Course Description

This course focuses on a central issue that all political leaders face: how to exert and maintain control over society. This topic is particularly timely in present-day China and one that the Party leadership has approached in many different ways. Topics covered will include: policing of protest and crime, censorship and information control, the Wuhan lockdown, and how the social welfare system is used to defuse discontent. We will consider both “hard” and “soft” repression and also strategies that incorporate responsiveness to popular expectations. Finally, the course will examine ways in which different social groups are coping with increased control.

The course is designed, and will be conducted, like a graduate seminar. Students who enroll must be ready to do all the reading in advance of seminar meetings and to participate actively in class discussions.

Prerequisites: Political science majors with junior or senior status, or other juniors and seniors who are very highly motivated to learn about Chinese politics. Some prior study of Chinese politics, economics, or society is strongly recommended.

Course Materials


3) Margaret (Molly) Roberts, Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall (Princeton, 2018)

4) Suzanne Scoggins, Policing China: Street-Level Cops in the Shadow of Protest (Cornell, 2021)

5) Guobin Yang, The Wuhan Lockdown (Columbia, 2022)

6) Journal articles which, like all the books, are available at bCourses “modules” in week-by-week order.

Course Requirements

Three take-home essay quizzes, due February 10, March 3, and March 24 at 11:59pm, via e-mail to kobrien@berkeley.edu, formatted in Word. Approximately 750 words. 1000 words maximum. (15% of course grade each)
One final essay exam, due May 7, 11:59pm (35% of course grade)

Class participation (20% of course grade) -- All students will be expected to participate in class discussions and to come to class prepared every week.

Academic Honesty

All the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university and handled according to university policy.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor, and seeking available assistance, in a timely manner. All efforts will be made to facilitate the learning of students with any sort of disability.

Week 1 (1/18) Introduction

Week 2 (1/25) Policing Protest: Repression, Hard and Soft


Week 3 (2/1) Policing (Mostly) Crime, Part 1

Suzanne Scoggins, Policing China, Introduction, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-90)

Week 4 (2/8) Policing (Mostly) Crime, Part 2

Suzanne Scoggins, Policing China, Chapters 4-6 (pp. 91-142)

Take-home Essay Quiz Distributed by 2/8 5pm, due Friday 2/10 11:59pm

Week 5 (2/15) Control and Accountability, Part 1
Daniel Mattingly, *The Art of Political Control in China*, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-86)


**Weeks 6 (2/22), Control and Accountability, Part 2**

Daniel Mattingly, *The Art of Political Control in China*, Chapters 4-7 (pp. 87-192)

**Week 7 (3/1) Signaling and Information**


Haifeng Huang, “Propaganda as Signaling,” *Comparative Politics* 47:4 (July 2015): 419-437

**Take-home Essay Quiz Distributed by 3/1 5pm, due Friday 3/3 11:59pm**

**Week 8 (3/8) Censorship, Part 1**

Margaret Roberts, *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China’s Great Firewall*, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-146)

**Week 9 (3/15) Censorship, Part 2**

Margaret Roberts, *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China’s Great Firewall*, Chapters 5-7 (pp. 147-236)


**Week 10 (3/22) Self-Censorship and Living with Repression**

Self-Censorship:


Living with Repression and Avoiding Conflict:


**Take-home Essay Quiz Distributed by 3/22 5pm, due Friday 3/24 11:59pm**

Week 11 (4/5), **COVID and Control, Part 1**

Guobin Yang, The Wuhan Lockdown, Chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-110)

Week 12 (4/12), **COVID and Control, Part 2**

Guobin Yang, The Wuhan Lockdown, Chapters 6-9, Conclusion (pp. 111-224)

Week 13 (4/19) **Political Stability and Social Welfare Provision, Part 1**

Jennifer Pan, Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for its Rulers, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-111)

Week 14 (4/26) **Political Stability and Social Welfare Provision, Part 2**

Jennifer Pan, Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for its Rulers, Chapters 5-7 (pp. 112-177)

**Sunday, May 7, 11:59pm, Take-Home Essay Exam Due, e-mail to kobrien@berkeley.edu, formatted in Word.**