

CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POLITICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

POLI 646 (3 credits)

Winter 2020

(Last Updated on Nov 28, 2019)

Time:

Location:

Course Description:

The China experience has invited scholarly attention because of its stable one-party rule accompanied by rapid economic growth that began more than three decades ago. To what extent is the China experience unique? To what extent can the China experience be explained and analyzed by existing theories in political science? In what ways can the China experience contribute to the scholarship of comparative politics? This is a graduate seminar that focuses on the comparative implications of the China case. While its substantive focus is on China, the course situates the case of China into broad literature of comparative politics, including state building, political economy of growth, contentious politics, and authoritarian rule.

There are five to seven article-length readings assigned each week. Required readings should be completed by the date corresponding with the topic as indicated on this syllabus. For each topic, the readings are chosen to encompass (to the extent possible) 1) background literature on specific topics of comparative politics; 2) analytic surveys or literature reviews on the topic; 3) studies presenting different views concerning the topic; and 4) recent studies that reflect the current state of the field on the topics.

Grading:

1) **Class Participation** (10%)

You are expected to have completed all readings and actively and regularly participate in seminar discussions. You may miss one session without penalty.

2) **Weekly Notes** (25%)

Each week, you need to hand in review notes before the class starts, reviewing all readings for that week. The notes need to concisely answer 3 to 5 questions listed below. The answer to each question should be limited to one paragraph.

For each reading:

- a) What is the author's explanatory objective (or dependent variable)? Pay special attention to how this is defined and operationalized.
- b) What is the author's argument (or independent variables)?
- c) What is the logic connecting a) and b)? How convincing do you find this logic?
- d) What are the intellectual roots of the argument?
- f) Is the research design and methodology appropriate for the questions being asked?
- g) What type of evidence, if any, is provided for the argument? Does the evidence actually support the intended argument? What type of evidence would strengthen or weaken the argument?

To think about the readings collectively each week,

- h) Are all the authors trying to explain the same phenomenon?
- i) Are they having a direct dialogue with one another? If not, how do you imagine that they might react to one another's arguments (e.g., in a conference or symposium)?

j) What is the intellectual contribution of the week's literature to our understanding of comparative politics?

3) **In-Class Presentations** (20%)

Each student will have two presentations throughout the semester (10% each). The presenter will provide thoughts and comments (20 min) on readings of a particular week, and lead discussions. You need to email all seminar participants a 3-page (double-spaced, 1/3 summary, 2/3 critique) review indicating the main points of the presentation at noon on the day before the seminar to facilitate discussion in class.

4) **Writing Assignment** (45%)

You have two options: Brief Critiques (three essays, 8-10 double-spaced typed pages, worth 15% each) or Research Prospectus (35-45 double-spaced typed pages)

Brief critiques need to evaluate and discuss the assigned readings. They are expected to compare, contrast, and integrate the readings for a given week, and reflect original analysis. Critique on a particular week's readings will only be accepted by the time class starts (electronic version only), because its other purpose is to enhance the quality of class discussions. *No extension or incompletes will be given. If you have not submitted three critiques by week 12, I will assume that you have chosen to write a research prospectus instead. None critiques (one or two) that have been written by then will count in your final grade.*

Research prospectus can focus on any topic broadly related to contemporary Chinese politics. This assignment is intended to prepare students for the dissertation prospectus and grant proposals. The prospectus will outline the phenomenon to be researched, posit a causal explanation and alternatives, and relate the topic to the existing literature. Students will present the outline of their work at week 13. Final paper is due two weeks from the last class. *If you miss the deadline, the replacement will be an 8-br take-home exam (10am-6pm) that resembles the format of your comprehensive exam. The exam needs to be scheduled no later than four weeks from the last class. It is the student's responsibility to contact me to schedule this exam.*

Miscellaneous Reminders:

A. 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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill.

Background readings that give a general and basic knowledge about Post-Mao China

Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds., [*Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*](#) (Harvard University Press, 1999)

Barry Naughton, [*Growing out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978-1993*](#) (Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Schedule of Classes and Assigned Readings:

1. **Introduction**

-Introduction of course outlines;

-Presentation assignment

-an overview of important political and economic actors, institutions, and issues in contemporary China

Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds., [*Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*](#) (Harvard University Press, 1999)

Topic I: (Post-Revolutionary) State Building and State Collapse

2. State Building

- Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1966)
- Ezra Vogel, "[From Revolutionary to Semi-Bureaucrat: The 'Regularisation' of Cadres](#)," *The China Quarterly* (CQ), No. 29 (1967), pp. 36-60.
- Martin King Whyte, "[Bureaucracy and Modernization in China: The Maoist Critique](#)," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1973), pp. 149-163.

