

Oberlin College
Department of Politics

Politics 110: Revolution, Socialism and Reform in China

Fall 2009

Professor Marc Blecher

Office: Rice 224; phone: x58493

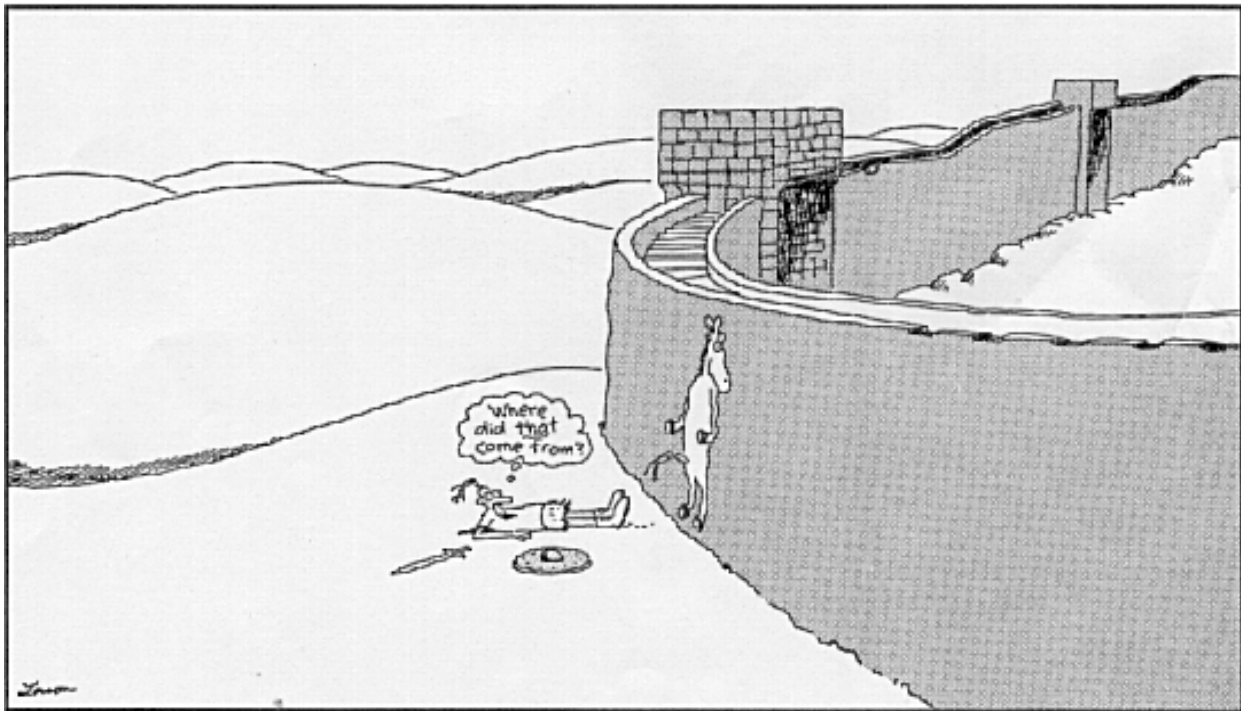
Office hours: T Th 3-4 & W 3:30-4:00

(for appointments, go to my website
and click on the link)

E-mail: marc.blecher@oberlin.edu

Website: [www.oberlin.edu/faculty/mblecher/
m-blech.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/faculty/mblecher/m-blech.html)

Class meets Monday,
Wednesday and
Friday, 2:30-3:20, King 337



Circa 300 B.C.: The first barbarian invader reaches the Great Wall of China

We must forgive our hapless equestrian. China has surprised many people — including its own leaders and people as well as foreign observers — more often than most of them care to remember. Its stunning downfall from the apex of world civilization, where it remained for millennia through the early nineteenth century, to the ignoble condition of the “sick man of Asia” by the late nineteenth century, still baffles. Subsequently, China could not consolidate a capitalist economy or a stable polity at a

time when some of its neighbors did so. Instead it produced the most massive socialist revolution and transformation in the third world. It experienced several dramatic shifts in the course of doing so. Departing early from the Soviet model, for years it evinced a driving impulse for “continuing revolution” that put it at the extreme left among state socialist countries. Then in 1979, China switched course, pioneering broad-gauged structural reform way ahead of other state socialist countries. In 1989 it switched back, moving more sternly, decisively and successfully against reform than any other state socialist country has yet done, precisely at a time when most others were being transcended by popular movements for change. Today China holds out the prospect of a “third way”, a hybrid combining in a new way features of state socialism and capitalism that I now call “market Leninism”.

