Week 9
Mar 9 Modes of Control: Propaganda


Recommend:

Mar 11 Modes of Control: Censorship and News Media


Recommend:

Week 10
Mar 16 Indirect Control

Recommend:

Mar 18 Political Space


Recommend:

Week 11
Mar 23 Judicial (In)dependence


March 25 The Judiciary and Other Actors


Week 12
Mar 30 Court Operation


Recommend:

Mar 26/Friday Midnight: the 3rd Response Essay/News Analysis Due

Apr 1 Law as Weapons of the Weak


Recommend:

Week 13

Apr 6 Reflection: The Political Stability and Authoritarian Endurance


Recommend:

Apr 8 No Readings. Time to prepare for Final exam