

## POLS 2026/6026 The Politics of China, Semester 2, 2023

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**Instructor:** Dr. Fengming Lu (fengming.lu@anu.edu.au), 4.22 Hedley Bull

**Office Hours:** 4-5 pm, Tuesday and by appointment

**Prerequisites:** None, as long as you are interested in Chinese politics!

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a broad introduction to contemporary Chinese politics and related social changes. While our focus is on the post-reform China after 1978, we will also spend considerable time and energy on tracing roots and origins of critical issues in today's Chinese politics, particularly by understanding the previous century of change and upheaval, including the legacies and decline of the imperial China, the decades of revolution, the rise of communism, and China under the rule of Mao Zedong (1949-1976).

The course is divided into three sections. The first four weeks cover the period from the last years of Qing Dynasty to the early years of the Reform and Opening Up. Weeks 5, 6, and 7 discuss the political institutions of China, particularly how the Chinese Communist Party, the central government, and local governments work and what have changed (and remain unchanged) during the reform years. The remaining five weeks examine some key topics in contemporary Chinese politics, as well as what a rising China means to the world.

### COURSE MATERIALS

The required textbook for this course is:

- Joseph, William A. 2019. *Politics in China: An Introduction, Third Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This course will also draw heavily upon several other books. You are not required to purchase them. All required and optional chapters will be posted on Wattle.

- Lieberthal, Kenneth. 2003. *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Walder, Andrew. 2015. *China under Mao*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kroeber, Arthur R. 2020. *China's Economy: What Everyone Needs to Know: Second Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- *Optional*: Vogel, Ezra F. *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press

All other reading items will also be posted on Wattle. Please note that the course outline at the end of this document is a tentative list and is subject to change. You will be notified in class or via email at least one week in advance about upcoming readings, should there be any changes.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Tutorial Participation (10%)**: Students should enrol in tutorials on Wattle. Your tutor will keep a record of your attendance. If you must miss a tutorial, please email and explain to the tutor or me. Students are expected to attend lectures and tutorials, do the required readings, and actively participate in class discussion after completing and digesting the assigned materials. Students will be graded on the quality of their active participation. Marks are not given for simply attending.
- **Midterm Test (25%)**: A take-home midterm test, which will allow you to choose two from five short answer questions, will be posted around the end of Week 5 (27th August), and due by 11:59 pm, 31st August. The questions will focus on the historical background of and working knowledge on Chinese political institutions.
- **Weekly News Presentation (5%)**: Throughout the semester, each student will sign up for a weekly tutorial (starting from Week 2) and make a short presentation (5-8 minutes) on his/her favourite China-related news story in the media. Your presentation should describe relevant background information and provide a succinct summary of event(s). It should also *briefly* discuss the significance of the event(s) and relate them back to the themes about Chinese politics or government discussed in class. You have only one chance to present a news story, so take a good pick!
- **Group Presentation (20%)**: To foster exchange of ideas and collaboration among students, you will join your classmates in groups of four or five to give a 15-minute presentation on a specific topic between Week 3 and Week 12. Email me your top three topic choices by 4 August, and I will assign groups based on your indicated preferences. You may refer to an indicative list of topic below and choose up to three candidate topics. If your group has come up with your very own topic for presentation, you will receive a 5% bonus on top of your original mark.
- **Final Research Paper (40%)**: Each student will write a research paper (12-point font, double-spaced) that focuses on a specific issue related to Chinese politics. The word limit is 3,000 words for ASIA 2026 students and 4,000 for ASIA 6026 students. You are free to do further research on the topic of your group presentation or choose something else. This paper, however, should focus on explaining the issue (e.g. its origin, development, and/or outcome) with politics, especially the unique characteristics of Chinese politics. In particular, you are expected to employ political theories or concepts discussed in class in your exploration of the topic. A 200-word-minimum

paper proposal is due on 6 October. You can submit an optional first draft to my email address by 20 October to receive comments on revisions (*optional*). The final draft should be submitted via Turnitin and it is due on 13 November.

**Indicative list of group presentation topics::** Again, the following topics are not the only available choices. You are encouraged to develop your own topic, and it would work better if it does not have too much overlap with our weekly topics.