Politics 110 provides a comprehensive introduction to China’s revolution and the transmutations of its socialism, focusing on these puzzles among others. The course is organized chronologically and topically. It involves the twin tasks of describing Chinese affairs and, on that basis, analyzing them. The course will familiarize you with what has been happening in China through readings, lectures and films. As we gain a base of knowledge, we will venture to come to terms with it through various kinds of conversations: discussions in and outside of class, and exchanges of our questions, concerns and views in writing on our blog.

Before each class I expect you to complete readings that will cover the subject for the day. In class the material cannot be covered in anything approaching the fullness of what you need to know about it; *ipso facto*, lectures cannot substitute for the reading. If you have not done the reading before class, you will not be able to get much out of that class session, and you will, unavoidably, feel lost.

An effective tool for learning is the Blackboard blog. We will be making intensive and regular use of it, so learn it by the end of our first week. We will use it in a number of ways.

§ Once each week you should respond in writing on the blog to questions that I will pose for each session. Specifically, those of you with surnames beginning A-H will do so by the end of Sunday night (for Monday’s class), those with surnames I-P by the end of Tuesday night (for Wednesday’s class), and those of with surnames Q-Z by Thursday evening (for Friday’s class). If you miss your appointed day, just post a reply for another day that week. You may, of course, respond more than once each week if you like; the more often you do so, the more you will learn.

§ You can post substantive questions of fact that arise as you do each session’s reading. I and other members of the class may respond to your questions right on the blog, and I will do so in the subsequent class. Start a debate!

§ On each morning or early afternoon before class, prepare for class by taking a few moments to log in to the blog to read what everyone has written.

You will also write two open-book, take-home essays of approximately 1,500 words (\approx 6 pages) each. The schedule can be found in the course outline below. These require a command of the material, but they are oriented mainly toward developing your engagement with and analysis and interpretation of it. To give you an idea of what to expect and to help you orient your reading and thinking, below you will find the essay questions used in the most recent offering of the course. You can expect many of the

same issues to be treated this time around, perhaps with some of the same or similar questions. Tommy Morello, our writing tutor, can help you write great papers.

I will evaluate your work according to the following weightings:

Blog comments	40%
Papers	30% each
Attention and participation in class	A "fudge factor"

Please take careful note of these proportions. They reflect my conviction that *the daily process of the course is as important* to your learning as the two papers you will write. In the past students who assumed that the papers were their only responsibilities for the course have been unpleasantly surprised at the end of the semester.

We are screening several films. Some can be viewed online, but others have to be shown **OUTSIDE OF REGULAR CLASS TIME**. These are noted in **BOLDFACE** in the schedule below. Please peruse the course schedule, **PLAN ACCORDINGLY**; and accept my sincerest thanks for your flexibility.

You should keep up with the news from China. There are several possibilities:

§ The best China journalism in major US papers can be found *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*, all available in Mudd or on line. Chingching Ni, a writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, is a veteran of Politics 110, which, I like to think, helps account for her penchant for stories about the human costs of China's very rapid development.

§ Official news from China can be found in the *Beijing Review* (a weekly magazine, in Mudd) and *China Daily* (<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/home/>). For official state publications, they are actually fairly lively, somewhat objective, and often even critical.

§ Yahoo provides a reasonably comprehensive source of Western wire-service reports at <http://asia.news.yahoo.com/china.html>

§ So does the *Financial Times*: <feed://www.ft.com/rss/world/asiapacific/china>

§ The Chinese Embassy to the US web site contains official government news releases and other basic information): <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/>

Please consult this syllabus's schematic chronology and guide to the rudiments of Chinese pronunciation. The timeline can help bring some order to the complex sequence of events we will be studying. The pronunciation guide will help you discharge your responsibility as students of China to pronounce Chinese words and names properly, or at least better than much of the broadcast news media who are shirking that same responsibility.

