Many historic lessons were obtained through tremendous sacrifice. Such as eating food – if something is poisonous, we all seem to know it. It is common sense. But in the past many people must have eaten this food and died so that now we know better. Therefore I think the first person who ate crabs was admirable. If not a hero, who would dare eat such creatures? Since someone ate crabs, others must have eaten spiders as well. However, they were not tasty. So afterwards people stopped eating them. These people also deserve our heartfelt gratitude. – Lu Xun

This course provides an introduction to the study of contemporary Chinese politics. The course explores both the content of 20th and 21st century Chinese political history with an emphasis on the past thirty years of reform as well as the methods and approaches used by scholars trying to peer into this often opaque society. Substantive topics include economic reforms, contemporary social movements, development, and inequality.

Course Requirements

1. Response Papers 30%
2. Participation 20%
3. Leading Discussion 5%
4. Research Paper 45%

Each student is responsible for writing 3 response papers (≤ 500 words each) over the semester to be shared on a class blog. Response papers should be full of comments and synthesis (not summary) and conclude with discussion questions. Starting in week 3, each session will have two discussion leaders tasked with moving the conversation forward. The principal assignment for the course is a research paper (≤ 15 pages) due by the end of reading week (May 1). At least one response paper and a draft outline of the research paper must be completed by the end of week 6 (Feb. 19).
Policies and Procedures

This course follows all normal University procedures, including those related to disability services and academic misconduct.

Plagiarism

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. Yale punishes all academic dishonesty severely. Please review Yale’s policies on Academic Integrity, e.g. http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/cheating-plagiarism-and-documentation.

Schedule of Readings

All readings are available online through the course website, linked, on reserve at the library, or available at a bookstore of your choosing. If you have a problem obtaining the materials, please let me know immediately. The following three books may be useful for those without extensive background in Chinese politics.


❖ denotes recommended but not required reading

Week 1 – Introduction

Jan. 15


Week 2 – Factory Girls

Jan. 22


Week 3 – China 3.0

Jan. 29


Week 4 – China and Comparative Politics


- Isabela Mares & Matthew Carnes. 2009. “Social Policy in Developing Countries.” *ARPS*.

Week 5 – CCP Victory and the Great Leap Forward


Week 6 – Cultural Revolution & Elite Politics


Week 7 – Transition and Reform


Week 8 – Tiananmen

Mar. 5
Spring Break

Week 9 – Growth and Discontents  Mar. 26


Week 10 – Protest  Apr. 2


Week 11 – Promotion and Information Politics  Apr. 9


**Week 12 – China and the Global Financial Crisis**

Apr. 16


**Barry Naughton. 2009. “Loans, Firms, and Steel: Is the State Advancing at the Expense of the Private Sector?” *China Leadership Monitor.***

**Week 13 – Where to Now? What Next?**

Apr. 23


[3] TBD.