

Political Science G8471x
Chinese Politics in Comparative Perspective

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Tuesdays, 6:10-8

INTRODUCTION.

This course examines selected aspects of Chinese politics. It is intended for students who have had W4471x, Chinese politics or the equivalent, and who are able to do more advanced and specialized work.

Students in the Department of Political Science may take the course either for 8000 colloquium or 9000 seminar credit in order to meet departmental requirements. The course is run as a colloquium, meaning that the sessions are devoted to discussion mainly of secondary literature. The required paper is normally based on extensive research in such literature.

A 9000 research seminar, in contrast, is devoted to the production of a major paper that relies heavily on primary sources—defined as sources emanating from the PRC, Taiwan, or Hong Kong-- either in English translation or in Chinese. Students are welcome to take the course for either purpose but you should let me know early on what your choices are. In either case, the major requirement is a term paper of around 25 pages. This paper will be due no later than Monday, May 8.

The theme for the colloquium is state capacity and state-society relations. The Chinese state faces a wide range of problems that arise from the rapid social, economic, and cultural changes of the reform era. These changes affect the way in which the Chinese state governs. It must in some way or other adapt to them, develop new capacities to deal with them, or it will find itself increasingly difficult to cope with the new challenges.

The Chinese state itself has of course been undergoing significant change, both intentional and unintentional. Intentional change refers to efforts by China's leaders to restructure the Chinese state from its Maoist foundations into one capable of guiding the "socialist market economy." Put another way,

China is engaged in building a modern state with many of the same features as those found in developing and developed capitalist systems. China's leaders are engaged in a process of developing appropriate policymaking, administrative, regulatory, and implementing capacities. The state-building process is shaped and constrained by institutional legacies of the Mao era, the political, economic, and social processes of the reform era and their numerous unanticipated consequences as well as by the regime's commitment to the maintenance of the monopoly of power of the Chinese Communist Party.

The political constraints are particularly evident in the case of state-society relations, as indicated by the blockages that inhibit China's rising and increasingly differentiated interests from openly and legitimately articulating their demands. But even within these limitations, it is known that citizens, individually or in groups, have ways of pressing their demands and voicing their grievances. A sustained inquiry into changing patterns of governance and of societal responses is thus an important task in assessing where China is going.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLOQUIUM

A. We will devote the first five or six sessions to discussions of readings on various aspects of the state and of governance. See Part I of the syllabus. For each week, readings on one of the topics will be assigned. One or more students will be asked to report on particular articles or book chapters and to raise questions for discussion. For this part of the course to be successful requires that everyone do the assigned readings and think about them. Those students scheduled to report on a piece of reading should not simply present a summary of the material. Instead, you should tell the class what the major points are and what their significance is for understanding that day's topic. Learning how to give effective reports is an important part of the course.

B. For the second half of the semester, a more interactive approach will be adopted, in which students will decide on topics to be covered in class. In Part II of the syllabus I have listed major topics together with subtopics relevant to state-society relations. Members of the class may suggest others. Each member of the group must decide on one of the major topics as well as a subtopic. If this works out, we can organize each of the remaining sessions around one major topic, with individual reports and papers dealing with a subtopic. This follows the panel format of the annual meetings of scholarly organizations such as the Association for Asian Studies, which devote each panel to one broad topic into which the papers of four or five participants fit.

Your task is to decide early on --see schedule below--which of the broad topics is of interest to you, and, as you proceed, to decide on a manageable

subtopic. (Some of the subtopics, it is important to note, can be broken up into further subtopics.) This requires doing some preliminary canvassing of sources and discussion with me, and, depending on class size, group discussion. Once everyone has made a decision, I will then draw up a schedule for the second half of the course.

Some members of the group may be interested in pursuing topics that do not directly focus on state-society questions, including foreign, economic, or security policies, or Taiwan. Students are welcome to write papers on such topics. If enough students are interested in a set of such issues, we can, depending on class size, allocate a session for presentations and discussion. If this is not possible, the students in question will have to do a report on a subject that will differ from that of their papers.

During the second half of the semester, those reporting on the week following will supply a short list of readings that all members of the class should do, and which I will put on reserve, thereby insuring that everyone has some knowledge of the topic and subtopics in question.