Newspapers and cyberspace can provide timely information; but information is not knowledge. For that, we still need, among other things, analyses contained in books. Each year Americans spend five times as much on dog food as on college books. Politics 110 is doing its part to help us get our priorities right. The following books are available for purchase at the Oberlin Bookstore:

Robert Benewick and Stephanie Donald, *The State of China Atlas* ((second edition [avoid the first edition])

Marc Blecher, *China Against the Tides: Restructuring Through Revolution, Radicalism and Reform* (second edition [avoid the first edition])

William Hinton, *Fanshen*

Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and*

Resistance (second edition [avoid the first edition])

Vivienne Shue, *The Reach of the State*

William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*

Gordon White, *Riding the Tiger: The Politics of Economic Reform in Post-Mao China*

We will also read all of Christine Hall, *Daughters of the Dragon*. It is out of print, but available from various online used booksellers. There will be a lot of demand for the few copies we have on campus, so I recommend purchasing a copy if possible. It is also available on electronic reserve ("E-res"), but printing it out may cost more than buying it.

Several other readings are also on reserve, all indicated in the schedule below. There are 5-6 copies of everything on print reserve. Everything is also on electronic reserve (Eres). You can find Eres at <http://eres.cc.oberlin.edu/eres/default.aspx>. The Eres password is Polt110 (and it is case-specific).

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Schedule of Classes, Topics, Readings and Assignments

August 31: Course Introduction

September 2-4: Imperial China

Marc Blecher, *China Against the Tides*, Introduction and pages 6-13.

William Hinton, *Fanshen*, chapter 4.

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, pages 162-187 (on reserve and Eres).

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pages 67-80 (on reserve and Eres).

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 7:00-9:00 PM: Screening of *China in Revolution*, Mudd 050

September 9: Republican China

Blecher, pages 13-16.

Moore, pages 187-201, 433-452.

Skocpol, pages 147-154, 236-251.

September 11: The Communist-Led Revolution, I

Blecher, pages 16-28.

Moore, pages 201-227.

Skocpol, pages 112-117, 252-262.

Mao Zedong, "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership" (on Eres).

Hinton, chapters 10, 15-19, 22, 23.

September 14: A: The Communist-Led Revolution, II: Land Reform; B: Summation of Pre-1949 Period

- A: Blecher, pages 39-44.
 Hinton, chapters 35-37, 46-53.
 B: Blecher, pages 28-37.

September 16: The Early 1950s: Consolidation and Socialist Beginnings

- Blecher, pages 38, 44-47.
 Mark Selden, ed., *The People's Republic of China*, pages 175-193, 254-277 (on reserve and Eres).
 Vivienne Shue, "Mutual Aid" (on reserve and Eres; also in chapter four of her *Peasant China in Transition* [on reserve]).

September 18: The Middle 1950s I: Accelerated Socialist Transformation in Urban Areas

- Blecher, pages 47-52.
 Selden, ed., pages 290-314 (on reserve and Eres).
 Stephen Andors, "From Reconstruction to the Great Leap Forward" (on reserve and Eres; also in chapter 3 of his *China's Industrial Revolution* [on reserve]).

September 21: The Middle 1950s II: Accelerated Socialist Transformation in the Rural Areas

- Blecher, pages 52-58.
 Shue, "Collectivization" (on reserve and Eres; also in chapter seven of her *Peasant China in Transition* [on reserve]).
 Selden, ed., pages 350-358, 364-373 (on reserve and Eres).

September 23: Sharpening Political Conflict

- Blecher, pages 58-end of first ¶ on page 63.
 Selden, ed., pages 314-330 (on reserve and Eres).
FIRST ESSAY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED.

