

POLS 468 (EALC 585) China Politics and Society, Fall 2024

Instructor: John Kennedy

Classroom: 212 Blake

Time: Mon & Wed 12:30-1:45 am

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Course Number: 27174, 27171

Scope and Purpose:

At present, China's leadership and society are facing tremendous economic, social, and political challenges. This course presents an overview on the development of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the social challenges that average citizens face in China today (2024). Among the topics covered are China's political institutions, the economy, rural to urban migration, ethnic minorities and population policies. In addition, we will examine the achievements, failures, obstacles, and potential development in the fields of education, social equality, legal system, environmental protection and economic development.

Readings:

William Joseph (editor), *Politics In China: An Introduction* Third Edition (Oxford University Press, 2024), ISBN: 9780197683217 (paperback—\$50.00)

Extra Readings posted on Canvas

The listed readings for the lecture *should be read before the class session*. Note: In the back of every chapter in the *Politics In China* text there is a great list of suggested readings. I also post some additional required and suggested readings on Canvas.

Grading:

The course grade will be based on one mid-term, a paper and the final exam:

Debates: 30%

Final Exam (12/19): 20%

Paper Draft (11/18): 15%

Mid-Term Exam (10/16): 20%

Paper Appointment: 5%

Final Paper (12/11): 10%

Exams (40%):

The exams are taken in class and are based on readings (textbook and assigned reading on Canvas), debates, and lecture material (posted on Canvas). It is your responsibility to know what has happened in class. A curve is *not* used in the grading, so you are not competing with each other. One week before the mid-term exam the instructor will hand out a *study guide*. Although the study guide is comprehensive, nothing will be on the exam that is not on the study guide. The mid-term and final exam will consist of three parts: (I) identify a number of terms with a single sentence answer, (II) identify concepts and issues with a single paragraph answer and (III) essay questions. The grading for each section is as follows Part I: 30%, Part II: 30% and Part III: 40%.

Debates (30%) **Carefully Read the Debate Instructions:

Each debate will include debate handouts with several positions (arguments). Each debate group will have their own position. The debate groups and positions will be assigned the lecture session *before* the actual debate. You work together outside and inside the class and then use the experience (and evidence) to *write your own* response paper after the debate. The debates start as small groups of three or four people and then merger into larger debate groups. This gives everyone a chance to participate in the discussions.

Your final debate grade is based on the 7 written debate papers. If we do not get to all 7 debates, then your grade will be based on the number of actual debates held in class. The reaction paper is due the following week. For example, if you write up a debate topic that was on Monday, Sept 9th, then the debate paper is due the following Monday, Sept 16th. There is a sign-in sheet for each debate. If you miss a debate, then you are allowed 1 make-up debate essay.

Debate Structure

1st Stage of the in-class Debate: The class is divided into small debate groups of about three to five people. The groups and position handouts are preassigned by the professor *before* the debate day. Debate Group 1A takes on the assigned Position and another small Debate Group 1B also addresses the same Position. The same for the other small groups for Position 2A and 2B. The research for the debate is to address the key points and questions in the assigned handout for your group (position). It is important to identify the *strongest* and weakest *evidence* for your assigned position.

2nd Stage of the in-class Debate: the smaller groups come together and form a single position group, 1A and 1B become larger Group 1. The smaller groups share ideas and come up with an agreed upon position. The same with Group 2 and Group 3. Compare the answers to the questions and your evidence (remember to identify the *strongest* and weakest *evidence* for your assigned position). Your Group needs to have agreed upon position points.

3rd Stage of the larger class Debate: the two larger groups present their positions and discuss the evidence and ideas used to support their side of the debate. It is important to identify the *strongest* and *weakest* evidence from the opposing positions. For example, Group 1 should evaluate the strongest and weakest evidence presented by Group 2. At the end of the debate, which group do you think presented the strongest argument/point?

