

POLS 4328: Politics of China, Spring 2025

Online Course
New Lectures Posted on Mondays and Wednesdays

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Course Description

China is an important country to students of politics. It is one of the largest country in terms of population, economic power, and military power. It is a radically-changing society which went through at least four major transformations in the last century. It also poses many puzzles that are intellectually charming. How did the communist regime survive the Third Wave of democratization, which wiped two dozen communist countries off the world map? How did the country not merely survive but prosper? Is the “China Model” of development sustainable and will it work elsewhere? What are the challenges China faces? How likely is democratization? What was the US-China relation like and what will it be? In this course, you will gain a background to understand and answer these questions. You will also develop the general skills to make informed and sound arguments and to conduct comparative research.

Course Format

This is an asynchronous online course, with the exception of the course overview and two exam Q&As, which will be delivered live on Zoom. All other lectures are pre-recorded and posted on Blackboard. Most lectures, including films, have embedded quizzes for you to complete while watching. Discussions are conducted on Blackboard.

Asynchronous courses have the obvious advantage of flexibility. No one has to miss a class due to scheduling conflict or logistic difficulty. You can pause and rewind lecture videos at your own pace. Note-taking becomes more manageable. However, this advantage, when taken unwisely, can turn into serious disadvantages. Many students yield to the temptation to procrastinate and quickly become overwhelmed by the remaining work. Without the classroom environment, attention span, which isn't long to begin with, may be even shorter. When everything is available “out there,” some people think it needless to take notes, often to their regret.

The best way to reach me is through email. My responses will be faster there than through office phone or Blackboard messages.

Required Text

- William Joseph (editor), *Politics in China: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 2019), ISBN: 978-0-19-087071-3 (paperback).
- Other readings will be posted on Blackboard

Learning Objectives

- Obtain knowledge of contemporary Chinese politics [**EDGE Experience: global awareness**]
- Understand key issues in political science
- Sharpen critical thinking skills [**EDGE Experience: critical thinking**]
- Develop research skills [**EDGE Experience: problem-solving**]
- Improve writing skills

Grading

Finishing readings before watching the lecture is critical to success in this class because it underlines your success in all the following class components.

Lecture quizzes	15%
Blackboard discussions	15%
Two reaction essays	20%
Mid-term exam	25%
Final exam	25%

Letter Grades will be assigned as follows:

Final Score	Final Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
65-79%	C
50-64%	D
Below 50%	F

Lecture Quizzes (15%)

Most of the lecture videos, including assigned films, come with an embedded quiz. The video pauses, a question pops up, you select the answer, and the video resumes. You may be quizzed about assigned readings or previous or current lectures.

Think of the quizzes as tests plus attendance. I have disabled fast-forwarding to prevent quiz-taking without watching videos. I understand the need for fast-forwarding when preparing for exams and therefore will upload all “fast-forwardable” lecture videos in a separate folder named “Lectures without Quizzes.” **Note that only the videos with quizzes allow you to earn quiz points.**

A lecture quiz is due the next Friday after it is posted. After this deadline, you cannot take the quiz but can still watch the lecture in the “Lectures without Quizzes” folder.

Blackboard Discussions (15%)

You will have five online discussions. To make the discussions more manageable and effective, I break the whole class into small groups, with around 8 students in each. You will conduct the discussions only within your small group. I've posted your group assignment in the folder named “Online Discussions.”

In Discussions 2-5, which have more substantive topics, you are required to submit **at least one post in reply to my topic and one post in reply to your classmates' posts. I will grade your posts based on its thoughtfulness and your mastery of course materials.** Although there are no length requirements, these two criteria are hard to meet with very short posts. Please check ongoing discussions frequently because some posts may demand your replies.

The first post is due at midnight the day after the discussion becomes available. The second post is due at midnight the second day after the discussion becomes available.

It is OK to voice personal opinions in discussions but they must be supported by evidence and good arguments. Lively discussion is encouraged, but civility must always be preserved. I will post a grading rubric on Blackboard.

Reaction Essays (20%)

You are required to write two essays in response to two readings. The two readings are marked by [Reaction Essay] in the time table. **The essays are due on Blackboard at 11:59 pm on those two days. A guideline for essay writing will be posted on Blackboard.** Your essay should respond to all the readings assigned for that day. Each day of late submission will result in a 5% penalty. **I will not accept papers one week after the due date.**

I highly encourage you to benefit from the Writing Center. This [link](#) shows you how to make an appointment with the Writing Center. **I offer a 3-point bonus for students who complete a consultation.** To earn the bonus, add a new page at the end of your essay, paste the screenshot of your appointment and provide the name and email address of your consultant. Remember to ask your consultant's name and email address if you plan to earn the bonus points.

Exams (50%)

There will be a midterm exam (25%) and a final exam (25%). Both are open-book and taken on Blackboard. Open-book means you can use assigned readings, lecture notes, and other materials I provide on Blackboard during exam but you are prohibited from collaborating with one another during exam or searching the Internet. **Exams will be held on Respondus Lockdown browser, so make sure you install and test it before the exams.** I will provide study guides and conduct Q&A sessions before each exam. Please refer to the timetable for specific dates.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct, such as cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Check the university definition of academic misconduct and make every effort to avoid it (<https://www.umgc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/academic-integrity/tutorial>).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, or otherwise seek additional information, please contact **The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS)** at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in Union East, Room 106. You are responsible for presenting to me any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams, quizzes, or other needs.