Recommend:

- Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism"
- James Scott, *Seeing like a State* (Yale University Press 1999). Part I & Part II.

3. State Collapse

- Harry Harding, *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976* (Stanford University Press, 1981)
- Andrew G. Walder. 2016. "Rebellion of the Cadres: The 1967 Implosion of the Chinese Party-State," *The China Journal* (CJ). Volume 75, Issue, pp. 102 – 120.
- Jonathan Unger. 2007. "The Cultural Revolution at the Grass Roots," *CJ*, Volume 57, Issue, pp. 109 – 137.

Topic II: The Political Economy of Growth

4. Explaining Growth: Credible Commitment, Principal-Agent Problem, Property Rights

- Steven Solnick, "[The Breakdown of Hierarchies in The Soviet Union and China](#)," *World Politics*, Vol. 48 (1996), pp. 209-238.
- Gehlbach, Scott and Philip Keefer, "[Investment without Democracy: Ruling-party institutionalization and credible-commitment in autocracies](#)," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Vol. 39 (2011), pp. 123-139.
- Minxin Pei, "[Microfoundations of state-socialism and Patterns of Economic Transformation](#)," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1996), pp. 131- 145.
- Qian Yingyi, Gabriella Montinola and Barry Weingast, "[Federalism, Chinese Style](#)," *World Politics*, Vol. 48 (1995), pp. 50-81.
- Yasheng Huang, "[Political Institutions and Fiscal Reforms in China](#)," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 48, No.1 (Jan/Feb 2001), pp. 16-26.

5. Explaining Growth: The State, The Sequence, and the Market

- 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.
- Lynette H. Ong, "[Between Developmental and Clientelist States: Local State Business Relationships in China](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2012), pp. 191-209.
- Juan Wang, "[Going beyond Township and Village Enterprises in Rural China](#)," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Issue 14, Vol. 42 (2005), pp. 171-181.
- Juan Wang, *The Sinews of State Power* (New York: OUP, 2017), Introduction and Conclusion. E-book.

Background readings on developmental state:

- Theda Skocpol, *Bring the State Back In*.
- Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford, 1982).
- Peter Evans, "[Predatory, Developmental and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Analysis of the Third World State](#)," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1989), pp. 561-82.
- Meredith Woo-Cumings ed. 1999 *The Developmental State* (Cornell University Press, 1999)

Topic III: The Authoritarian Rule

6. Various Challenges and Solutions

- Zhu Jiangnan, Zhang Dong, "Weapons of the Powerful: Authoritarian Elite Competition and Politicized Anticorruption in China," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 50, Issue 9, 2017.
- Andrew Nathan, "[Authoritarian Resilience](#)," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2003), pp. 6-17.
- Li Cheng, "[The End of the CCP's Resilient Authoritarianism? A Tripartite Assessment of Shifting Power in China](#)," *China Quarterly*, Vol. 211, Issue 3 (2012), pp. 595-623.
- Cai Yongshun, "[Power Structure and Regime Resilience: Contentious Politics in China](#)," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38(2008), pp. 411-432
- Peter Lorentzen, Pierre Landry, and John Yasuda, "[Undermining Authoritarian Innovation: The Power of China's Industrial Giants](#)," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (2014), pp. 182-194.

7. Information and Communication

- Peter Lorentzen, "[China's Strategic Censorship](#)," *AJPS*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (2014), pp. 402-414.
- Jeremy Wallace, "[Juking the Stats? Authoritarian Information Problems in China](#)," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2016), pp. 11-29.
- Huang Haifeng, "[A War of \(Mis\)Information: The Political Effects of Rumors and Rumor Rebuttals in an Authoritarian Country](#)," *British Journal of Political Science*, (first published online July 2015)
- Huang Haifeng, "[Propaganda as Signaling](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2015), pp. 419-444.
- Juan Wang, "What's Wrong with Corruption? Messages from Confessions in China," *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 2018.