Structure of the Debate Reaction Paper

First, start with the stated issues and positions. There may be two or three key positions. Make sure you clearly state the issue and *all* the positions in the first paragraph. Next write out the key debate question from your handout. Even if there are several questions focus on one. Finally, clearly state your smaller debate group's initial position. This should be the results from the first stage of the debate such as Groups 1A, 1B, 2A...ect).

Second is the discussion within the 2nd stage of the debate when Groups A and B merge (for example, groups 1A and 1B become Group 1). Using *evidence* from the readings and other sources, how did your group support the position with the evidence? What was the *strongest* evidence that you think supported your group's argument? What was the *weakest* evidence? This is the result of your group (2nd stage) discussion (about a half page/2-3 paragraphs).

Third, how did the 3rd stage of the debate play out in the whole class? In your opinion, which position (group) had the strongest argument? Why? Which position had the weakest argument? Remember a strong argument depends on strong *evidence* and a weak argument is due to weak evidence. This is the result of the third stage of the debate and is about a half page.

Fourth, the conclusion should be *your opinion* on the outcome of the debate. Do you personally agree with the position of your group? Why or why not? In this part, you do not have to take the position of your debate group, but rather your own position. You start this paragraph with, "in my opinion", and it is about a half page.

Paper Appointment (5%):

Once you have selected a research paper topic, you must make an appointment to see me and discuss your research question and paper. The point of the meeting is to help you define the debate and develop a paper outline. The professor will post a sign-in sheet for the paper appointment in early September.

Paper Draft (15%):

The draft paper must follow the paper outline and instructions. The draft paper should be at least 10 but no longer than 12 pages, and, of course, use Word.doc double-spaced with 12 pt. font (not including tables or figures). In your paper, you will present an argument (debate) and present the pros and cons of a specific topic then support your position. First, select a relatively *narrow* topic that you have an interest in writing. An example of a *broad topic* is "environmental protection in China". This topic is too broad and it is not an acceptable paper topic for this course. An example of a *narrow topic* is "the environmental protection priorities in the 13th Five year economic plan (2016-2020)". Then, write a single sentence that contains the pro and con or two sides of the debate. For example, "Some scholars believe the environmental protection priorities starting in 2016 have not effectively dealt with air pollution in China's major cities, while other scholars suggest there has been major improvements"

Second, you need to restate your topic in the form of a clear *research question* that can be answered either as *yes or no*. Here is an example of a good question: "Have the environmental protection priorities in the 13th Five year economic plan (2016-2020) significantly reduce air pollution in China?" Here is an example an unacceptable research question: "What has the Chinese party-government done to reduce pollution in China?" This is a broad descriptive question (rather than analytical) and cannot be answered as yes or no.

Third, answer the question by providing *both* the sides of the debate and then support your position (i.e., analysis). You will look at evidence that supports the “yes” answer and evidence that supports the “no” answer. Your answer will depend on the strongest evidence. I will provide a paper guideline/outline.

The draft paper is due **Monday, November 18th** and I will return your paper with my comments and grade on **Wednesday, December 4th**.

Final Paper Draft (15%): After you receive and review my Track Changes and comments on the draft paper, you have an opportunity to address the comments and improve the final paper grade. Late paper drafts will be penalized 5 pts per-day and you will have less time for final revisions. *The original digital copy of the draft paper with my comments will be compared with the final paper.* Final Papers are due on the last day of class **Wednesday, December 11th**.

Criteria for Grading the Draft and Final Papers:

