

POLS*3920 DE W26 Politics of China

Credit Weighting: 0.50**Pre-/Co-Requisites:** 1 of POLS*2080,
POLS*2100,
POLS*2200**Restrictions:** N/A**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Theresa Lee**Email:** tmlee@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** MacKinnon 512**GENERAL DETAILS**

This course is a study of contemporary China through the lens of its political history. The Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 with the mandate to build a sovereign and united China as well as to modernize the country within a socialist framework. We shall examine the historical background and the ideological factors behind the formulation of these goals and assess the extent to which they have been accomplished. Accordingly, the course covers the full range of major events that helped shape contemporary China. These events include the end of imperial China, the birth of Republican China, the Communist Revolution, the Mao era, and post-Mao China (the reform era of Deng Xiaoping and beyond).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The design of the course, including the assigned readings and audio-visual materials, is informed by the following objectives (formerly known as University Learning Objectives):

1. Literacy

As a course in comparative politics, "Politics of China" offers you the opportunity to explore how specific terms and concepts are applied to the study of development in a non-Western nation, which is also a communist state. In addition, through the assigned readings, you will be introduced to the system of romanization of the Chinese language. More generally, the course aims to broaden the scope of your literacy through a wide range of text-based and audio-visual materials.

2. Numeracy

China offers a good case of how statistics and data are often manipulated to serve political purposes.

3. Understanding of Forms of Inquiry; Depth and Breadth of Understanding

You will be reading a wide range of materials written primarily by contemporary Western scholars from different academic disciplines specializing in Chinese studies. There are also assigned reading on writings by Confucian scholars, modern and contemporary Chinese intellectuals. Documentary films are an integral component of learning materials. Together, these materials will enable you to understand Chinese politics from a variety of perspectives.

4. Sense of Historical Development

The study of contemporary China demonstrates the need to be mindful of the promise of revolution in delivering a new society that is unencumbered from its past. Over the semester you will come to appreciate why a historical approach is integral to in-depth analysis of Chinese politics.

5. Global Understanding

The birth of modern China and its subsequent course of development is considered a classical case of "East meets West," in which the encounter of two seemingly opposite cultures has been interpreted as a history of fundamentally conflicting values. It is also important to bear in mind that China is the world's second most populous country and the second largest economy. The study of China is therefore crucial to the enhancement of one's global understanding.

6. Independence of Thought

Course materials aims to enable you to build a body of knowledge about contemporary China that facilitates independent thinking. Through the readings and assignments, you will learn to critically differentiate among academic analyses, ideological pronouncements and propaganda, as well as first-person narratives. You will be better informed of cultural and ideological biases, both in the context of how people in the West perceive the Chinese and vice versa.

7. Moral Maturity

The study of Chinese politics constitutes a challenging context in which one has to address a full array of human rights issues, including democracy, economic equality, social justice, the status of women and ethnic minorities.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

1. Participation (unit-based learning exercises) -- 15%
2. Three written assignments -- 15% each (45% in total)
3. Final examination (in person during on-campus exam period) -- 40%

REQUIRED READING

Joseph, William A. Ed. Politics in China: An Introduction. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2024 (available for purchase at University Bookstore)

AND
Other readings on Ares

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