

# CET Syllabus of Record



**Program:** Chinese Studies and Internship in Beijing

**Course Title:** Politics in China

**Course Code:** CS270

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Suggested Cross Listings:** Chinese Studies, Political Science

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites/Requirements:** None

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## Description

In the last century, China has arguably been one of the most politically volatile nations on the world stage, and to a great extent its political future is also a question mark. From the 180-degree turnabout from Marxism-Leninism to a kind of experimental hybrid capitalism during the Deng era, to the chaos after 1989 and the subsequent economic explosion in the 1990s, China's politics have continued to surprise and confound China watchers. Given that the political legitimacy of the current regime rests precariously on the premise of continued economic growth, and given China's increasing importance to the world's security and economy, an understanding of Chinese politics has become more and more vital to global policy makers. This course aims to provide students with a comprehensive background of the various forces and domains that affect China's political evolution – such as history, economics, demographics, modernization, and industrialization – and to paint a broad picture of how these components interact to shape China's political landscape. The course covers both internal factors such as ethnic tensions and income disparity, as well as outside factors such as foreign policy and trade issues.

## Objectives

At the end of this course, students should have a familiarity with (1) the hierarchical structure and decision-making process of the PRC government, (2) the distinctive dynamic of politics, economy, and legal system in the PRC, and how it differs from other western models, (3) the social realities of human rights, economic inequality, and ethnic minorities in China and how they impinge on political governance, (4) how the PRC is taking its place on the world stage as an economic and military power, and how this effects domestic politics in the country.

## Course Requirements

**Participation:** Student participation, including actively contributing to class discussion is an important part of the grade. Students should complete all reading assignments before coming to class. About 50 pages of reading are assigned for each class meeting.

**Exams and Quizzes:** There is a midterm and final, and also announced and unannounced quizzes on geography and the readings.

**Final paper:** Each student writes a 2,500 word paper on a central issue in Chinese political science. Topics are open to discussion and agreement on the part of the student and instructor.

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## Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Participation	20%
Exams and Quizzes	50%
Final paper	30%

## Primary Texts

William A. Joseph (ed.) *Politics in China: an Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2010

Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, Harper Books, 2010

## Supplementary Texts

China is constantly in flux politically, and an enormous number of mundane aspects of Chinese life impinge to a greater or lesser extent on politics. Thus it is to be expected that during the time this course is being conducted, new developments in the news and “blogosphere” will present themselves as relevant to this course. Thus, in addition to course pack readings, the instructor from time to time also provides supplementary handouts, or requires that students get online to view certain articles or materials that may be relevant to the topic at hand.

## Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic per week. During the summer, when class periods are longer, students cover approximately 2 topics per week.

Topic 1 – The Origins of Communism

Chen Duxiu, Mao Zedong, Li Dazhao

Social context of Chinese communism

CCP and KMT collaboration and conflict

Topic 2 – Mao Zedong Thought

The Yan'an Period

Mao's revisions of Marxism

Topic 3 - Information Control under the CCP

Theoretical basis of Chinese censorship

The conception of the Party's role in the arts

Evolution of control of the arts in the PRC

Chinese Mass Media: Structure and Control

The structure of mass media in China; propaganda, monitoring and control of content; the nature of entertainment products in contemporary China

Chinese cinema and television. Transition to commercialized system; domestic vs. foreign market; current trends; globalization of Chinese culture.

The Chinese Internet

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The Internet in China; issues of filtering and control; Chinese blogs and their effect on society.

## Topic 4 - China's Soft Power

Soft power media push; CCTV and media outlets  
Confucius Institutes  
Soft power in Southeast Asia

## Topic 5 - Leadership succession: Mao, Deng, Jiang, Hu, Xi Jinping

Evolution from quasi-emperor to technocratic governance  
Foreign policy implications of leadership succession

## Topic 6 - State and Economy

How the Party controls the national purse strings  
The CCP's relation to business

## Topic 7 - Protest and Resistance

The causes and scope of mass demonstrations  
The nature and demographics of dissenting groups  
Evolving policies in the face of human rights pressure

## Topic 8 – Nationalism, “Angry Youth” (fengqing 愤青)

1999: Belgrade Chinese embassy bombing, 2001: Spy plane collision, 2008: Beijing, blogs, boycotts. Tibet, Darfur, Xinjiang and Olympic torch protests leading up to the Beijing Olympics  
The relation between economic growth and grass roots dissent

## Topic 9 - The Party Center and the Provinces

Enforcement of central policy in the provinces and cities  
Democratic movements in the localities  
The handling of local corruption and fiefdoms

## Topic 10 - Corruption and Anticorruption Reform

Anti-corruption movements and their effectiveness  
The Party's involvement in the regulatory process

## Topic 11 - Xinjiang and Tibet

Brief overview of the historical relation of these regions to China  
The Party's revisionist account of history  
The Dalai Lama; Xinjiang “split-ists”  
Issues of religious freedom

## Topic 12 - Hong Kong and Taiwan

Deng's “One country two systems”  
Hong Kong as model for Taiwan

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Topic 13 - US-China relations

Sino-US relations and the human rights issue

Trade issues and their effect on US-China relations

Topic 14 - Relations with other countries

The Party's plans in Africa, the Third World, the Middle East

The Taiwan issue and foreign relations

Topic 15 - The Party and the Military

History of the PRC military

The new emphasis on militarization

Tension points in the South China Sea, border disputes, China's military influence in Southeast Asia

Topic 16 - The Party and the Control of History

Dealing with Mao's image

New media attempts at historical revision

Dealing with 1989