Papers are graded for both content and form. The evaluation of your paper is based on three questions: 1.) How well does the paper follow the assignment instructions? 2.) Is the paper organization clear with a concise argument/statement at the beginning, logical development of the argument and a solid conclusion? 3.) Is there plenty of evidence from the class and outside readings to back up the argument? Evidence can be paraphrased or quoted, but make sure you provide the proper *citation* for each piece of evidence you present (see the Paper Reference and Reference Guide attached to the syllabus). *Papers should not have too many long quotes. No quarter or half page quotes. Also do not cut and paste tables or graphs (figures) from other journal articles or the internet.* You can only use an Excel graph or Word (doc.) table that you made from raw data (from China Statistical Yearbooks <http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/Statisticaldata/AnnualData/>). If you find data and you want to present a graph (figure) or table ask me and I will help you get started. *Your paper must have at least six references and no more than two internet sources.* What is an internet source? An internet source is a non-published source (i.e. not a digital version of a published journal or newspaper/magazine). For example, a US State Department report on China is a “.gov” internet source. I will only accept “.gov”, “.edu”, or “.org” web sources. Remember JSTOR is not an internet source. It is a digital access to print journals, so do not cite the web address for JSTOR or any other digital resource for printed material. Always cite the print information (see Paper Reference and Reference Guide).

Make-up Exams: Make up exams require making a completely different exam from the rest of the class. The material will still come from the study guide, but you will need to contact me *before* the exam day.

Disabilities: Any student who has a disability that may influence class participation or test taking should contact the instructor. I am happy to make accommodations.

E-Mail: All e-mail will receive a response within 24 hours. Regarding exams, I will *not* give exact answers for possible exam questions, but rather I will provide information to help you find the answers.

Attendance: All the PPT and debate handouts will be posted on Canvas. Although you will not lose points for missing a lecture, it is highly recommended that you attend the lectures in order to get the most out of the class and be prepared for the exams and writing assignments. However, there is required attendance for in-class debates.

Class Conduct: *Turn off all cell phones:* Each time a cell phone rings during class, *everyone will lose one point* from their final grade, but if the professor's cell phone rings then everyone *will receive an extra two points* on their final grade. The reason for the cell phone rule is that in-class disturbances waste your classmates' time and money (tuition). Also, please do not read the newspaper, use class time to sleep, do work for other classes, listen to music or check e-mail/surf the web during class. Sleeping or conducting other business within the 75 minute time period is disruptive and disrespectful to the whole class. Therefore, if you are observed sleeping or surfing the web (via i-phone), then I will stop the lecture to wake you up or ask you to please stop.

Computers in Class: No computers in class. However, I provide detailed outlines from the Power Point Slides that are posted on Canvas *before* each class. These outlines are guides and baseline notes and you can use to in class (no need to copy the PPT slides) and write in the additional needed information.

Canvas: I will post the course lectures (PPTs) and relevant links and material on Canvas (Modules).

Office Hours: I hold office hours, but if you cannot make the assigned hours, then you can make an appointment. I am in my office most of the time: my door is always open. If you are falling behind in class, come see me before you get too far behind.

Final Grades: The grading is based on A, B, C, D and F. I do not use the +/- system for grading. A = 100-90%, B = 89-80%, C = 79-70%, D = 69-60% and F = below 59%.

Week 1: Introduction and the Origins of Chinese Communist Party (CCP):

Objective: Introduce the class and the study of China's politics and society. The first week we discuss the some of the major social and political issues facing citizens and the leadership. This week we begin to discuss the critical political developments from the 1930s until late 1970s that continue to influence and shape contemporary China in 2023 including how the 20th Party Congress and Xi Jinping's unrepresented third term.

8/26— Introduction and Lecture 1: Marxism and Leninism; Readings (Text): Chapter 2 "From Empire to People's Republic" in *Politics In China*, pp. 41-70

8/28— Guest Speakers: Research Team from China visiting KU and Starting Lecture 2.

Week 2: CCP Political and Social Development I

Objective: This week we will continue the discussion regarding the critical political developments from the 1930s until the late 1970s that continue to influence and shape contemporary China including the Mass Line and Campaigns in 2024.

