

Political Science 537
Politics in China
Kevin J. O'Brien

Winter 2000 M,W 3:30-5:18 obrien. 2@osu. edu

Course Description and Requirements:

Office Hours: M,W 5:30-6:30 Derby Hall 2018 292-7102

The purpose of this course is twofold: 1) to give students a general familiarity with Chinese political history since the fall of the Qing Dynasty, and 2) to consider some of the major challenges confronting the People's Republic of China today. Throughout the course efforts will be made to integrate historical materials with the study of specific political issues and analytical concepts. Topics to be covered include: the rise of the Communist Party, the 1949 revolution, the Sino-Soviet alliance, the Hundred Flowers Movement, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and post-Mao economic and political reforms. Attention will be devoted to contemporary elite politics (e.g. the role of the military, political succession), mass politics (e.g. rural protest, the causes and outcome of dissent), and certain policies (regarding the environment and popular culture) that promise to bedevil the Chinese leadership throughout the 21st century.

The class format will be that of a combined lecture-seminar. Sessions will typically include extensive remarks by the instructor -- remarks designed to orient the student and to provide a context within which the readings for that day can be understood. Sessions will also include periodic discussion of both points made in the lecture and of the readings assigned for that day. All students are encouraged to ask questions and raise points of interest during our sessions. Students who enroll in this course are encouraged to keep up with daily assignments and to take an active role in class discussions.

Course evaluation will be based on two take-home, essay exams and one final exam. In the take-home exams, students will write an analytical essay on a topic of the instructor's choosing. Students will be evaluated on the basis of; demonstrated mastery of the assigned readings; skill in exposing nuances of similarity and difference in various defensible positions; cogency, clarity, precision and organization of presentation; and relevance of evidence marshalled to prove main point(s). The final exam will focus on the latter part of the course and will require that students write two essays from a choice of three possible topics. Each take-home exam will count for 1/4 of the course grade. The final exam will count for 1/2 of one's course grade.

For those lacking sufficient previous knowledge of Chinese history I would highly recommend Jonathan Spence's The Search for Modern China or William T. Rowe's, "Approaches to Modern Chinese Social History," in Olivier Zunz, ed., Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp.236-96. Spence is particularly strong on intellectual history and foreign relations and writes gracefully. Rowe provides a fine summary of the state of the field on the large questions in Chinese history, e.g. when did feudalism end?, why didn't capitalism develop?, oriental despotism or local autonomy?, administrative units or macro regions? Students are expected to bring a lively interest in learning to this course. No prior knowledge of Chinese politics or history will be assumed.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to hand in only material that has been completed by yourself. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university and handled according to university policy.

¹¹The Dog ate it": Please keep a copy of your take-home essays until the instructor has returned them. Also, to sidestep easily avoidable problems related to computer failures -- keep a copy of your essays on a floppy disk and be ready to make alternative arrangements for last-minute printing.

Assistance: All efforts will be made to facilitate the learning of students with any sort of disability. This syllabus, for example, is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Wayne DeYoung, Department of Political Science, 2140 Derby Hall, 292-2880.

Required Texts:

The following books are available at SBX. One copy of each book has also been placed on closed reserve in the Main Library.

- A) Lucien Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-49 (Stanford, 1971)
- B) Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds. The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms (Harvard, 1999)
- C) Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After, 3rd ed. (The Free Press, 1999)
- D) John Bryan Starr, Understanding China (Hill and Wang, 1997)
- E) Gao Yuan, Born Red (Stanford, 1987)
- F) Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Elizabeth Perry, eds., Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, 2nd Edition, (Westview, 1994)

Lecture and Reading Schedule

January 5 Introduction and Handouts: Names, Places, Map, Pinyin Starr, pp.3-41

January 7 Imperial and Republican China: The Traditional Order, The Decay of Gentry Society, The Failure of Liberalism

Starr, pp.42-57 Bianco, pp.1-52

January 10

The CCP's Rise to Power: The Origins of the Rural Strategy, Yanan and the Mass Line, Nationalism and Peasant Revolution

Bianco, pp.53-166 Gao Yuan, pp. ix-xxx, 1-60

January 12 Civil War, Reconstruction, Collectivization

Bianco, pp.167-210
Meisner, chaps. 7 and 9
Gao Yuan, pp.61-ill

Hundred Flowers, Anti-Rightist Campaign, Great Leap Forward

Meisner, chaps. 10-13 Gao Yuan, pp.112-72

Continuing the Revolution, Cultural Revolution 1966-69, Late Maoism

Meisner, chaps. 17-19
Gao Yuan, pp.173-243
Essay Exam Distributed

Terror, Assessing Maoism

Gao Yuan, pp.243-304 Meisner, chaps. 20-21

January 31 China's Political Structure

Starr, pp.58-77
Essay Exam Due!

Elite Politics after Mao, Political Succession

Goldman and MacFarquahar (G&M), chap. 3
Starr, pp.305-li

The Military in Post-Tiananmen Politics

Starr, pp.97-113 G&M, chap. 4

Rural Politics Since 1978

Starr, pp.78-96, 114-22 G&M, chap. 10

February 14 Political-Legal Reforms and Rural Unrest

Start Viewing "The Story of Qiu Ju"
G&M, chaps. 6 and 9
Starr, pp.122-33

February 16 View and Discuss "Qiu Ju" Exam Distributed

February 21 and 23 Urban Reforms, "Market Leninism," and Corruption

Starr, pp.134-48
G&M, chaps. 8, 11,12
Essay Exam due 2/23!

January 24

January 26

January 19

February 2

February 7

February 9

February 28 Dissent, Protest and the Consequences of Tiananmen Wasserstrom and Perry, (W&P),

Chaps. 2, 3, 13

March 1 Popular Culture and Politics, Environmental Politics

Starr, pp.167-82, 229-45 W&P, pp.148-65

March 6 Women and the Revolution

Starr, pp.183-96

W&P, pp.125-35 March 8 Review and Catch-up

Scheduled Exam Time-- Final Exam