

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

POL 302F
State and Society in 20th Century China

Fall, 2025
Mr. Falkenheim

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00 and by appointment
SS3029

Course Content and Format

This course will examine China's efforts to reconstitute its political institutions following the collapse of the imperial system in 1911. Particular attention will be paid to the clash between competing conceptions of political development and the rival political movements and forces that espoused them. The search for an effective and stable political order in the face of external pressures and internal fragmentation will receive extended discussion. The failed effort to create legitimate and popularly grounded political institutions will be a major focus of the course. A secondary focus will explore the impact of rapid economic, social and cultural change on the political system. The course will be organized in a lecture format, though class discussion will be encouraged.

Grades will be based on a *midterm test (35%), a research essay (40%) and an end-of-term test (25%).*

All readings will be posted on Quercus in Modules by date and topic.

Topics and Readings:

Sept 8 **Course Overview: Competing Perspectives on Modern China**

1. Bill Hayton, *The Invention of China*, Introduction
2. Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, Chap 12
3. Kaiser Kuo, "Why do the Chinese People like their government?"
4. "Western Intellectuals now have weak minds to grasp China"

Sept 15 **The Traditional Order and the Problem of Change**

1. Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, Chapter 3 ("China's Ignominy") pp.70-85
2. Lieberthal, *Governing China*, Chapter 1, pp.3-19.

Sept 22 **Revolution and Reform**

1. Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution, Chapters 1&2.
2. Jonathan Spence, Gate of Heavenly Peace, Chapter 1
3. Chen Duxiu, “Call to Youth”
4. Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, (Mao’s ‘Autobiography’)

Sept 29 **The CCP and the KMT (GMD): 1921-1949**

1. Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution, Chap. 3, 5& 6.
2. Mao Zedong, “Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society” (1926)

Oct 6 **The CCP in Power: The Mao Years: I&II**

1. Kenneth Lieberthal, Governing China, 60-77; 86-99.
2. Maurice Meisner, Mao’s China and After, Selections.
3. Mao Zedong, “On People’s Democratic Dictatorship.” (1949)

Oct 13 **Thanksgiving: No Class**

Oct 20 **The Cultural Revolution and the End of the Mao Era: II**

1. Maurice Meisner, Mao’s China and After, Chapters 17, 19.
2. Andrew Walder, “The Mao Era in Retrospect”
3. Phillip Pan, “The Cemetery”

Oct 27 **Reading Week**

Nov 3 **The Deng Era: Economic Reform and Market Authoritarianism**

1. Maurice Meisner, Mao’s China, Chapter 23-25.
2. William Overholt, “Reassessing China: Awaiting Xi Jinping” (2012)
3. Video (‘Born Under the Red Flag’)

Nov 10 **The Xi Jinping Era: Back to the Future ?**

1. Evan Osnos, “Born Red,” New Yorker.
2. Alfred Chan, Xi Jinping: Political Career, Governance and Leadership, Oxford, 2022. (Conclusion).
3. Minxin Pei, “The Long Shadow of Totalitarianism,” Journal of Democracy, Journal of Democracy, 2021

Nov 17 **Party and State Institutions in Flux**

1. Patricia Thornton, "Party all the time: The CCP in Comparative and Historical Perspective," China Quarterly, 2021.
2. Lance Gore, "The Communist-Party-Dominated Governance Model of China," Polity, 2019.
3. Daniel Bell, "Chinese Democracy isn't Inevitable," Atlantic, 2018

Nov 24 **Political Leadership in Flux**

1. .Cheng Li, "Leadership Politics in the Xi Jinping Era" (2018)
2. Joseph Fewsmith, "Authoritarian Resilience Revisited."
3. Daniel Bell and Eric Li "Meritocracy"
4. Susan Shirk, "Return to Personalistic Leadership,": Journal of Democracy, 2016
5. Timothy Cheek, "Xi Jinping's Counter Reformation" (2021)

Dec 1 **State and Society in Flux**

1. Ian Johnson, "The Death and Life of China's Civil Society," 2003.
2. Gilboy and Read, "Political and Social Reform in China," 2008
3. Andrew Nathan, "The Puzzle of the Chinese Middle Class."
4. James Leibold, 'Xinjiang'

Dec 2 **China Challenges the World**

1. Ian Johnson, "Will China Become Supreme?"
2. Frank Pieke, Knowing China, Chapter 6
3. Minxin Pei, "China under Xi Jinping" (2018)
4. Graham Allison, "Destined for War: Can China and the US Escape the Thucydides Trap?" Atlant