QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY

Political Studies 341: CHINESE POLITICS
FALL 2015
Preliminary syllabus, subject to change before September

Wednesday, 2:30 to 5:20 pm
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, B201
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Office: Watson Hall, 203
Tel: (613) 533-6000 ext. 74355
Office hours: TBA, and by appointment.

Overview
POLS 341 is an introduction to Chinese politics for students familiar with the discipline of
Political Studies. It aims to deepen participants’ understanding of contemporary world history
and current events. A premise of the course is that a good grasp of the political system led by the
Chinese Communist Party and Chinese political history is essential for understanding current
dynamics of change in the People’s Republic of China and China’s behaviour as an international
actor. The main focus of the course, therefore, is domestic politics. China’s international
relations will come to the fore gradually over the course of the semester. Another premise is that
Chinese domestic politics are always connected to global events, even when the Chinese people
appear to be isolated from the rest of the world. Attention to such points of connection will help
participants integrate understanding of China within their intellectual horizons.

Structure
The first half of the course covers major events and periods in a chronological manner. From
Week Seven onward, the treatment will be thematic, focusing on a number of China’s current
challenges.

Class time in POLS 341 will be divided between lectures and class discussion. Structured
discussion sessions will begin in October, and questions for discussion and debate will be
assigned in advance. For the purpose of discussion, participants will be organized into groups.
Group members will take turns as discussion moderators. Representatives of each group will
report to the class as a whole at the beginning of the next class.

Goals and expectations
The course aims to enhance participants’ skills in critical reading, attentive listening, conceptual
thinking, analytic reasoning, structured writing, and oral communication. Discussion time will be
structured to provide the benefits of face-to-face debate and opportunities to moderate and report
on discussion. In other words, in this course you can become a better reader, listener, thinker,
analyst, writer, debater, and public speaker. To achieve all this, it is important that you keep up
with the reading and prepare for discussions. For fruitful debate, attention to others’ views is as
important as expressing one’s own. Therefore extroverts must restrain themselves, introverts
must speak out, and moderators will be responsible for involving their fellow group members in
discussion.
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Assessment will be based on oral and written expression in a variety of assignments, as described below.

Participation in discussion and in-class exercises (such as quizzes). 20 percent of final grade

Position statements. Two brief essays (400-500 words) based on positions taken in class discussion. In these papers you will articulate and clarify your responses to discussion questions, course materials, and classmates’ views. Try to defend a clear main point in each paper. The first statement will be weighted at ten percent of the final grade and the second at fifteen percent. At least one of these must be turned in by November 7.

Mid-term test. A test taken in class on October 21 will assess understanding of the material presented in lectures, discussed in class, and covered in reading assignments.

Term essay OR take-home final examination. 30 percent

Requirements of the final examination. Exam questions will be posted online on December 4. Part A will require short answers to questions chosen from a set. Succinct analysis will be required. In part B, you will compose an essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words in response to a broad question about Chinese politics. The questions will focus on material covered since the mid-term test. Group work will not be permitted. The assignment will be due by 4 pm on Friday, December 11 (online submission).

Requirements of the term essay. You are welcome to prepare an essay on any topic related to Chinese politics. Extensive research is not required. The essay may take the form of a focussed literature review or a book review essay. For example, you might choose to review recent scholarship on Chinese policy toward minority populations, environmental protection, or foreign relations. Alternatively, you might choose to discuss one of the books assigned in the course in relation to one or more other works. Whatever approach you choose, the essay will be assessed largely on the strength and originality of your main argument. Formulation of a good topic, effective research, and clear expression will also be taken into account in evaluation. Length: 2,000 to 3,000 words. Due date: Friday, December 11, by 4 pm (online submission).

Note: If the essay option is chosen, you must turn in a proposal, by 4 pm on Saturday, November 21 at the latest (about 350 words). The proposal will be returned promptly with comments and a mark, weighted at 5 percent of the final grade; the essay itself will account for 25 percent. You are advised to consult me early on for guidance if you are interested in preparing an essay.
READING ASSIGNMENTS

The books listed below will be made available at the Campus Bookstore. They are also available for purchase as e-books. Other reading assignments are specified in the schedule below. Various other materials will be posted in the course website (under preparation). A few short readings not specified in this syllabus will be added later; these will be assigned and posted at least a week before the class meeting in which they will be discussed.


______________________________________________________________________________

SCHEDULE

September 16: An overview of China’s political system

Reading assignment: Joseph, Politics in China, pages 3-33.

Introductory Lecture: Distinctive features of China’s political system and approaches to studying Chinese politics.

______________________________________________________________________________

PART ONE: Eras, events, and themes

September 23: The Imperial System and its end

Reading assignments will include:


______________________________________________________________________________

September 30: Post-monarchical China

Reading assignments will include:


Question for in-class discussion: Why did the Chinese Communist Party win national power in 1949?
October 7: Mao Zedong: Case study of a political career


Question for discussion in class: What were Mao’s primary motivations?

October 14: Political economy and social order in the era of Mao Zedong

Reading assignment: Begin reading River Town (reading to the end if possible). Prepare to answer a quiz question about politics in China at local, non-elite levels.

October 21: Deng Xiaoping, post-Mao Reforms, and the quality of life


Question for discussion in class: Has the Chinese Communist Party veered too far from the Maoist commitment to socialist equity?

October 28: Review of the eras of Mao and Deng (1949-1997)

IN-CLASS TEST (60 minutes)

Format: The test will consist of three parts, worth 10, 40, and 50 percent respectively. The first part will be a set of five to ten True/False questions. Part B will require two short answers to questions chosen from a larger set (suggested length per answer: 250 words). Succinct analysis will be required. In part C, you will compose an essay of about 1,000 words in response to a broad question about Chinese politics since the imperial era.

Marked tests will be returned in two weeks.

PART TWO: China’s current challenges

November 4: Political Structure and Social Division


Question for discussion in class: What are the most important foundations of the authority of the Chinese Communist Party?

November 11: Discontent, dissidence and social unrest: ethnic minorities and border regions

Reading assignments will include:


Questions for discussion in class: Is China’s party-state keeping discontent under control? Explain China’s policies toward particular regions?

November 18: Guiding and governing a growing economy

Reading assignments will include:


Question for discussion in class: How is China’s party-state similar to and different from a large business enterprise?

November 25: Environmental politics

Reading:

Note: A full discussion session will not be held this week.

December 2: China and the world

Reading: Nina Hachigan, Debating China. Chapters 1 through 6 and one or more of the others.

Question for discussion in class: Is China becoming more cooperative or more competitive?
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Lateness. All assignments are compulsory components of the course. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 10 percent of the available marks, followed by 1 percent per weekday thereafter. Extensions without penalty will only be approved in advance. In cases of significant lateness, the instructor will not provide comments on assignments.

Copyright of course materials. Please take note that this syllabus and other materials presented in the course are copyrighted. They are made available for your sole use as students registered in POLS 341. The material posted on the course website in Moodle may be downloaded for registered students’ personal use, but shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in POLS 341. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

Grading system. In this course, some components will be graded using numerical percentage marks. Other components will receive letter grades, which for purposes of calculating your course average will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale:

**Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment mark</th>
<th>Numerical value for calculation of final mark</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>C</td>
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Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D-</td>
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Reminder regarding academic integrity
POLS 341 will uphold the principles of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html ). Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/2011-2012-calendar/academic-regulations/regulation-1), on the Arts and Science website (see http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Disability Accommodations
Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the DSO website at: http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/.