

Selected Topics in Contemporary Chinese Politics

Professor XIE Tao

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Course Description

This short course aims to improve students' factual knowledge about China and to engage them in scholarly debates about Chinese politics. Toward these two goals the course will discuss several issues in contemporary Chinese politics that have attracted considerable attention from both western and Chinese scholars. These issues include the "China model", Chinese meritocracy vs. western democracy, national identity and nationalism, party-rebuilding, regime legitimacy, and the political future of China.

The course does not have any prerequisite. However, prior knowledge about and intellectual interest in China would certainly help students to critically engage assigned readings and to participate in classroom discussion.

Course schedule

July 24 Basics of the Chinese political system

Kenneth Liberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*, 2nd ed., New York: 2004, chapters 6-7, pp.171-242.

July 25 Is there a China Model?

Barry Naughton, "China's Distinctive System: Can It Be a Model for Others?"

Journal of Contemporary China, 2010, 19(65): 437-60

Scott Kennedy, "The Myth of the Beijing Consensus," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2010, 19(65): 461-477.

July 26 Chinese meritocracy vs. western democracy

Daniel A. Bell, *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015, Preface, pp.ix-xxx; chapter 2, 63-109.

July 27 National identity and nationalism

William A. Callahan, *China: The Pessimist Nation*, London: Oxford University Press, 2010, chapters 5, pp.127-159.

Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing," *International Security*, winter 2016/2017, 41(3): 7-43.

July 31 **Rebuilding the party**

David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2008, chapters 6-7, pp.103-160.

August 1 **The question of legitimacy**

Dingxin Zhao, "The Mandate of Heaven and Performance Legitimation in Historical and Contemporary China," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2009, 53(3): 416-33.

Jinghan Zeng, "The Debate on Regime Legitimacy in China: bridging the wide gulf between Western and Chinese scholarship," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2014, 23:88, 612-35.

August 2 **Whither China?**

Yu Liu and Dingding Chen, "Why China Will Democratize," *Washington Quarterly*, 2012, 35(1): 41-63.

Gordon G. Chang, "The Coming Collapse of China: 2012 Edition," *Foreign Policy*, December 29,

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/12/29/the-coming-collapse-of-china-2012-edition/>.

David Shambaugh, "The Coming Chinese Crackup," *Wall Street Journal*, March 6, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-coming-chinese-crack-up-1425659198>

August 3 **Final Exam**

Course Evaluation

Final exam 50%

The final exam consists of six essay questions and students are required to answer FOUR out of the six questions.

Classroom participation 20%

Participation is scored based on the quality and frequency of classroom discussions.

Attendance 20%

Since the class meets eight times only, any unexcused absence will be penalized by 5 points from the final course grade. Three unexcused absences disqualify you from earning any credit for the course.

Pre-class questions 10%

Students should prepare 3-5 questions based on assigned readings and send the questions to the instructor by 8am the day the class meets.