To reiterate, active and ongoing participation in class discussions, not just in “your” session, but in all sessions, is an essential part of a colloquium. About a quarter to a third of your final grade will depend on the quality and quantity of your participation. Needless to say, regular attendance is also required. If you must miss a class, you should notify me ahead of time. Repeated unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

SCHEDULE

1.No later than February 14, hand in a short statement no longer than one page of your paper interests, outlining what you anticipate your paper to be about. Please include as much bibliographical detail as you can at this point. I will return this with comments.

2.A final prospectus of your topic, which should include the major questions which you are asking, must be handed in no later than March 7.

3. Depending on the size of the class, I will discuss your topics either individually or in groups. Reports will begin on March 21.

3.Papers are due on Monday May 9. Graduating students, whose grades need to be turned in early, should make every effort to turn in their papers ahead of this deadline.

READINGS

A course pack will be available at Village Copier, 2872 Broadway at 112th Street.

All readings are on reserve in Starr Library.

TOPICS FOR PART ONE

I. Assessing the Capacities of the Chinese State

Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (1966 edition), chapter VIII, "The Capabilities of Political Systems" (course book)

"China's Changing of the Guard," Journal of Democracy, vol.14, no.1, January 2003, pp. 6-81 (on reserve)

II. Policy-making

Susan Greenhalgh, "Missile Science, Population Science: The Origins of China's One-Child Policy," China Quarterly, no.182, June 2005, pp.253-276 (course book)

Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes, (1988), chpts.1, 2, 4

David Lampton, "A Plum for a Peach: Bargaining, Interest, and Bureaucratic Politics in China," in David Lampton and Kenneth Lieberthal, eds., Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision-Making in Post-Mao China, 1991, pp.33-58 (course book)

Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin Winckler, Governing China's Population, (2005), pp.47-54 and chpt. 6, "The Hu Era: From Comprehensive Reform to Social Policy", pp.166-201 (course book)

III. Performance: the Tax and Fee Reform

T.Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, "Taxation and Coercion in Rural China," in Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Capacity and Consent: Taxation and State Building in Developing Countries, (forthcoming, 2006, course book)

T.Bernstein, "Implementing Policy Innovations in Rural China: The Case of the Phasing out of Peasant Financial Burdens," (forthcoming, 2006, course book)

IV. Perspectives on Corruption

Minxin Pei, China's Trapped Transition, chpt.4, "Transforming the State: From Development to Predatory," pp.132-166, (forthcoming, 2006, on reserve), pp. 132-166

Dali Yang, Remaking the Chinese Leviathan, (2004), chpt.7, "Institutional Reforms and the Struggle against Corruption," pp.217-258, (course book)

Melanie Manion, Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong, (2004), chpt.2, "Corruption and Anticorruption Reform in Hong Kong," pp.27-83 and chpt.5, "Anticorruption Campaigns as Enforcement Mechanisms," pp.155-199 (course book)

V. Ideology and legitimacy.

Alan R.Kluver, Legitimizing the Chinese Economic Reforms: A Rhetoric of Myth and Orthodoxy, chpts. 2, 5, 6 (course book)

Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy crisis in China," in Gries and Rosen, eds., State and Society in 21st Century China, pp. 24-49 (course book)

Peter Gries, "Popular nationalism and state legitimation in China," in *ibid*, pp.180-194 (course book)

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR PART TWO.

I. State and society: the aggrieved vs. the beneficiaries

Examples: various types of workers and peasants, intellectuals, business groups, officials, students, migrants, middle class, new business elites, the newly rich, minorities.

II. State Measures to enhance responsiveness to society

What channels are there and how effective are they?

1. Legal system

- 2.Village and other elections
- 3.People's congresses, local and national
- 4."Letters and visits" system
- 5.The media
- 6.Transparent bureaucracy
- 7.NGOs

III.Measures to control official conduct

- 1.Police and prison abuses
- 2.Household registration system
- 3.Family planning
- 4.Curbing corruption
- 5.official arbitrariness

IV.State measures to improve delivery of services

- 1.Health care, e.g., AIDS
- 2.Environment
- 3.Education, rural, urban
- 4.Social safety net

V.Protest and contention

A.Protest in the urban sector: workers, pensioners, migrants, redevelopment; protest in the rural sector, financial burdens, land requisitioning; among minorities;

B.The rise of unofficial groups and organizations

VI.Capacity to maintain control over society

Subtopics:

- 1.Control over information flow (internet, media, etc)
2. Dissent and deviance, Falungong and other heterodox sects; religion, "house churches,"
3. Ordinary crime; gangs