9/2 —No Class: Labor Day Holiday

9/4 — Lecture 2: Maoism, May 4th Movement and Nationalism Chapter 6 “Ideology: the evolution of Chinese Communism” in *Politics In China*, pp. 161-173

Week 3: CCP Political and Social Development II

9/9 — Lecture 3: The Mass Line, Political Campaign Model, Land Reform and the GLF
Readings (Text): Chapter 6 “Ideology: the evolution of Chinese Communism” in *Politics In China*, pp. 173-189; Chapter 3 “Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)” in *Politics In China*, pp.73-94;

9/11 — Lecture 4: Communes, Cultural Revolution: Readings (Text): Chapter 3 “Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)” in *Politics In China*, pp.106-123: Reading (Canvas): Gallagher, Mary. “China's Rewritten Past: How the Communist Party Weaponizes History.” *Foreign Affairs*. 102 (2023): 190-195.

Week 4: Rapid Economic Reform and Slower Political Reform

9/16 —Lecture 5: Limited and slow reform with political opening in the 1980s that lead to Tiananmen protests and repression in 1989 as well as the rapid speed of economic reform after Deng’s “Southern Tour” in 1992 into the 1990s and 2000s as well as CCP impressions of the Soviet Union collapse that guides the CCP today (2024). Readings (Text): Chapter 4 “Deng Xiaoping and the Reform Era” in *Politics In China*, pp.118-136.

9/18 — Guest Speaker: Tiananmen Protest Personal Experience (from an artist’s perspective) and development of the Arts in China. Reading: Chapter 12 “Policy Case Study: The Arts” in *Politics In China*

Week 5: The Political System: Party and State Institutions

Objective: To learn about the structure and function of the CCP and the State. First, we examine the party and state structure and constitutions (there is a separate constitution for the party and the state). On paper these institutions are separate, but in practice there is an overlap and a fusion between party and state.

9/23 — Lecture 6: Party Institutions

Readings (Text): Chapter 7 “China’s Communist Party State: The Structure and Dynamics of Power” in *Politics In China*, pp. 209-241.

9/25— Lecture 7: State Institutions and Cadre Management System

Readings (Text): Chapter 10, “Rural China: Reform and Resistance” in *Politics In China*, pp. 337-361; On Canvas: “China: Democracy That Works” Translated document from the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, December 4, 2021 (read “Preamble” pages 1-2 and “A New Model of Democracy” pages 29-30)

Week 6 The Legal System and Debate 1

Issue and Debate 1: The legal system in China is relatively weak due to the lack of clear separation between the Party and State and the sheer size of the country, but it is more developed today (in 2024) than it was during the Maoist Period. There are many legal challenges and issues such as Food Safety, Workplace Safety, Trade and Customs as well as Civil Liberties. The key is the distinction between “rule of law” where the law is applied to all citizens and leaders, and “rule by law” where the law is manipulated and selectively applied by leaders.

9/30 — Lecture 8: Legal System and Legal Reform

Readings (Canvas): Chapter 8 “China’s Legal System” in *Politics In China*, pp.246-285.

10/2 — Debate 1: Can Western type of legal institutions be established in China or is the political culture of “relationships over regulations” too resistant to change (i.e. institutions or political culture)? Will “rule of law” develop or is “rule by law” too entrenched in China’s political/legal system?

Readings (Canvas): Scoggins, Suzanne E., “Introduction: The Death of Xiao Hu” from *Policing China: Street Level Protest in the Shadow of Protest* (2021) p.1-19:

Week 7: The Economy

In Week 6 we discuss the economic reforms from planned to a semi-market economy. This week we examine private, semi-private and State-Owned Enterprises (SOE). The difference is the level of government intervention in the companies, markets (such as agricultural, energy and housing), banks and currency value. One of the key issues is the move from a generally export driven economy to a consumer driven one. Also, one of the debates is on the necessity and merits of government intervention including the current trade war with the United States.

10/7 — Lecture 9: From Planned to Market Economy

Readings (Text): Chapter 8 “China’s Political Economy” *Politics In China*, pp. 294-336

10/9 — Lecture 10: TVEs, SOEs and Foreign Investment

Week 8:

10/14 No Class Fall Break

10/16 — Midterm Exam

Week 9: Economy Debate 2 and Social Credit System/Information Control

Debate 2: Conservative Reformers want to maintain and even increase state intervention in the economy such as SOEs and increased social welfare benefits and protections for workers. Radical reforms want to increase market reforms and reduce state intervention in the economy. Should China reduce or increase market reforms? Should China maintain the status quo?