8. Civil Society or State Corporatism

- Tony Saich, "[Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China](#)," *The China Quarterly*, no. 161 (2000), pp. 228-258. (NGOs)
- Lily Tsai, "[Constructive Noncompliance](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (2015), pp. 253-279.
- Yuen Yuen Ang, "[Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why 'I-Paid-A-Bribe' Worked in India but Failed in China](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 47 (1), pp. 21-40.
- Kevin O'Brien, "[Rightful Resistance](#)," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (1996), pp. 31-55.
- Bruce Dickson. 2000-2001, "[Cooptation and Corporatism in China: The Logic of Party Adaptation](#)," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 4, pp.517- 540.
- Zheng Yongnian and Wu Guoguang, "[Information Technology, Public Space, and Collective Action in China](#)," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (2005), pp. 507-536.

9. Political Participation

- Melanie Manion, "['Good Types' in Authoritarian Elections: The Selectoral Connection in Chinese Local Congress](#)," *Comparative Political Studies* (first published online June 2014).
- Cai, Yongshun "[Managed Participation in China](#)," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 3 (2004), pp. 425-451.
- Rory Truex, "[Consultative Authoritarianism and Its Limits](#)," *Comparative Political Studies* (first published online in June 2014).
- Meng Tianguang et al. "[Conditional Receptivity to Citizen Participation: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in China](#)," *Comparative Political Studies* (first published online, December 2014).
- Chen Jidong, Jennifer Pan, and Xu Yiqing, "[Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China](#)," *AJPS*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (2016), pp. 383-400.

10. Discursive and Substantive Accountability

- Lily Tsai, "[Solidarity Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China](#)," *APSR*, Vol. 101, No.2 (2007), pp. 355-372

- Xu Yiqing and Yao Yang, "[Informal Institutions, Collective Action, and Public Investment in Rural China](#)," *APSR*, Vol. 109, No. 2 (2015), pp. 371-391.
- Edmund J. Malesky et.al. "[Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2011), pp. 409-427.
- Greg Distelhorst, "[The Power of Empty Promise: Quasi-Democratic Institutions and Activism in China](#)," *Comparative Political Studies* (first published online December 2015).
- Christoph Steinhardt, "[Discursive Accommodation: Popular Protest and Strategic Elite Communication in China](#)," *European Political Science Review*, 2017, Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp. 539-560.

11. Mobilization and Demobilization

- Jeffrey Becker, "[The Knowledge to Act: Chinese Migrant Labor Protest in Comparative Perspective](#)," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 11 (2012), pp. 1379-1404.
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, "[How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression](#)," *APSR*, Vol. 107, No. 2 (2013), pp. 326-343.
- Diana Fu, "[Disguised Collective Action in China](#)," *CPS*, 2017, Vol. 50, Issue 4, pp. 499-527.
- Bill Hurst et al. "[Reassessing Collective Petitioning in Rural China: Civic Engagement, Extra-State Violence, and Regional Variation](#)," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2014), pp. 459-482.
- Juan Wang, "[Shifting Boundaries between the State and Society: Village Cadres as New Activists in Collective Petition](#)," *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 211 (2012): 697-717.
- 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.

12. The Checks (?): Media & Legal Institutions

- Ya-Wen Lei. "[Freeing the Press: How Field Environment Explains Critical News Reporting in China](#)" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 122, No. 1 (2016), pp. 1-49.
- 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.
- Daniela Stockmann & Mary E. Gallagher, "[Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China](#)," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (2011), pp. 436-467.
- 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*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1-18.
- Minzner, Carl F. 2011. "[China's Turn against Law](#)." *American Journal of Comparative Law* 59: 935-984.
- Benjamin L. Liebman. "The Media and the Courts: Towards Competitive Supervision?," *CQ*, Vol. 28 (2011), pp. 833-850.
- Sida Liu and Terence Halliday, "[Political Liberalism and Political Embeddedness: Understanding Politics in the Work of Chinese Criminal Defense Lawyers](#)," Vol. 45, Issue 4 (2011), pp. 831-866.

13. Presentation