1. China's ambitious dual-carbon goal: reaching peak carbon use by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2060. Why has China set so ambitious goals and what are China's plans?
2. China's fight against the air pollution: what measures have been taken and what were their effects?
3. China's emerging Internet giant companies and the government's response.
4. The Belt and Road Initiative.
5. China's Taiwan policy.
6. China's Hong Kong policy and how it has changed over the last 40 years.
7. China's presence in Southeast Asia and/or the Pacific Islands.
8. China's real estate industry: its boom and its sudden decline.
9. Urbanization and the housing market in China
10. Recruitment of Chinese civil servants and public sector employees: how has that evolved in the last few decades.
11. The Chinese government and the universities.
12. Xi's anti-corruption campaign.
13. Xi's military reform.
14. Demographic crisis and the slowly relaxing one-child policy.
15. Income inequality and its origins.
16. China's petition (*shangfang*) system: how it works.
17. "Me too" movement in China.
18. China's high-speed railway system.
19. The rise of China's electric vehicle (EV) industry and the government.

20. China's solar power industry and the government.
21. China's gaming industry and government regulations.
22. How China managed to build and revamp so many infrastructures: how are those projects funded and constructed.
23. Revisiting China's zero-COVID policies.
24. Big data and China's social credit system.
25. China's anti-poverty and rural vitalization campaigns.

Of course, the list is not exhaustive and you can always come to my office hour to discuss your group presentation topic.

**Grading scale:** Final grades will follow the general grading scale of the ANU: High Distinction (80-100), Distinction (70-79), Credit (60-69), Pass (50-59), and Fail (0-49).

**Important Dates:**

Deadline for Choosing a Group Presentation Topic .....	4 August
Midterm Test Due .....	31 August
Teaching Break .....	4-17 September
Last Drop Day without failure .....	2 October
Final Paper Proposal Due .....	6 October
Last Drop Day with failure .....	1 November
Final Paper Draft Due ( <i>optional</i> ) .....	20 October
Final Paper Due .....	13 November

**Academic Honesty:** Any work submitted for assessment by a student at ANU must be work that is original, produced by the student for the purpose of a specific assessment task, and gives appropriate acknowledgement of the students use of others' ideas, scholarship and intellectual property.

**Flexibility:** This course will accommodate students' special needs for support. If the student holds a valid Education Access Plan (EAP) and need to request an extension for an assignment, please notify the course convenor at least TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE.

**University Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend lectures and tutorials regularly. If the student encounters any emergency situation that prevents them from attending, please contact the course convenor as soon as possible. If you have a medical emergency or condition, please send the course convenor a GP-signed document.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

A solid circle ● indicates **required** reading that must be finished before each LECTURE, a hollow square □ indicates **video** materials that must be watched before each TUTORIAL, and an asterisk \* indicates **optional** reading.

### **Week 1: Introduction (Why Studying China) and the Historical Background (From Late-Qing to the End of the WWI)**

- Nathan, Andrew J. 2003. “Authoritarian Resilience.” *Journal of Democracy* 14(1): pp. 6-17.
- McGregor, Richard. 2020. *China’s Deep State: The Communist Party and the Coronavirus*. Research Notes at Lowy Institute.
- *Politics in China*, Chapter 2 (part 1), “From Empire to People’s Republic” (Schoppa). pp.45-60 (For Kindle user: read until the first two pages of “The May Fourth Movement”)

### **Week 2: The Republican Era and the Rise of the Communist Party**

- Lieberthal, Chapters 2 (second half) & 3 (first half), pp. 39-77.
- Walder, Chapter 2.
- PBS Documentary. *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 1*.
- \* Mao, Zedong. 1949. “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” (Original version in Chinese).

### **Week 3: The Mao Era**

- Lieberthal, Chapters 3 (second half) & 4, pp. 77-122.
- Walder, Chapter 14.
- PBS Documentary. *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 2*.
- \* Documentary Film. *Morning Sun*.
- \* *Politics in China*, Chapter 3, “Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)” (Teiwes)

### **Week 4: The Reform and Opening Up**

- *Politics in China*, Chapter 4, “Deng Xiaoping and his Successors” (Gilley).
- Naughton, Barry. *The Chinese Economy: Adaption and Growth (Second Edition)*. Chapter 5.

- PBS Documentary. *China: A Century of Revolution, Part 3*.
- \* Kroeber, Chapter 4.
- \* Vogel, Chapters 12-24
- \* Documentary Film. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*.

### **Week 5: The Party, Formal Institutions, and the ‘New Era’**

- *Politics in China*, Chapter 6. “China’s Communist Party-State: The Structure and Dynamics of Power” (Li), pp.201-236.
- McGregor, Richard. 2012. *The Party: The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers*. Chapter 1.
- \* Shirk, Susan L. 2018. “China in Xi’s ‘New Era’: The Return to Personalistic Rule.” *Journal of Democracy*, 29(2), 22-36.