10/21— Debate 2: State intervention, employment and exports...Can the CCP afford to introduce greater free market reform? Can the CCP afford to close remaining key SOEs even if they are non-profitable?

10/23— Lecture 11: Social Credit System in China and Control over Information

Readings (Text): Chapter 16 “Policy Case Study: Internet Politics” in *Politics In China*, pp. 469-480: Readings (Canvas): Sun, Taiyi, and Quansheng Zhao. “Delegated Censorship: The Dynamic, Layered, and Multistage Information Control Regime in China.” *Politics & Society* 50, no. 2 (2022): 191-221.

Week 10: Debate 3 Censorship and Information Control and the Hukou System

There is a debate whether the Social Credit System is more of a social control mechanism than monitoring credit and e-commerce. In addition, to internet censorship and information control it seems like the central government has significant authority over Chinese social engagement in-person and online. However, there is also evidence that the system is much more decentralized and greater flexibility in the system. What does the evidence suggest flexible authoritarianism or greater moves to centralized/totalitarianism?

10/28 — Debate 3: Is the Social Credit System an extension of the existing household registration system and financial monitoring system for Banks? Or is it a deeper form of social control? One issue is centralization of information and control. How decentralized is social monitoring and information control?

10/30 — Lecture 12: The Household Registration System (*hukou*) from 1958 to 2024
Reading: “China’s Hukou Reform in 2022: Do They Mean it this Time?” CSIS, April 2022 <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/chinas-hukou-reform-2022-do-they-mean-it-time-0>

Week 11: Debate 4 Urbanization

In 1979 at the beginning of reform period, about 20 percent of the population lived in the cities, but by 2012 the majority of population is considered urban (51 percent). The dynamic pace of urbanization creates a range of pressure on social services and infrastructure in cities. Several of the key issues are the growing urban inequality and “urban villages” including the rural to urban migration and *hukou* status. On the other hand, megacities may improve living and employment conditions for rural migrants and urban residents. However, megacities also face challenges related to waste management, transportation and energy needs. Are the benefits of mega cities worth the costs?

11/4— Lecture 13: Urbanization

Readings (Text): Chapter 11 “Urban China” in *Politics In China*, pp.367-387.

11/6 — Debate 4 (Costs and Benefits of Megacities in China): What are the benefits of a megacity including quality of life, income and employment opportunities? What are the costs including pollution, transportation and social inequalities? Are the benefits of mega cities worth the costs? Keep in mind the *hukou* system, property rights, the economy and legal system debates.

Week 12: Education Debate 5

Issue: The education system has gone through several significant changes over the last few decades. In 1985, China announced the Compulsory Education Law requiring nine years of education (Elementary to Junior High). However, there is a continuing rural and urban gap in access and quality of education. There are also issues regarding higher education such the college entrance exam and types of colleges and universities. One of the debates is whether China should (or can) abolish the national college entrance exam?

11/11 — Lecture 14: Compulsory Education and Higher Education

Readings (Canvas): Scott Rozelle, “Rural Underemployment Threatens China’s Growth” *East Asia Forum Quarterly*, Vol 15, No 1 (March 2023); “One Year Later: Behind China’s Education Reforms,” *Asia Global Online*, August 11, 2022

<https://www.asiaglobalonline.hku.hk/one-year-later-behind-chinas-education-reforms>

11/13 — Debate 5: The college entrance exam is considered a merit based exam, but there are uneven educational opportunities at K-12 levels that can influence the outcome for students. Can the current system be reformed, or should the current exam system be eliminated? Readings: Review the Rural Education Actions Program (REAP) web page at <http://reap.fsi.stanford.edu/>

Week 13: Environmental and Debate 6 (*Paper Draft Due November 13th)

Issue: Due to rapid economic development, urbanization and weak legal enforcement of environment protection laws, the air, water and soil pollution levels in China are some of the worst in the world. Also China’s energy resources are still dependent on coal and petroleum. At the same time, China has developed massive solar and wind power projects as well as recycling centers. One question is can (or will) the CCP and central leadership implement environmental protection laws to curb the pollution?