September 25: The Great Leap Forward: Radical Communist Experimentation

- Blecher, pages 63-66.
 Hinton, *Shenfan*, chapters 29-34 (*n.b.* This is NOT *Fanshen*) (on reserve and Eres; photocopies also on reserve under the title "Great Leap").
 Selden, ed., pages 467-482 (on reserve and Eres).

September 30: The Early 1960s: Readjustment and Emergent Two Line Struggle

- Blecher, pages 66-72.
 Jack Gray, "The Two Roads" (on reserve and Eres; also in Stuart Schram, ed., *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* [on reserve], pages 109-158).
 Selden, ed., pages 530-541 (on reserve and Eres).

October 2: The Cultural Revolution, I: Narrative and Political Sociology

- Blecher, 72-82.
 Marc Blecher and Gordon White, *Micropolitics in Contemporary China*, chapters 2-6 (on reserve and Eres; chapter 1 recommended to provide context).

October 5: The Cultural Revolution, II: Political Economy

Peer Møller Christensen, "The Shanghai School and Its Rejection" (on reserve and Eres; also in Stephan Feuchtwang and Athar Hussain, eds., *The Chinese Economic Reforms*, pages 74-90 [on reserve]).

Mark Selden, ed., pages 651-662 (on reserve and Eres).

October 7: Summary of Maoist Period

Blecher, 177-179

October 9: Discussion of papers.**OCTOBER 11, NOON: papers due via e-mail.****OCTOBER 11, 3:30-5:30 PM: screening of *Born Under the Red Flag*, Mudd 050**October 12: Politics, I: Theory and Ideology

Gordon White, *Riding the Tiger*, chapter 5.

October 14: Politics, II: The State

Screen *China from the Inside, Part 1* online (<http://octetl.csr.oberlin.edu/media/200702-POLT-110-01>)

Robert Benewick and Stephanie Donald, *The State of China Atlas*, maps 18-21.

Blecher, chapter 4.

White, chapter 6.

October 16: Class canceled since no one will come anywayOctober 26: Politics, III: The State and Society

Benewick and Donald, maps 22. & 23.

Blecher, pages 208-222.

Shue, *The Reach of the State*, chapters 2 and 3.

White, chapter 7.

October 28: Politics, IV: Political Participation and Resistance: Labor

Benewick and Donald, maps 10 & 11.

Blecher, pages 137-148 and 156-158.

Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, chapters 3 and 6.

October 30: Politics, IV: Political Participation and Resistance: Nationality

Screen *China From the Inside, Part 4* online (<http://octetl.csr.oberlin.edu/media/200702-POLT-110-01>)

Benewick and Donald, maps 8 & 32.

Blecher, pages 159-161.

Perry and Selden, eds., chapters 10-12.

NOVEMBER 1, 2-5 PM: Screening of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Mudd 050**November 2: Politics VI: Political Participation and Resistance (iii) – The 1989 Crisis (a)**

Read *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* web site: <http://tsquare.tv/>

Reread Blecher, 99-104.

November 4: Politics VII: Political Participation and Resistance (iv) – The 1989 Crisis (b)

Tang Tsou, “The Tiananmen Tragedy: The State-Society Relationship, Choices and Mechanisms in Historical Perspective” (on reserve and Eres; also in chapter 6 of Jon Elster, ed., *The Round Table and the Breakdown of Communism*, [on reserve]).

November 6: Political Economy, I: Overview

White, chapters 1-2.

November 9: Political Economy, II: The Maoist Model in Agriculture

Blecher, pages 162-165, 169-170, 173-178.

Tang Tsou, Marc Blecher and Mitch Meisner, “Organization, Growth and Equality in Xiyang County, Part I” (on reserve and Eres; also in *Modern China* V, 1 [January 1979]).

Tang Tsou, Marc Blecher and Mitch Meisner, “Organization, Growth and Equality in Xiyang County, Part II” (on reserve and Eres; also in *Modern China* V, 2 [April 1979]).

November 11: Political Economy, IV: Structural Reform and Agriculture (a)

Screen *All Under Heaven* online (<http://octet1.csr.oberlin.edu/media/200702-POLT-110-01>)

Benewick and Donald, map 12.

Blecher, pages 181, 184-185, 187, 197-200.