### **Week 6: Local Governments and Economic Development**

- Xu, Chenggang. 2011. “The Fundamental Institutions of China’s Reforms and Development.” *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49(4): 1076-1151.
- Zhou, Li-An. 2016. “The Administrative Subcontract: Significance, Relevance and Implications for Intergovernmental Relations in China.” *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, 2(1), 34-74.
- Li, Eric X. TED Talk: “A Tale of Two Political Systems.” (Click here)
- Huang, Yasheng. TED Talk: “Does Democracy Stifle Economic Growth?” (Click here)
- \* Hessler, Peter. 2021. “China’s Reform Generation Adapts to Life in the Middle Class.” *New Yorker*.
- \* Kroeber, Chapter 8.

### **Week 7: The Government and the Businesses**

- Kroeber, Chapters 5, 7, and 9.
- Documentary. *The Chinese Mayor* (Watch either of them. If you have time, highly recommended to watch both).
- Documentary. *The Transition Period* (Watch either of them. If you have time, highly recommended to watch both).

- \* *Politics in China*, Chapter 8, “China’s Political Economy” (Zweig).

### Week 8: Rule of Law and Corruption

- *Politics in China*, Chapter 4, “China’s Legal System” (DeLisle).
- “The Wen Family Empire.” *The New York Times*.
- “Tigers and Flies: How Two Years of Graft Probes Have Shaken China’s Political Elite.” *South China Morning Post*.
- \* Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2020. *China’s Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption*. Cambridge University Press.

### Week 9: Social Protests and State Response

- O’Brien, Kevin. 1996. “Rightful Resistance.” *World Politics*, 49(1):31-55.
- Gallagher, Mary E. 2014. “China’s Workers Movement & The End of the Rapid-growth Era.” *Dædalus* 143(2): 81-95.
- Wang, Yuhua, and Carl Minzner. 2015. “The Rise of the Chinese Security State.” *The China Quarterly*, 222: 339-359.
- “Students Defiant as Chinese University Cracks Down on Young Communists.” *The New York Times*.
- \* Deng, Yanhua and Kevin J. O’Brien. “Relational Repression in China: Using Social Ties to Demobilize Protesters”. *The China Quarterly*, 215: 533-552.
- \* Xu, Xu. 2021. “To Repress or To Co-opt? Authoritarian Control in the Age of Digital Surveillance.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2): 309-325.

### Week 10: Ideology, Media Control, and Censorship

- *Politics in China*, Chapter 5, “Ideology and China’s Political Development” (Joseph), pp.157-200.
- Stockmann, Daniela. *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China*, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. **Read pp.1-18.**
- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2017. “How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument.” *American Political Science Review*, 111(3): 484-501.

- Hessler, Peter. 2022. *A Teacher in China Learns the Limits of Free Expression*. New Yorker.
- \* Roberts, Margaret E. 2018. *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### Week 11: Ethnic Politics

- *Politics in China*, Chapter 16, "Tibet" (Barnett); Chapter 17, "Xinjiang" (Bovingdon), pp.457-516.
- Greitens, Sheena Chestnut, Myunghee Lee, and Emir Yazici. 2020. "Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression: China's Changing Strategy in Xinjiang." *International Security* 44(3): 9-47.
- \* Distelhorst, Greg and Yue Hou. 2014. "Ingroup Bias in Official Behavior: A National Field Experiment in China." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 9(2): 203-230.
- \* Li, Cheng. 2006. "Ethnic Minority Elites in China's Party-State Leadership: An Empirical Assessment." *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 25.

### Week 12: China and the World

- "Geo-economics with Chinese Characteristics: How China's Economic Might is Reshaping World Politics", *World Economic Forum Report*, 2016.
- Allison, Graham. 2015. "The Thucydides Trap: Are the US and China Headed for War?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 24.
- Roach, Stephen. 2014. *Unbalanced: The Co-Dependency of America and China*, pp.1-38.
- Chellaney, Brahma. 2021. "Chinas Debt-trap Diplomacy", *The Hill*, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/551337-chinas-debt-trap-diplomacy>
- Brautigam, Deborah and Rithmire, Meg. 2021. "The Chinese 'Debt Trap' Is a Myth", *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/02/china-debt-trap/617953/>
- \* Dreher, Axel, Andreas Fuchs, Brad Parks, Austin M. Strange, and Michael J. Tierney. 2017. "Apples and Dragon Fruits: The Determinants of Aid and Other Forms of State Financing from China to Africa." *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(1):182-194.
- \* Broz, J. Lawrence, Zhiwen Zhang and Gaoyang Wang. 2020. "Explaining Foreign Support for China's Global Economic Leadership." *International Organization*, 74(3):417-452.