

**University of Washington  
Department of Political Science and Jackson School of International Studies  
Autumn 2017**

**The Chinese Political System  
POLS 532/JSIS 532  
Wednesday, 1:30-4:20pm  
105 Smith Hall**

**Professor Susan Whiting  
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### **Course Description**

This graduate-level course surveys the latest developments in the field of Chinese politics. The syllabus reflects two themes and three trends in the field. Two overarching themes are evident in the study of Chinese politics today: interrogating authoritarian resilience and examining political factors in China's economic performance. In light of China's unorthodox economic institutions, political scientists seek explanations for China's three-and-a-half decades of sustained economic growth with reference to political features of the regime. As in comparative politics more broadly, the resilience of authoritarian regimes in the twenty-first century poses another puzzle, particularly in light of late-twentieth-century expectations of the "end of history." Issues in Chinese politics as diverse as elections, media, civil society, welfare provision, and labor politics are framed today in terms of authoritarian resilience. This emphasis on the durability of the CCP regime replaces an earlier theme of potential for democratization, raising questions about how we know what we know in general comparative theory and Chinese politics.

Three underlying trends are evident in the field: first, the study of Chinese politics is increasingly engaged with general comparative theory. Second, and relatedly, the field is characterized by improved access to data and methodological diversification. Third, the boundaries among disciplines are increasingly blurred, uniting the work of economists and sociologists, among scholars of other disciplines, with that of political scientists.

The course examines these themes and trends through sets of weekly readings on the following topics: leadership selection and incentives within the one-party state, elections, infrastructural power, media politics and information control, contentious politics and civil society, welfare and public goods, and political economy of development. For each topic, we will trace the development of debates in the fields of comparative and Chinese politics and critically examine the relationship between theory and method in the Chinese case. In a ten-week quarter, some topics are, of necessity, left out. There could easily be sessions, for example, on revolutionary change, nationalism, historical foundations of contemporary institutions, ethnic conflict, etc. The final paper assignment provides students the opportunity to build on syllabus topics or to explore these other issues.

## **Course Requirements**

### *Short responses (35%)*

You will write seven short responses to the readings, not to exceed *one page* in length. Each response should critically and constructively explore a theme, debate, method, etc. in one or more readings for that class session. Short responses are to be posted to Canvas by 5:00pm on the evening before class. No late responses will be accepted, since the idea is to quickly get your thoughts down and to use them as a starting point for class discussion.

### *Participation (25%)*

First, you are expected to read the assigned material before class and to contribute to discussion regularly and thoughtfully. Second, you will give at least one short presentation (approximately 5-10 minutes) based on the readings for that day, and you will co-facilitate class discussion. Your comments should appreciate and critique the readings, raise questions, and draw connections to other readings and themes of the course. The purpose of your presentation is to stimulate discussion, and you will help direct the conversation that follows.

### *Final paper (40%)*

You will write a longer, analytical paper of approximately 10-15 pages in length. The longer paper may take the form of a theoretically informed research paper, an extensive critical review of the literature, or a research design that treats the literature as a springboard. The final paper is due on Wednesday, December 13th to Canvas. Unexcused late papers will be marked down 0.1 point per day.

## **Office Hours**

Office hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays 11:00 to 12:00 noon in 147 Gowen Hall.

## **Additional Course Information**

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students, 011 Mary Gates Hall (<http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs>). If you have a letter from DRS indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so that we can discuss the accommodations you may need for class.

The Department of Political Science recognizes and affirms the University of Washington's mission to "value and honor diverse experiences and perspectives, strive to create welcoming and respectful learning environments, and promote access, opportunity and justice for all." We expect every member of this community to contribute toward cultivating an inclusive and respectful culture throughout our classrooms, work environments, and campus events.

## **Course Materials**

The following book is available for purchase at the University Book Store and through reserve at the East Asia Library: Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*

Journal articles and book chapters are available full-text online through the UW Library E-Journals and E-books collection. Conference papers are available on Canvas.

## Course Schedule

### WEEK ONE

**Wednesday, September 27, 2017**

#### Introduction

Kevin J. O'Brien, "Studying Chinese Politics in an Age of Specialization," *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 20, No. 71 (September 2011), pp. 535-541.

For reference:

Kellee Tsai, "China's Political Economy and Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 11, No. 3 (2013), pp. 860-871.

Allen Carlson, et al., eds., *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Carsten A. Holz, "Have China Scholars All Been Bought?" *Far Eastern Economic Review* Vol. 170, No. 3 (April 2007), p. 36-40.

Elizabeth J. Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?" *The China Journal* No. 57 (January 2007), 1-22.

