Political Science 244c  
Chinese Politics: New Voices and Issues for the 21st Century  
Kevin J. O'Brien

Wednesday, 4pm-6pm, 791 Barrows  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Fall 2015  
Phone: 510-704-3740 (Cell) 925-935-2118 (H)  
kobrien@berkeley.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on emerging issues in the field of Chinese politics, and (mostly) younger authors who have published books (and articles) since 2005. The early weeks emphasize the Chinese state and state-society relations at a high level of abstraction; later weeks turn toward state-society relations nearer the grassroots. Topics covered include: regime change, state capacity, bureaucratic politics, village elections, social capital, private entrepreneurs, banking, local cadres, adaptive governance, policy implementation, protest, rights consciousness, cross-national comparison and recent experimental research on authoritarian responsiveness. For political science graduate students preparing for the East Asian politics exam, this syllabi should be read in conjunction with the 2006 Political Science 244c syllabus available at my website.

Books to be purchased

1) Allen Carlson, Mary Gallager, Kenneth Lieberthal and Melanie Manion, Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies (Cambridge, 2010), paperback


3) Yasheng Huang, Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State (Cambridge, 2008), hardcover

4) Scott Kennedy, The Business of Lobbying in China (Harvard, 2005), paperback

5) Scott Kennedy (ed.), Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China’s Capitalist Transformation (Stanford, 2011), paperback

6) Andrew Mertha, Water Warriors: Political Pluralization in China’s Hydropower Policy (Cornell, 2008), paperback

7) Victor Shih, Factions and Finance in China: Elite Conflict and Inflation (Cambridge, 2009), paperback

8) Kelly Tsai, Capitalism Without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China (Cornell, 2007), paperback

9) Lily Tsai, Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China (Cambridge, 2007), paperback
Course Requirements

3 seminar papers (30% of course grade) -- Due on Monday evening (5 pm) of the three weeks for which a student is responsible. (Copies should be sent to the e-mail addresses of all students and, of course, to the instructor). Each paper (approx. 3-4 double-spaced pages) should critically engage the readings assigned for that week. Students may focus on gaps or conflicts in one (or more) readings and may bring in relevant material from other courses. The purpose of these papers is to stimulate class discussion. Papers should not be a summary but rather an effort to highlight an important point, a methodological issue, and/or an assumption that underlies or permeates the reading(s). Efforts should be made to explore ways in which the readings relate to each other and how they help us improve our understanding of politics. During class, each author should be ready to explain (and expand upon) the points raised. Hint: When preparing your papers, pretend you are an overburdened student racing to figure out “why this reading is so important” the night before your qualifying exams. You might also consider how the readings speak to other areas of political science (or other regions of the world) with which you are familiar.

A 15-20 page research paper (50% of course grade) or a final exam (2 out of 3 essay questions, approx. 4000 words total)

Class participation (20% of course grade) -- All students will be expected to participate in class discussions and to come to class prepared to consider the seminar papers for that week.

Please keep a copy of your essays until the instructor has returned them. Also, to sidestep easily avoidable problems related to computer failures, keep a copy of your essays on a flash drive.

Week 1  (8/26)  
Introduction

Week 2  (9/2)  
Entrepreneurs, Democracy and Growth

Kelly Tsai, Capitalism Without Democracy

Yasheng Huang, Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 3  (9/9)  
Pluralization of High-Level Politics?

Scott Kennedy, The Business of Lobbying in China

Andrew Mertha, Water Warriors

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)
Week 4 (9/16)  Village Elections – Democratic Breakthrough, 
Sham, or State-Building?

Kevin J. O’Brien and Rongbin Han, “Path to Democracy? Assessing Elections in Rural China,” 
Journal of Contemporary China (June 2009): 359-78 (on the web)

Implementation of Elections:

Daniel Kelliher, ”The Chinese Debate over Village Self-Government,” China Journal 37 
(January 1997): 63-86 (on the web)

Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, “Accommodating ‘Democracy’ in a One-Party State: 

Tianjian Shi, ”Village Committee Elections in China: Institutionalist Tactics for Democracy,” 
World Politics 51:3 (April 1999): 385-412 (on the web)

Effects of Elections:

Yusheng Yao, “Village Elections and Their Impact: An Investigative Report on a Northern 
Chinese Village,” Modern China, 39:1 (January 2013): 37-68 (on the web)

Gunter Schubert and Chen Xuelian, “Village Elections in Contemporary China: New Spaces for 
Generating Regime Legitimacy? Experiences from Lishu County,” China Perspectives, no. 3 
(2007): 12-25 (available from instructor by e-mail)

Lianjiang Li, “The Empowering Effect of Village Elections in China,” Asian Survey 43:4 
(July/August 2003): 648-62 (on the web)

Renfu Luo, Linxiu Zhang, Jikun Huang and Scott Rozelle, “Village Elections, Public Goods 
Investments and Pork Barrel Politics, Chinese Style,” Journal of Development Studies 46:4 
(April 2010): 662-84 (on the web)

Monica Martinez-Bravo, Gerard Padro I. Miguel, Nancy Qian, Yang Yao, “Political Reform in 
(available at ssrn.com)

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 5 (9/23)  Social Capital at the Grassroots

Lily Tsai, Accountability Without Democracy

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)
Banking and Factions

Victor Shih, *Factions and Finance in China*

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Local Cadres, Predation and Developmentalism: Incentives and Beyond Incentives

Incentives and Misimplementation:


Too Much Attention to Responsibility Systems etc.?:

Anna L. Ahlers and Gunter Schubert, “Effective Policy Implementation in China’s Local State,” *Modern China*, forthcoming (available at “online first” at the journal’s website)

Ciqi Mei and Margaret M. Pearson, “Killing a Chicken to Scare the Monkeys? Deterrence Failure and Local Defiance in China,” *China Journal* 72 (July 2014): 75-97 (on the web)


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Adaptive Governance


Student Discussants:
Week 9 (10/21)  Cross-National Comparison

Scott Kennedy (ed.), *Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China’s Capitalist Transformation* (Stanford, 2011)


Student Discussants:
1)  

Week 10 (10/28)  Conceptualizing Resistance


Diana Fu, “Disguised Collective Action: Mobilizing Without the Masses in Authoritarian China,” unpublished article, 2015, 43 pp. (available from the instructor)


Student Discussants:
1)  

Week 11 (11/4)  Rights vs. Rules Consciousness


Peter L. Lorentzen and Suzanne E. Scoggins, “Rising Rights Consciousness: Undermining or Undergirding China’s Stability?” *China Quarterly* (forthcoming) (available at ssrn.com)


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 12 (11/18) **Experiments and Chinese Politics: Understanding Authoritarian Responsiveness and Censorship**


Rory Truex, “Consultative Authoritarianism and Its Limits,” *Comparative Political Studies*, forthcoming, 33pp. (available at "online first" at the journal)


Week 13 (12/2) **How We Know What We Know**


Kevin J. O’Brien, “Discovery, Research Re(Design) and Theory Building,” in Maria Heimer and Stig Thogersen eds., *Doing Fieldwork in China* (Hawaii, 2006), pp. 27-41 (available from instructor by e-mail)

Bruce Gilley, “Paradigms of Chinese Politics: Kicking Society Back Out,” Journal of Contemporary China (June 2011): 517-533 (on the web)

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3

Friday December 11, 2pm; By e-mail to kobrien@berkeley.edu – Final Paper or Take-home Exam Due