

PIA3710: CONTEMPORARY CHINESE POLITICS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Contemporary Chinese Politics

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3710

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SA3710 Contemporary Chinese Politics / POL3710 Contemporary Chinese Politics

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to explain and analyse the complexity of politics in contemporary China, the ideology, the institutions and the actual operation. It explores the intriguing relationship between the party and the state as well as between the

state and the society. It enables students to discover new knowledge and develop a critical attitude on the major political events, campaigns and policy moves in contemporary China. The course also enhances students' ability to understand and analyse political phenomena in China's economic transformation. Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to have a higher interest in learning China's political issues, a better understanding on China's political system and reform, and a stronger ability to analyse political phenomena from theoretical perspectives.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand and interpret the complexity of politics in contemporary China		x	x	
2	Analyse and evaluate the ideology, institutions and political practices in contemporary China		x	x	
3	Compare and contrast the major political events, campaigns and policies in contemporary China		x	x	
4	Summarise and develop critical perspectives on the party-state and state-society relationships in contemporary China		x	x	
5	Sensitize reflections and ideas upon extensive reading of major works on Chinese politics		x	x	x
6	Research independently on a critical issue, or aspects of it, in China's socio-political transformation		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Readings	Consolidate students' understanding on lecture information by reading assigned literature around 20 pages each week	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2	Lectures	Identify and interpret the related topics and issues, political ideology, institutions and events, party-state and state-society relationships, and official documents and position of the Chinese regime;	1, 2, 3, 4	1.5 hours per week
3	Mini-presentations and discussions	Discuss assigned readings in good depth; apply knowledge learned from the lectures present original ideas and findings on the specific topics;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1.5 hour per week
4	Literature search & review	Create new ideas and information, using critical thinking, from a range of sources, including lectures, discussions, books, articles, television, internet, documentaries, and the mass media	4, 5, 6	
5	Essay-writing	Conduct independent research, develop original ideas and accomplish an individual essay on critical issues related to China's socio-political transformation	4, 5, 6	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Weekly mini presentations and discussions on assigned readings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	40	The discussions and presentations help students to reflect critically on the literature, listen and respond to the views of others, communicate effectively and present arguments intelligently, respond to and critique ideas, and engage with audiences.	Yes

2	Individual essay	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	40	The essay writing help students explain and compare the related theories and concepts, engage with professional scholarship, learn with independence and intellectual curiosity, think laterally, discover and analyse information from a range of sources, use critical reasoning, present arguments intelligently, and critique ideas with personal opinions.	Yes
3	In-class quiz	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	20	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Presentations and discussions

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High standard of knowledge, critical reasoning and original ideas of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Strong ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Excellent analytic, writing and communication skills.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Fairly good knowledge and critical reflection of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Good analytic, writing and communication skills.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Rudimentary knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Basic analytic, writing and communication skills.

Marginal (D)

Poor knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Very weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Weak analytic, writing and communication skills.

Failure (F)

Little knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Extremely weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Extremely weak analytic, writing and communication skills. Failure of either course work or final examination.

Assessment Task

2. Essay-writing

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High standard of knowledge, critical reasoning and original ideas of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Strong ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Excellent analytic, writing and communication skills.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Fairly good knowledge and critical reflection of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Good analytic, writing and communication skills.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Rudimentary knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Basic analytic, writing and communication skills.

Marginal (D)

Poor knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Very weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Weak analytic, writing and communication skills.

Failure (F)

Little knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Extremely weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Extremely weak analytic, writing and communication skills. Failure of either course work or final examination.

Assessment Task

3. In-class quiz

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High standard of knowledge, critical reasoning and original ideas of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Strong ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Excellent analytic, writing and communication skills.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Fairly good knowledge and critical reflection of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Ability to analyse the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Good analytic, writing and communication skills.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Rudimentary knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Basic analytic, writing and communication skills.

Marginal (D)

Poor knowledge of the complexity of politics in contemporary China. Very weak ability to explain the ideology, institutions and actual operation of contemporary Chinese politics, as well as to compare and evaluate the major political, economic, and social events and policy moves in China. Weak analytic, writing and communication skills.

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Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

People’ s Republic of China. Politics. Socialist State. Chinese Communist Party. Socialism. Communism. Marxism. Leninism. Maoism. Mass Campaigns. Cultural Revolution. Tiananmen Movement. Propaganda. Village Election. Performance Management. People’ s Liberation Army. Chinese Constitution. Reform. Economic Transformation. Policy Making. Democratisation. Social Tension. Political Adaptation.

Authoritarianism; authoritarian control; authoritarian power-sharing; The China Communist Party; political elites; political reform; village elections; grassroots governance; public goods provision; government financing; the policymaking process; fragmented authoritarianism; cadre control; popular protest; rightful resistance; repression; social stability maintenance; entrepreneurs; co-optation; non-governmental organisations; the middle class; the media; Internet politics.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Kesselman, Mark, Joel Krieger and William A. Joseph (eds). 2010. Introduction to Comparative Politics: Political Challenges and Changing Ideas (Fifth Edition). Wadsworth: Cengage. Chapter 13 ‘China’
2	Svolik, Milan W. 2012. The Politics of Authoritarian Rule. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1
3	Fewsmith, Joseph. 2013. “The 18th Party Congress: Testing the limits of institutionalization.” China Leadership Monitor 40.
4	Miller, Alice. 2013. “The new Party Politburo leadership.” China Leadership Monitor 40.
5	Shambaugh, David. 2008. China’ s Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 3 ‘The Western Discourse on the Chinese Communist Party-State’
6	Lieberthal, Kenneth G. 1992. “Introduction: the “fragmented authoritarianism” model and its limitations.” In David M. Lampton and Kenneth Lieberthal (eds) Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1–32.
7	O’ Brien, Kevin J. and Lianjiang Li. 2000. “Accommodating democracy in a one-party state: Introducing village elections in China.” The China Quarterly 162, 465–489.
8	O’ Brien, Kevin J. and Rachel E. Stern. 2008. “Introduction: Studying contention in contemporary China.” In Kevin J. O’ Brien (ed.) Popular Protest in China. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 11–25..
9	Cai, Yongshun. 2004. “Managed participation in China.” Political Science Quarterly 119 (3), 425–451.
10	Lee, Ching Kwan and Yonghong Zhang. 2013. “The power of instability: Unraveling the microfoundations of bargained authoritarianism.” American Journal of Sociology 118 (6), 1475–1508.

11	Teets, Jessica. 2013. "Let many civil societies bloom: The rise of consultative authoritarianism in China." <i>The China Quarterly</i> 213, 19–38.
12	Qian, Gang and David Bandurski. 2011. "China's emerging public sphere: The impact of media commercialization, professionalism, and the Internet in an era of transition. In Susan L. Shirk (ed.) <i>Changing Media, Changing China</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 38–76.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	China Net http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/index.htm
2	China News Net http://www.chinanews.com.cn
3	China On Line http://www.republicchina.com/
4	China Today http://www.chinatoday.com
5	China.50 http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/
6	Chinese Communist Party at 80
7	Deng Xiaoping http://www.cbw.com/asm/xpdeng/contents.html
8	Maoism http://www.maoism.org
9	Mao's Thought http://www.mzdthought.com
10	People Net http://www.people.com.cn
11	USC of CUHK http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk
12	Xin Hua Net http://www.xinhuanet.com