Haihui Zhang, ed., "Scholarly Review of Chinese Studies in North America," *Asia Past & Present: New Research from AAS*, Number 11

Elizabeth J. Perry, "The Cultural Foundations of Chinese Communism,"  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6fRrhxBt\\_A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6fRrhxBt_A)

### WEEK TWO

**Wednesday, October 4, 2017**

#### Elite Politics: Leadership Selection and Career Incentives

Barbara Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 1-19 only. E-book.

Victor Shih, Christopher Adolph, and Mingxing Liu, "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China," *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 106, No. 1 (February 2012), pp. 166-187.

Ting Chen and James Kung, "Do Land Revenue Windfalls Create a Political Resource Curse? Evidence from China," *Journal of Development Economics* Vol. 123, No. C (2016), pp. 86-106.

Pierre F. Landry, Xiaobo Lü, Haiyan Duan, "Does Performance Matter? Evaluating Political Selection along the Chinese Administrative Ladder," *Comparative Political Studies*, Online first.

Jiangnan Zhu and Dong Zhang, "Weapons of the Powerful: Authoritarian Elite Competition and Politicized Anticorruption in China," *Comparative Political Studies* Vol 50, No. 9 (2017).

For reference:

Li, Hongbin and Li-An Zhou, "Political Turnover and Economic Performance: The Incentive Role of Personal Control in China." *Journal of Public Economics* Vol. 89 No.9 (2005), pp. 1743-1762.

Ruixue Jia, et al., "Political Selection in China: The Complementary Roles of Connections and Performance," *Journal of the European Economics Association* (August 2015), pp. 631-668.

James Kai-sing Kung and Shuo Chen "The Tragedy of the *Nomenklatura*: Career Incentives and Political Radicalism during China's Great Leap Famine," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 105 (2011), pp 27-45.

Dali L. Yang, Huayu Xu, and Ran Tao, "A Tragedy of the *Nomenkalura*? Career Incentives, Political Loyalty, and Political Radicalism during China's Great Leap Forward," *Journal of Contemporary China* (2014)

Susan H. Whiting, "The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grassroots: The Paradox of Party Rule," in Barry Naughton and Dali Yang, eds., *Holding China Together* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, ) "Leadership Incentives"

Andrew Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics," *China Quarterly* No. 53 (1973), pp. 33-66.

## **WEEK THREE**

**Wednesday, October 11, 2017**

### **Authoritarian Elections**

Jennifer Grandhi and Adam Przeworski, 'Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats', *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 40, No. 11 (2007), pp. 1279–1301.

Rory Truex, "The Returns to Office in a 'Rubber Stamp' Parliament," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (May 2014), pp. 235-251.

Melanie Manion, "'Good Types' in Authoritarian Elections: The Selectoral Connection in Chinese Local Congresses," *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 50 No. 3 (March 1, 2017), pp. 362-394.

Xiao Ma, Susan Whiting, and Tan Zhao, "Farmland and Fraud: Land Rents and Vote Buying in China's Village Elections," APSA 2017. Canvas.

For reference:

Kevin O'Brien and Rongbin Han, "Path to Democracy? Assessing Village Elections in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 18, No. 60 (June 2009), pp. 359-378.

Jie Chen and Yang Zhong, "Why do People Vote in Semicompetitive Elections in China?" *Journal of Politics* Vol. 64, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 178-197. Full text online.

Xiaopeng Pang, Junxia Zeng and Scott Rozelle, "Does Women's Knowledge of Voting Rights Affect their Voting Behaviour in Village Elections? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in China." *China Quarterly*, No. 213 (2013), pp 39-59.

## **WEEK FOUR**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2017**

### **Authoritarian Resilience and Infrastructural Power**

Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology* Vol. 25, No. 2 (1984), pp. 185–213.

Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang, "The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundations of Bargained Authoritarianism in China," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 118, No. 6 (May 2013), pp. 1475-1508.

Xiaojun Yan, "Patrolling Harmony: pre-emptive authoritarianism and the preservation of stability in W County," *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 25, No. 99 (2016), pp. 406-421

Susan Whiting, "Authoritarian 'Rule of Law' and Regime Legitimacy," *Comparative Political Studies*, Online first.

Rogier Creemers, "Cyber China: Upgrading Propaganda, Public Opinion Work and Social Management for the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of Contemporary China* Vol. 26, No. 103 (2017), pp.85-100.

For Reference:

Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 2003), pp. 6-17.

Bruce Dickson, "Who Wants to Be a Communist? Career Incentives and Mobilized Loyalty in Contemporary China," *China Quarterly*, No. 217 (March 2014), pp. 42-68.

## **WEEK FIVE**

**Wednesday, October 25, 2017**

### **Media Politics and Information Control**

Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Oct., 1991), pp. 7-48.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *American Political Science Review* Vol. No. (May 2013), pp.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, Margaret E. Roberts, "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 111, No. 3 (2017), pp. 484-501.