November 13: Political Economy, IV: Structural Reform and Agriculture (b)

White, chapter 3.

Shue, *Reach of the State*, chapter 4.

Perry and Selden, eds., chapter 4 and 5.

November 16: Political Economy, V: Industry and Commerce (a)

Benewick and Donald, map 8.

Blecher, pages 165-169, 170-173, 178-181, 182-184, 185-186, 187-197.

November 18: Political Economy, VI: Industry and Commerce (b)

White, chapter 4.

November 20: Gender and Family, I

Benewick and Donald, map 7.

Blecher, pages 148-155.

Christine Hall, *Daughters of the Dragon*, chapters 1-5 ([on reserve and Eres]).

November 23: Gender and Family, II

Screen *Small Happiness and China From the Inside (Part 2)* online (<http://octetl.csr.oberlin.edu/media/200702-POLT-110-01>)

November 25: Class cancelled since no one would come anyway

November 30: Gender and Family, II

Hall, chapters 6-11
Perry and Selden, chapters 7 & 13.

December 2: Population

Benewick and Donald, map 1.
Perry and Selden, chapter 8.
SECOND ESSAY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED.

December 4: The Environment

Screen *China From the Inside, Part 3* online (<http://octetl.csr.oberlin.edu/media/200702-POLT-110-01>)
Benewick and Donald, page 87 and maps 33-35.
Perry and Selden, chapter 9.

December 7: Music and Politics

Richard Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China*, chapters 1, 4, 7 (others recommended; on reserve and Eres).

December 9: Intellectuals and Education

Benewick and Donald, map 26.
Perry and Selden, chapter 2.

December 11: Conclusion: Toward the Future

Blecher, chapter 8.
White, chapter 8.

DECEMBER 14, 4:30 PM: SECOND ESSAY DUE

SCHEMATIC CHRONOLOGY OF CHINESE POLITICS

c. 500 B.C.E.	Confucius (and other Zhou thinkers, including Daoists & Legalists)
c. 220 B.C.E.	First Emperor of Qin unifies China, makes virtual revolution
c. 200 B.C.E. - 200 C.E.	Han Dynasty founded (and Buddhism from India)
c. 600 C.E.	Turkic ruling houses regenerate the empire in Sui and Tang
c. 750	Mid-Tang revolution (capita taxes to land, migration north to south)
c. 1000-1300	Song (policy-making traditions; culture stronger than army)
1368	Ming expels the Mongols' harsh and short Yuan Dynasty
1644	Manchus come to power after the Ming falls in a peasant rebellion
1840	Opium War (unequal Treaty of Nanjing in 1842)
1850-64	Taiping Rebellion (Han gentry/proto-warlord armies save the Qing)
1895	Sino-Japanese War ends with China's loss
1898	Hundred Days of Emperor's reform ended by Empress Dowager & friends
1905	Confucian exams abolished for posts: Sun Yatsen founds proto-Guomindang
1911	Fall of the empire; Republican Revolution
1915	21 Demands (Japan wants China as protectorate); Yuan Shikai attempts to restore the monarchy and make himself emperor
1919	May 4 Movement protests Versailles gift of Shandong enclaves to Japan
1921	Chinese Communist Party founded (then a minor event, in Shanghai)
1923	First United Front of Guomindang and Communist Party (Sun-Joffe Agreement)
1925	Sun Yatsen dies
1926	Beginning of Northern Expedition of Jiang Kaishek to unify warlords under Guomindang
1927	Jiang attacks Communist Party in "White Terror", forces it to countryside, begins "Nanjing Decade"
1929-34	Jiangxi Soviet (land reforms); Jiang's "encirclement campaigns"
1931	Japan seizes Manchuria (N.E. China), later installs Qing emperor there
1934-35	Long March ("go north to resist Japan"), Mao becomes head of Communist Party
1936	Xi'an Incident (anti-Japanese Guomindang generals kidnap Jiang temporarily)
1937	World War II begins: Japan invades N. China Plain & coasts; Guomindang-Communist Party "Second United Front"
1941	Pearl Harbor (U.S. enters war); Guomindang-Communist Party military conflict in Anhui
1945	Japanese surrender; cities given to Jiang's Army: civil war resumes
1948	People's Liberation Army attacks in North and Central China; US aids Jiang

