

Political Science 244c
State-Society Relations in China: Approaches and Debates
Kevin J. O'Brien

Wednesday, 12pm-2pm
Fall 2006

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Office Hours: W, 10am-11:50am (#505)
2223 Fulton Street)

Course Description:

This seminar has three objectives: first, to expose students to major debates in the study of reform-era Chinese politics; second, to consider how research on contemporary China both draws from and informs political science; third, to explore characterizations of the Chinese state and state-society relations. Throughout the course we will be focusing on questions such as: what can we learn by examining Chinese political culture and institutions? Do concepts such as state "reach," civil society, "rightful resistance", weapons of the weak, inclusion, and corporatism produce insights into the structure and dynamics of Chinese politics? What can we learn from new research in the survey tradition?

For those students lacking previous knowledge of Chinese history or politics, three textbooks are highly recommended: Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-49 (Lucian Bianco), Mao's China and After (Maurice Meisner), Governing China (Kenneth Lieberthal). Together, these books provide an overview of China from the end of the Qing Dynasty up to recent days. For those lacking any background in dynastic Chinese history I would recommend, as a pleasant read, Jonathan Spence's The Search for Modern China. In the past, this course has included a section on Mao Zedong thought. If you are unfamiliar with Mao's writings, and you are interested, contact the instructor at an early date for a list of supplementary readings. All this said, there is no expectation that students have any prior background in Chinese politics or history, and it is the intention of the instructor to make the class accessible to any motivated graduate student.

Materials to be purchased:

- A) Neil Diamant, Stanley Lubman, and Kevin J. O'Brien, Engaging the Law in China: State, Society, and Possibilities for Justice (Stanford, 2005), hardcover
- B) Larry Diamond and Ramon Myers, eds. Elections and Democracy in Greater China (Oxford, 2001), paperback (note: the articles in this book are also available for free (!) at jstor.org as the June 2000 issue of China Quarterly)
- C) Thomas Gold, Doug Guthrie, and David Wank, eds., Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi (Cambridge, 2002), paperback
- D) Maria Heimer and Stig Thogersen, Doing Fieldwork in China (Hawaii, 2006)
- E) Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge, 2006), paperback
- F) Vivienne Shue, The Reach of the State (Stanford, 1988), paperback
- G) A large coursepack of articles (arrangements TBA)

Materials available from the instructor:

- A) Kevin J. O'Brien, Reform Without Liberalization: China's National People's Congress and the Politics of Institutional Change (Cambridge, 1990) (see instructor for copies), hardcover

Course Requirements:

3 seminar papers (1/3 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 reading relate to each other and how they help us improve our understanding of politics. During class, each author will be responsible for leading at least a brief discussion around 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

1 Take-Home Exam (2 questions about 8 pages each) (1/2 of course grade) -- Two essays evaluated on the basis of: demonstrated mastery of the assigned readings, skill in exposing nuances in various defensible positions; cogency, clarity, precision and organization of your presentation; and relevance of evidence marshaled to "prove" your main point. Students, with the instructor's approval, may substitute a research paper of approximately twenty double-spaced pages for the exam.

Class participation (1/6 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 CD or flash drive and be ready to make alternative arrangements for last-minute printing.

Week 1 (8/30)

Introduction

Harry Harding, "The Evolution of American Scholarship on Contemporary China," in David Shambaugh, ed., American Studies of Contemporary China (M.E. Sharpe, 1993), pp. 14-40, 120-37 (a solid, comprehensive history of the first three generations of China scholarship)

Lowell Dittmer and William Hurst, "Analysis in Limbo: Contemporary Chinese Politics Amid the Maturation of Reform," Issues and Studies (December 2002/March 2003): 11-48 (the latest and best "state of the field" article)

Week 2 (9/6)

How We Know What We Know

Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen (eds.), Doing Fieldwork in China (Hawaii, 2006) (entire)

Discussants:

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3)

Week 3 (9/13)

Do Guanxi Matter?

Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, "The Resilience of Guanxi and its New Deployments: A Critique of Some New Guanxi Scholarship," China Quarterly 170 (June 2002): 459-476 (a pointed critique of Guthrie -- read first)

Doug Guthrie, "The Declining Significance of Guanxi in China's Economic Transition," China Quarterly 154 (June 1998):254-82

Thomas Gold, Doug Guthrie and David Wank, "An Introduction to the Study of Guanxi," Doug Guthrie, "Information Asymmetries and the Problem of Perception," Yi-min Lin, "Beyond Dyadic Social Exchange: Guanxi and Third-Party Effects," "Business-State Clientelism in China: Decline or Evolution?", Scott Wilson, "Face, Norms and Instrumentality," in Thomas Gold, Doug Guthrie and David Wank eds., Social Connections in China (Cambridge, 2002)

David L. Wank, "Evolving State-Business Clientelism in China: The Institutional Organization of a Smuggling Operation," Presented at the 2002 APSA

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 4 (9/20) **The Reach of the Maoist State -- Predation or Protection?**

Jonathan Unger, "State and Peasant in Post-Revolution China," Journal of Peasant Studies 17 (October 1989):114-36 (a scathing review of Shue--read first)

Vivienne Shue, The Reach of the State (Stanford, 1988), 152 pp. (entire)

Neil J. Diamant, "Making Love 'Legible' in China: Politics and Society During the Enforcement of Civil Marriage Registration, 1950-66," Politics and Society 29:3 (September 2001): 447-80

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 5 (9/27) **Peasant Power? -- Decollectivization and Weapons of the Weak**

Daniel Kelliher, Peasant Power in China, (Yale, 1992), Chapters 2 and 9 (the case for peasant power)