Yuyu Chen and David Y. Yang, "1984 or Brave New World? Evidence from a Field Experiment on Media Censorship," APSA 2017. Canvas. Do not cite or circulate outside of seminar.

Cai (Vera) Zuo, "Selective Media Coverage on Protests in Contemporary China," APSA 2017. Canvas.

For reference:

Daniela Stockmann and Mary E. Gallagher, 'Remote control: how the media sustain authoritarian rule in China', *Comparative Political Studies* 44(4), (2011), pp. 436–467

## **WEEK SIX**

**Wednesday, November 1, 2017**

### **Contentious Politics and Civil Society**

Tarrow, Sidney. 2008. "The New Contentious Politics in China: Poor and Blank or Rich and Complex?" in Kevin J. O'Brien, ed., *Popular Protest in China*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 1-10. E-book.

Ngai Pun, et al., "Apple, Foxconn, and Chinese Workers' Struggles from a Global Labor Perspective," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2016), pp. 166-185.

Eli Friedman and Ching Kwan Lee, "Remaking the World of Chinese Labour: A 30-year Retrospective," *British Journal of Industrial Relations* Vol. 48, No. 3 (September 2010), pp. 507-533.

Diana Fu, "Disguised Collective Action in China," *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 50, No. 4 (2017), pp. 499-527.

Jeffrey Becker, "The Knowledge to Act: Chinese Migrant Labor Protests in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 44, No. 11 (2012), pp. 1379–1404.

For reference:

Eli Friedman, "Alienated Politics: Labor Insurgency and the Paternalistic State in China," *Development and Change* Vol. 45, No. 5 (2014), pp. 1001–1018.

Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and Political Institutionalization," *American Behavioral Scientist* Vol. 40, No. 5 (March/April 1997), pp. 562-574.

## **WEEK SEVEN**

**Wednesday, November 8, 2017**

### **Distributive Politics, Welfare, and Public Goods**

Nita Rudra, "Welfare States in Developing Countries: Unique or Universal?" *Journal of Politics* Vol. 69, No. 2 (May 2007), pp. 378-396.

Xian Huang, "The Politics of Social Welfare Reform in Urban China: Social Welfare Preferences and Reform Policies," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* Vol. 18 (2013), pp. 61-85.

Yujeong Yang, "Dual Pension Regimes in China: Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion," APSA 2017. Canvas.

Yiqing Xu and Yang Yao, "Informal Institutions, Collective Action, and Public Investment in Rural China," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 109, No. 2 (May 2015), pp.

Bruce J. Dickson, et al., "Public Goods and Regime Support in Urban China," *China Quarterly* (2016), pp. 859-880.

## **WEEK EIGHT**

**Wednesday, November 15, 2017**

### **Political Economy of Development I**

Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 10-40.

Jean C. Oi, "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China. *World Politics* Vol.45, No. 1 (1992), pp.99-126.

Gabriella Montinola, Yingyi Qian, and Barry R. Weingast, "Federalism, Chinese Style: The Political Basis for Economic Success in China," *World Politics* Vol. 48, No.1 (1995), pp.50-81.

Susan Whiting, *Power and Wealth in Rural China: The Political Economy of Institutional Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chapters 1,5,7.

Kai Yuen Tsui, "China's Infrastructure Investment Boom and Local Debt Crisis, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (2011), 686-711

For reference:

Chenggang Xu, "The Fundamental Institutions of China's Reforms and Development," *Journal of Economic Literature* Vol. 49, No. 4 (2011), pp. 1076-1151.

Pierre Landry and Lü Xiaobo, "Show Me the Money: Interjurisdiction Political Competition and Fiscal Extraction in China," *American Political Science Review*

Fubing Su and Ran Tao, "The China Model Withering? Institutional Roots of China's Local Developmentalism," *Urban Studies* Vol. 54, No. 1 (2017), pp. 230–250

Meg Rithmire, "China's 'New Regionalism': Subnational Analysis in Chinese Political Economy," *World Politics* Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2014), pp. .

## **WEEK NINE**

**Wednesday, November 22, 2017**

### **Thanksgiving Holiday**

No class meeting.

Begin reading Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

## **WEEK TEN**

**Wednesday, November 29, 2017**

### **Political Economy of Development II: A Chinese "Model"?**

Dani Rodrik, "Institutions for High-Quality Growth: What They Are and How to Acquire Them," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 1-31.

Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

Barry Naughton, "Is China Socialist?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 2017), pp. 3-24.

Loren Brandt and Eric Thun, "The Fight for the Middle" *World Development* Vol. 38, No. 11, (2010) pp. 1555–1574.

## **WEEK ELEVEN**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2017**

### **Research Day**

No class meeting.