- 1949 “Liberation”: October 1 founding of People’s Republic of China
- 1950 Korean War (June 25; China enters, October 25); land, labor, & marriage laws
- 1951 Main land reform; patriotic bourgeois support for CCP in war; truce talks
- 1952 “Three-anti/five-anti” campaigns to purify & scare bureaucrats and businessmen in cities
- 1953 Stalin dies; Korea truce
- 1954 Constitution, centralization; rations; Gao & Rao (regional leaders) purged for being pro-Soviet; lower-stage agricultural coöps
- 1955 Higher-stage agricultural coöps; First Five Year Plan (1953-57) announced
- 1956 Hundred Flowers campaign
- 1957 Antirightist Campaign; intellectuals and critics “sent down”
- 1958 Great Leap Forward (oversized communes, new factory capital, mobilization)
- 1959 Defense Minister Peng Dehuai purged for criticizing Mao; revolt in Tibet
- 1960 Famine in post-Leap economic depression; Soviet technicians leave China
- 1961 Retrenchment to smaller communes, last of “3 bad years”
- 1962 Border war with India
- 1963 Socialist Education Campaign: workers & peasants advantaged in jobs, education
- 1964 Atom bomb successfully tested; army organizes movements for proletarian pride
- 1965 “On Dismissal of Hai Rui”/“People’s War” (pre-Cultural Revolution radical tracts, Yao/Lin)
- 1966 Red guards from cadres’ families, then among ex-bourgeois & contract labor; Liu Shaoqi purged
- 1967 Cultural Revolution at height: red guard factional coalitions, civil wars
- 1968 Clean class ranks: soldier-worker-cadre teams force order; USSR invades Prague
- 1969 Lin Biao named “Mao’s successor”; May 7 cadre schools; Ussuri River fighting between China and USSR
- 1970 Zhou Enlai-Mao Zedong political coöperation: Mao supports “Gang of 4” too
- 1971 Lin Biao’s fall; Kissinger’s secret flight to Peking; China takes UN seat
- 1972 People’s Liberation Army budget cut; official violence ebbs a bit; Shanghai Communiqué between China and US
- 1973 Commanders shifted among military regions: Deng reappears after being purged in 1966
- 1974 “Criticize Confucius” (an allegory: radicals criticize Zhou); leaders ill

- 1975 Deng Xiaoping quasi-premier for Zhou's Four Modernizations (removed, 1/76)
- 1976 Zhou, Mao die (January & September); Hua Guofeng Premier (February), Party Chair (September); "Gang" jailed (October)
- 1977 Four Modernizations new line, but under old-style leader Hua; admission exams for colleges
- 1978 Deng in charge at Third Plenum; "democracy wall"; Carter-Hua Communique (US-China relations)
- 1979 "Rightists" exonerated: rural reforms extend; Vietnam invasion
- 1980 "Gang of Four" tried: some communes become townships; Zhao Ziyang becomes Premier
- 1981 Rural incomes up, amid urban shortages: Hu Yaobang replaces Hua as Party Chair
- 1982 US defense weapons to Taiwan, but US-China agreement on fewer future sales
- 1983 Spiritual Pollution Campaign stirs doubts in Communist Party about reform, but campaign ends soon
- 1984 Industrial reforms announced; Hong Kong accord
- 1985 Old cadres retired at autumn congress; Gorbachev heads USSR
- 1986 Students protest delay of political reforms, but Communist Party is slow to accommodate them.
- 1987 Dismissal of Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang; movement against "bourgeois liberalization"
- 1988 Abortive price reform; inflation; beginning of economic austerity
- 1989 Broad popular protests followed by repression and martial law; rise of hard-line leadership
- 1990 Hard-liners in power
- 1991 Consolidation of post-1989 leadership; economic austerity
- 1992 Deng's "Southern Tour": economic austerity ends; debate on appropriate pace of growth
- 1993 Some releases from prison of 1989 protesters; economic overheating; rural discontent erupts
- 1994 High inflation; continuing expressions of discontent
- 1995 Corruption a major issue; death of Chen Yun; economic soft landing; Taiwan Straits heat up
- 1996 Economy stabilizes; Taiwan Straits conflict heats up; US-China relations difficult
- 1997 Death of Deng Xiaoping; return of Hong Kong; 15th Party Congress: Jiang Zemin consolidates leadership and state enterprise reform; Jiang visits US
- 1998 At National People's Congress, Premier Li Peng is the first top Chinese leader in history to vacate his position in accordance with the Constitution; President Clinton visits China; hardliners rise at end of the year