Resources in Challenging Times

Times can be challenging but you are never alone. UTEP is dedicated to students' mental health. Here is a list of on-and-off campus resources that you may find helpful. <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>.

Important Dates (Put us on your calendar!)

Wednesday, January 22, 2025	Discussion 1 available
Wednesday, February 5, 2025	Discussion 2 available
Wednesday, March 5, 2025	Discussion 3 available
Wednesday, March 19, 2025	Midterm exam live Q&A
Monday, March 24, 2025	Midterm exam
Wednesday, March 26, 2025	Reaction 1 essay due
Wednesday, April 2, 2025	Discussion 4 available
Friday, April 4, 2025	Drop/Withdrawal Deadline (You don't need my approval to drop this course before this date.)
Monday, April 14, 2025	Reaction 2 essay due
Monday, April 28, 2025	Discussion 5 available
Wednesday, April 30, 2025	Final exam live Q&A
Wednesday, May 7, 2025	Final exam

PART 1: HISTORY AND PRE-REFORM ERA

1/22 Wednesday—Course Overview

- **Discussion 1 available**

1/27 Monday—A Snapshot into Chinese Politics

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 1 (pp. 3-28).

1/29 Wednesday—Confucianism

- Chan, Wing-Tsit. 1963. “The Humanism of Confucius.” *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Chapter 4.
- Page, Jeremy. 2015. “Why China is Turning Back to Confucius.” *Wall Street Journal*, Sep 20,
- Confucius, *The Analects*. [link](#) (optional)

2/3 Monday—Chinese Imperial History

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 2 (pp.45-56).

2/5 Wednesday—Film on imperial China

- **Discussion 2 available**

2/10 Monday—the Republican Revolution and the May Fourth Movement

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 2 (pp.56-73).
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. [link](#) (optional)

2/12 Wednesday—the Republican Revolution and the May Fourth Movement, continued

2/17 Monday—the Mao Era before the Cultural Revolution

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 3 (pp. 76-100)
- Li Zhisui. 1994. *The private life of Chairman Mao: The memoirs of Mao's personal physician* (pp. 114-136).
- Mao Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*. [link](#) (optional)

2/19 Wednesday—the Cultural Revolution

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 3 (pp. 100-123)
- Ramzy, Austin. 2016. “China’s Cultural Revolution, Explained”. *New York Times*.

2/24 Monday—Deng Xiaoping & “Reform and Opening”

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 4 (pp. 124-133).
- “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party.” CCP. 1981. ([link](#), optional)

2/26 Wednesday—Deng Xiaoping & “Reform and Opening”, continued

3/3 Monday—film on the Mao years

PART 2: POLITICS OF THE REFORM ERA

3/5 Wednesday—the Tiananmen Protests

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 4 (pp. 133-153)
- **Discussion 3 available**

3/10, 3/12—Spring Break, no lectures

3/17 Monday—film on the Tiananmen Protests

3/19 Wednesday—midterm exam Q&A

3/24 Monday—midterm exam on Blackboard from noon to 11:59 pm

3/26 Wednesday— the emergence of a “Socialist Market Economy” [**reaction essay**]

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 4 (pp. 134-153).
- Tang, Min. 2011. "The Political Behavior of the Chinese Middle Class." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16 (4):373.

3/31 Monday—The “Drivers for Economic Modernization” and the Role of the Government

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 8

4/2 Wednesday—structure of the party state

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 6
- Tang, Wenfang. 2014⁶ “Same Bed, Different Dreams: The Bifurcation of the Chinese Communist Party,” Shan and Yang eds., *The Rising Civil Society and State-Society Relations in China* (pp. 1-30).
- **Discussion 4 available**

PART 3: SPECIFIC ISSUES

4/7 Monday—China’s legal system

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 7
- Wang, Yuhua. 2015. *Tying the Autocrat's Hands*. New York: Cambridge University Press (pp. 16-49).

4/9 Wednesday—film on China’s legal system

4/14 Monday—the survival strategy of the CCP [**reaction essay**]

- Dickson, Bruce. 2004. “Dilemmas of Party Adaptation: the CCP’s Strategies for Survival.” Gries and Rosen eds. *Chinese Politics* (pp. 22-40).
- Nathan, Andrew J. 2003. "Authoritarian Resilience." *Journal of Democracy* 14 (1):6-17.

4/16 Wednesday— Protests and Resistance

- Tang, Wenfang. 2016, “Regime-Inspired Contentious Politics (Chapter 6)” in *Populist Authoritarianism: Chinese Political Culture and Regime Stability*.

4/21 Monday—Rural and Urban China

- *Politics in China*. Chapter 9-10

4/23 Wednesday—Corruption

- Rock, Michael T. "Corruption and democracy." *Journal of Development Studies* 45, no. 1 (2009): 55-75.
- Quah, Jon ST. "Combating corruption in Singapore: What Can be Learned?" *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 9, no. 1 (2001): 29-35.

4/28 Monday—US-Sino Relations

- Zhao, Suisheng. 2022. *The Dragon Roars Back: Transformational Leaders And Dynamics of Chinese Foreign Policy*. Chapter 1.
- **Discussion 5 available**

4/30 Wednesday— Final exam Q&A

5/5 Monday—Film on Taiwan

5/7 Wednesday—Final exam on Blackboard from noon to 11:59 pm