11/18 — Lecture 15: Air, Land & Water Pollution; Government and Citizen Responses

Readings (Text): Chapter 13 “Policy Case Study: The Environment” in *Politics In China*, pp.405-421; Readings (Canvas): Lewis, Dyani. “Air pollution in China is falling—but there is a long way to go.” *Nature* (2023): 230-231; “China’s Fight Against Climate Change and Environmental Degradation” *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 19, 2021 <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-climate-change-policies-environmental-degradation>

11/20 — Debate 6: Progress versus Protection, and the environmental costs (and crisis) of rapid development. Do the benefits of rapid development outweigh the environmental costs? Given the political system and the need for continued economic development, can the CCP leadership afford to enact policies that improve the environment and slow growth? Does the central leadership lack the capacity or the willingness to fully implement environment protection laws?

Week 14 Health Care Debate 7 and Thanksgiving

Issue: During the Maoist period (work unit system and communes) most Chinese had free access to hospitals and clinics. However, after the introduction of market reforms and the closure of SOEs (work units) many health care expenses dramatically increased for average citizens. Moreover, the gap in health care services between rural and urban as well as smaller and larger cities grew wider. Should the central leadership return to universal coverage or continue to privatize health care services? How can universal or privatized health care close the rural and urban gap?

11/25 — Lecture 16: The evolution, erosion and reform of the health care system
Readings (Text): Chapter 14 “Policy Case Study: Public Health” in *Politics In China*, pp. 426-441.

11/27 — Thanksgiving No Class

Week 15 Debate 7 Health Care Debate and Xinjiang/Tibet

Issue: Currently over a million Uighurs have been detained in reeducation camps in Xinjiang China since 2017. Why is this occurring? What is the goal of the CCP leadership regarding the camps? Is the current policies and internment camps helping to achieve this goal (or is it making matters worse)? What are the personal, political and social costs? The other broader issue is greater autonomy. Tibet and Xinjiang are considered Autonomous Regions in China. However, they tend to have less realized autonomy than a regular province. Both regions have significant minority populations (non-Han Chinese) and a history of resistance and accommodation. While some scholars discuss why Xinjiang and Tibet *should* be independent, the real debate is whether or not Xinjiang and Tibet *can* become independent.

12/2 — Debate 7: Should the central leadership return to universal coverage or continue to privatize health care services? How can universal or privatized health care close the inequality as well as rural and urban gap?

12/4 — Lecture 17: Tibet and Xinjiang

Readings (Text): Chapter 17, “Tibet” in *Politics In China*, pp.489-517; Chapter 18, “Xinjiang” in *Politics In China*, pp. 523-546; Readings (Canvas): China’s Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang, Council on Foreign Relations, Sept 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/chinas-repression-uighurs-xinjiang>

Week 16 The social and political implications of changing demographics and Class Wrap-up (*Final Paper Due December 11th)

12/9 Lecture 18: The social and political outcome of the Single Child policy (1980-2015) and the aging population. Some of the outcomes include “bare branches” or involuntary bachelors in mostly poorer rural areas, couples having fewer children and the population replacement issues (labor and economy) as well as social welfare to pensions.

Readings (Canvas): Carl Minzner, “Xi Jinping Can’t Handle an Aging China,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 2, 2023

12/11 Open Discussion: Given what we have discussed and learned, consider the following question. Is it possible for China to remain an economically and politically stable single party authoritarian regime *without* democratic reforms? What are the most challenging issues and problems facing Chinese people? What are the most challenging issues and problems facing Chinese leadership?

Final Exam: Thursday, December 19th 10:30am - 1:00pm