1999	China tense in face of political demonstrations by workers and <i>Falungong</i> spiritual practitioners; US bombs Chinese embassy in Belgrade, provoking popular patriotic outrage and state-approved popular demonstrations.
2000	Hardliners remain in control, keeping political atmosphere repressive
2001	Tensions in US-China relations; China joins WTO
2002	16 th Party Congress chooses younger, Hu/Wen leadership; China joins WTO
2003	SARS rocks China; Three Gorges Dam begins operation; Chinese in space
2004	Continued economic growth and tight political control
2005	Hu promotes “harmonious society”; serious chemical spill covered up but then revealed
2006-7	Continuing economic growth and political authoritarianism; new labor laws passed
2008	China hosts the Olympics; huge Sichuan earthquake
2009	Broad political stability amid slowed economic growth and key anniversaries; massive ethnic riot in Xinjiang

GUIDE TO CHINESE ROMANIZATIONS

As students of Chinese politics, it is both respectful and incumbent on us to try to pronounce Chinese names, places and phrases correctly.

There are three major systems of romanization used in the general literature. The first can be called the “post office system”, though it is totally unsystematic. It is mainly used for place names, examples include Peking, Canton, and Amoy.

The other two are Wade-Giles, which was commonly used through the 1970s, and pinyin, which is the official system of the People’s Republic, and has increasingly replaced Wade-Giles. You will have to discern which one your source is using by inspection. (Most of our readings will use pinyin.) The pinyin system is distinguishable by any of the following: x, q, z, zh, r, g, d, b, ong. By contrast, the Wade-Giles system contains apostrophes and hyphens.

Once you have deduced which system a text uses, you apply a few rules. The main general rule is that practically all words you see, except family names, contain two syllables. Sound them as containing two syllables, even if the letters suggest three or more to you. A few system-specific rules are noted below. The left side of each equation is the romanization, as you might see it on a page; the right is a usual and approximate English equivalent sound.

PINYIN

x = sy z = dz zh = j c = ts ong = ung ian = ien ui = way

i is variable: “-ee” after most initials; “-r” after ch, r, sh, zh; or a deep “-uh” or no sound after c, s, & z.

WADE-GILES

When not followed by apostrophes: k = g p = b t = d ts = dz ch = j. When followed by apostrophes, these all have English sounds.

Also: j = r ih = r ui = way yu = yo yü = yü hs = sy

ESSAY QUESTIONS FROM THE MOST RECENT OFFERING OF THE COURSE

First Essay Topics

1. Discuss some significant ways in which legacies from China's history before 1949 affected the course of its socialist development. In doing so, you should try to deploy – critically or agreeably – some of the structural concepts and arguments advanced by Moore and/or Skocpol. Be sure to be specific not just about the pre-1949 period but also about what in the post-1949 period you are explaining by reference to elements of the past.
2. What does the Chinese case teach us about class structure and struggle under state socialism?
3. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were both in part efforts to resolve some basic problems of Chinese socialism. Compare them along one or more of the following dimensions: the problems they were attempting to address; the specific policies they involved; the kind of politics they involved, within the state and between the state and society; their successes and failures (in terms of their own avowed goals and/or in terms of other evaluative criteria you may wish to bring to bear). Account for the similarities or differences you have discovered.
4. Compare the “open-door rectification” of the land reform period with the Cultural Revolution. Discuss their respective goals, methods and outcomes. Account for the similarities or differences that you find. (Hint: a good way to do this question is to re-read the relevant portions of *Fanshen* and *Micropolitics in Contemporary China*.)
5. How can the marked swings of the 1950s – from the moderate policies of the reconstruction period to the First Five Year Plan to the Great Leap Forward – be explained? Is there any underlying logic at work here? If so, does it reflect political intentions of the leadership or just their efforts to cope?
6. Choose one or more key moments in China from the revolutionary period up to the end of the Maoist period. Assess the relative role of the top leadership, middle- and/or lower level officials, and ordinary Chinese citizens in accounting for what occurred. Be careful not to assume that because China is not a Western-style democracy the people played no significant role. They often constrained the top- and middle-level leadership in various ways, and they always provided the context within which the leadership made its choices. Think hard about all this as you formulate your response.
7. Write out your own question, discuss it with me (a necessary step), and then respond to it in writing.

