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 2010. It leans towards state-society relations and local politics rather than political economy or the central state. It also includes several weeks on protest and repression, which was previously covered in PS 244D. Topics covered include: control and accountability, signaling and information, online expression, censorship and self-censorship, living with repression, protest and protest control, rights and rules consciousness, people’s congresses and representation, social welfare provision, and policy implementation and experimentation.

Books

2) Rongbin Han, *Contesting Cyberspace in China: Online Expression and Authoritarian Resilience* (Columbia, 2018) (paperback)

Course Requirements

2 seminar papers (30% of course grade) -- Due on Tuesday morning (8 am) of the two weeks for which a student is responsible. 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, an area of disagreement, 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 and China. 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 (45% of course grade) or a final exam (2 out of 3 essay questions, appox. 4000 words total)

Class participation (25% 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 or safely in the cloud. All the readings are available at the course's Bcourse site. The books should also be available at the Campus bookstore and on e-reserve at the library.

Week 1 Introduction – August 24


Week 2 Control and Accountability – August 31

Daniel Mattingly, The Art of Political Control in China


Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 3 Signaling and Information – September 7


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

Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 4 Online Expression – September 14
Rongbin Han, *Contesting Cyberspace in China: Online Expression and Authoritarian Resilience*


Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 5 **Censorship** – September 21

Margaret Roberts, *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China’s Great Firewall*

Rongbin Han and Li Shao, “Scaling Authoritarian Information Control: How China Adjusts the Level of Online Censorship,” *Political Research Quarterly*, 2022, available at “Online First” at the journal’s homepage

Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 6 **Self-Censorship and Living with Repression** – September 28

Self-Censorship:


Sheena Greitens and Rory Truex, “Repressive Experiences Among China Scholars: New Evidence from Survey Data,” *China Quarterly* 242 (June 2020): 349-75

Living with Repression and Avoiding Conflict:


Student Discussants:

1) 2) 3)

Week 7 **Policy Implementation and Misimplementation** – October 5

Problematic Implementation:


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

Responding to Non-Compliance:


“Good Enough,” Effective and Enthusiastic Implementation:


Student Discussants:
1)  2)  3)

Week 8 **Policy Experimentation: Successes, Partial Successes and Failures**—October 12


Wen-Hsuan Tsai and Nicola Dean, “Experimentation under Hierarchy in Local Conditions: Cases of Political Reform in Guangdong and Sichuan, China,” *China Quarterly* 218 (June 2014): 339–358


The Xi Era:


Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 9 **People’s Congresses: Representation?** – October 19


Private Benefits:


Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 10 **Rights Consciousness vs. Rules Consciousness and Legal Consciousness** – October 26


Lianjiang Li, “Rights Consciousness and Rules Consciousness in Contemporary China,” *China Journal* 64 (July 2010): 47-68

Peter Lorentzen and Suzanne Scoggins, “Understanding China’s Rising Rights Consciousness,” *China Quarterly* 223 (September 2015): 638-57

Legal Consciousness:


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3

Week 11 Rightful Resistance (and Our Critics) — November 2

Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 12 Rethinking What’s Collective About Collective Action – November 9

Diana Fu, Mobilizing Without the Masses: Control and Contention in China

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 13 Policing Protest and Crime – November 16

Repression, Hard and Soft:


Lynette Ong, “‘Thugs and Outsourcing of State Repression in China,” China Journal 80 (July 2018): 1-17

Everyday Policing:


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 14 Political Stability and Social Welfare Provision – November 30

Jennifer Pan, Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for its Rulers

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Monday December 12, 9am – Final Paper or Take-home Exam Due