Chad Raymond, Mark Selden, and Kate Zhou, "The Power of the Strong: Rural Resistance to Reform in China and Vietnam," China Information 14:2 (2000): 1-30 (along Kelliher's lines)

Xueguang Zhou, "Unorganized Interests and Collective Action in Communist China," American Sociological Review 58 (1993):54-73 (in the Kelliher/Zhou school, with the sociological theory trimmings)

Joseph Fewsmith, "The Emergence of Rural Reform," in Dilemmas of Reform in China, (M.E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 19-55 (the elite view)

Jonathan Unger, "Disbanding Collective Agriculture," in The Transformation of Rural China (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 95-118 (a critique of Kelliher and Zhou)

Lucian Bianco, "Weak Weapons," in Peasants Without the Party (M.E. Sharpe, 2001), pp. 257-73 (a critique of Kelliher and Zhou)

David Zweig, "Rural People, the Politicians, and Power," China Journal, No. 38 (July 1997):153-68 (a synthesis)

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 6 (10/4)

Disaggregating the Post-Mao State

Elizabeth J. Perry, "Trends in the Study of Chinese Politics: State-Society Relations," China Quarterly 139 (September 1994):704-13.

Fayong Shi and Yongshun Cai, "Disaggregating the State: Networks and Collective Action in Shanghai," China Quarterly 186 (June 2006): 314-32

Lianjiang Li, "Political Trust in Rural China," Modern China 30: 2 (April 2004): 228-58.

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," Comparative Politics 31:2 (January 1999):167-86

Maria Edin, "State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township Perspective" China Quarterly 173 (March 2003): 35-52.

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 7 (10/11)

Rural Resistance in the Reform Era

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge, 2006) (entire)

Ethan Michelson, "Justice from Above or Justice from Below? Popular Strategies for Resolving Grievances in Rural China," China Quarterly, (forthcoming)

Pierre Landry and Yanqi Tong, "Disputing the Authoritarian State in China," Paper presented at the 2005 APSA

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 8 (10/18) **Workers after Socialism -- Reticence, Resistance, and Moral Economy**

Feng Chen, "Privatization and its Discontents in Chinese Factories," China Quarterly 185 (March 2006): 42-60

Feng Chen, "Industrial Restructuring and Workers' Resistance in China," Modern China 29:2 (April 2003): 237-62

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Week 10 (11/1) **Surveys and Sinology -- What Does Voting Mean in China?**

The Meaning of Boycotting Elections:

Tianjian Shi, "Voting and Nonvoting in China: Voting Behavior in Plebiscitary and Limited Choice Elections," Journal of Politics 61:4 (November 1999): 1115-39

Jie Chen and Yang Zhong, "Why Do People Vote in Semicompetitive Elections in China," Journal of Politics 64:1 (February 2002): 178-97 (a critique of Shi)

More on Election Outcomes:

John James Kennedy, "The Face of 'Grassroots Democracy' in Rural China: Real Versus Cosmetic Elections," Asian Survey 42:3 (May/June 2002): 456-82

Jie Chen, "Popular Support for Village Self-Government in China: Intensity and Sources," Asian Survey 45:6 (November/December 2005): 865-85

Melanie Manion, "The Electoral Connection in the Chinese Countryside," American Political Science Review 90 (December 1996):736-48

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

Using Imperfect Surveys:

Melanie Manion, "Survey Research in the Study of Contemporary China: Learning from Local Samples," China Quarterly 139 (September 1994): 741-65 (on how to use non-representative samples)

Student Discussants:

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Class 11 (11/8)

Civil Society?

Theory/Concept Pieces:

Gu Xin, "A Civil Society and Public Sphere in Post-Mao China? An Overview of Western Publications," China Information (Winter 1993-94):38-52 (an early review article)

Thomas Gold, "Bases for Civil Society in Reform China," in K.E. Brodsgaard and David Strand, eds. Reconstructing Twentieth Century China (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 163-88

Heath B. Chamberlain, "On the Search for Civil Society in China," Modern China (April 1993):199-215.

Empirical Studies:

Guobin Yang, "The Co-Evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China," Asian Survey 43:3 (May/June 2003): 405-22

Tony Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China," China Quarterly (March 2000): 124-41

Gordon White, "Prospects for Civil Society in China: A Case Study of Xiaoshan City," Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 29 (January 1993): 63-88.

Corinna-Barbara Francis, "Reproduction of Danwei Institutional Features in the Context of China's Market Economy: The Case of Haidian District's High-Tech Sector," China Quarterly 147 (September 1996): 839-59

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 12 (11/15) **Class Cancelled** (Instructor Out-of-Town)

Week 13 (11/22) **Corporatism?**

Theory/Concept Pieces:

Ray Yep, "The Limitations of Corporatism for Understanding Reforming China," Journal of Contemporary China (November 2000): 547-65

Jonathan Unger and Anita Chan, "China, Corporatism, and the East Asian Model," Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 33 (January 1995): 29-53 (the launching pad of this literature)

Bruce Dickson, "Cooptation and Corporatism in China: The Logic of Party Adaptation," Political Science Quarterly 115:4 (Winter 2000-2001): 517-540.

Empirical Studies of Business Associations:

Kenneth Foster, "Associations in the Embrace of an Authoritarian State: State Domination of Society," Studies in Comparative International Development 35 (Winter 2001): 84-109

Margaret M. Pearson, "The Janus Face of Business Associations in China: Socialist Corporatism in Foreign Enterprises," Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 31 (January 1994): 25-46.

Christopher Earle Nevitt, "Private Business Associations in China: Evidence of Civil Society or Local State Power?" The China Journal, 36 (July 1996): 25-43.

Jonathan Unger, "Bridges: Private Business, the Chinese Government and the Rise of New Associations," China Quarterly, no. 147 (September 1996): 795-819

Student Discussants:

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