Second Essay Topics

Choose one:

1. Discuss some significant ways in which particular legacies from China's history before 1949 affected the course of its project of structural reform. If you wrote on this topic last time, take this opportunity to reevaluate your ideas.
2. "The rural structural reforms were based in significant ways upon the achievements of the socialist transformation of the countryside that preceded them, even as they also undid many of those achievements.

– A. Nonimus

Comment.

3. Choose a major difference between the urban and rural structural reforms that you want to explain, and identify some factors that do the explaining. Possible *explananda* (things explained) and *explanans* (things that do the explaining) among which you can choose might be: ownership forms; constituencies (*i.e.*, peasants/workers); incentives; economic coordination (plan/market); distributive effects (equality/inequality); effect on economic performance; the pace of reform; the preexisting structures and problems in each sphere; politics (*e.g.*, support and opposition, controversiality, the roles of state and society). These are just suggestions; you may well think of others to bring into either side of the analysis.
4. When compared with other "developing" or "third world" countries, China is often regarded as having achieved a particularly distinguished record in social policy. Evaluate and account for China's population control policy in both the Maoist and Dengist periods, and relate it to wider questions about China's politics and state. For example, do the various successes and failures reflect some basic features of the state and politics? Does the imperative of population control demand or promote a particular kind of state and politics, or limit the possible forms that the state and politics can or should take?
5. "The spring 1989 popular demonstrations appeared to be about democracy, but at their bottom lay something else."

– Kurt Remarque

Comment, reflecting also on the movement's social composition.

6. Account for the leadership's response to the spring 1989 popular demonstrations, both before and after the infamous night of June 4, in light of what you have learned about Chinese history, politics, society and economy.
7. The Dengist period is considered by some to be the first one since 1949 in which society began to emerge as a political actor and have some impact upon the state. Others think it was there all along, constraining the Maoist state. Still others it is not yet a significant factor in Chinese politics. Discuss some aspects of state-society relations in the Maoist and Dengist periods.
8. Compare some of the kinds of political resistance seen in the Maoist period (*e.g.*, the 100 Flowers, the Cultural Revolution, the "localism" described by Shue) with those we have studied for the Dengist period.

9. Compare political resistance under the structural reforms in China's rural and urban areas. Account for similarities and/or differences in terms of wider aspects of the structural reforms and of the political system.
10. Discuss gender relations in the Dengist period, comparing with the Maoist period. Be sure to locate the gender question within the wider constellations of political and economic forces operating in China. Reflect upon the possible routes to increased gender equality, grounding your prognostications and possible proposals squarely in your understanding of China today.
11. Has China "gone capitalist"?
12. Using music as an example, discuss China's encounters since 1949 with its own historical culture and with foreign cultural forms, relating the issue to relevant aspects of politics, society and/or economy.
13. China faces myriad pressing social and economic problems, including a burgeoning population, the need to produce adequate supplies of food, and environmental degradation. Does it require high state capacity to solve them? If so, what are the implications of arrogating such capacity to the state for other issues, such as gender equality or better labor conditions, which may require a more democratic approach? In responding to this question, be sure to make specific reference to the material we have studied. (That is, it will not do just to ruminate about your political preferences.)
14. Write your own question, clear it with me, and then answer it.