This course provides an introduction to the major institutions, actors, and ideas that shape contemporary Chinese politics. Through an examination of texts from the social sciences as well as historical narratives and film, we will analyze the development of the current party-state, the relationship between the state and society, policy challenges, and prospects for further reform. First, we examine the political history of the People’s Republic, including the Maoist period and the transition to market reforms. Next, we will interrogate the relations between various social groups and the state, through an analysis of contentious politics in China including the ways in which the party-state seeks to maintain social and political stability. Finally, we will examine the major policy challenges in contemporary China including growing inequality, environmental degradation, waning economic growth, and foreign policy conflicts.

**Required Readings**
Required readings are listed on the syllabus throughout. There is one required book we will regularly return to: *Governance and Politics of China*, 3rd edition, by Tony Saich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

There is also a 4th edition of the textbook, which is a little more expensive online than the 3rd edition. You can use either; the page numbers listed here are for the 3rd edition.

**Additional readings** are listed throughout the syllabus and will be made available via the Learn@UW website. On occasion, I will post and email news articles.

**Classroom Expectations**
Respect for others. Please keep in mind the Honor Code and respect others in the classroom. Comments during discussions should be respectful of differing opinions. If you use a laptop to take notes in class, stay on task so that your laptop screen content does not distract those around you. If you are not observing laptop protocol, I will close your laptop.

Class attendance. Attendance is mandatory. Please notify me as soon as possible if you are unable to come to class for an excused reason (e.g., illness or family emergency). More than one unexcused absence in the semester will lower your participation grade.

Readings. You are expected to do significant amounts of reading for this course. Some readings provide crucial foundational information or context about China’s historical or political contexts. Other readings present an argument regarding Chinese politics. You are expected to extract the major themes and arguments from the readings as appropriate. You
should approach readings that have a provocative argument with a critical eye. Be prepared to incorporate the readings into your interventions during class discussions.

Class discussions. In addition to lectures, class discussions will be a significant part of class. You will be expected to have done the readings assigned for each class and to be prepared to talk about them. Please be willing to take risks in your class participation; I do not require perfectly “correct” observations, but I do expect relevant, thoughtful responses to the course material.

Electronics. Other than a laptop or similar device that is being used for taking notes or to reference course materials, electronic devices are not permitted. Use of cell phones and recording devices is prohibited without prior approval from me. If you sit in class but occupy yourself with non-course material on your laptop, your attendance and participation grade will suffer.

E-mail communications. I will make every effort to reply to e-mails promptly. Please allow two business days for me to respond to your inquiry. Please consult the syllabus before e-mailing.

Assignments and Grading
The breakdown for this course is as follows:

- 15% Attendance and Participation
- 15% Midterm 1 February 8th
- 15% Midterm 2 March 15
- 15% Midterm 3 May 3
- 40% Policy Memo Writing Assignment

Attendance and participation will be calculated based on attendance in lecture, participation in discussion during lecture, and raising questions. In each lecture, I will build in a time for questions and have discussion questions for the readings prepared. If you are less comfortable talking in front of the class, I recommend you prepare answers for the reading discussion questions.

There will be three SHORT midterm examinations in-class. Each class will ask you to respond to a few writing prompts (with choice). In order to make the most of class time, you will have 30 minutes to complete the in-class exam. You will be allowed one sheet of paper (standard letter sized) with any notes you may wish to prepare for reference during the exam. Each writing prompt will ask you to synthesize themes, arguments, and evidence discussed in class and will not strictly speaking be cumulative. Make-up exams will not be allowed without written proof of why the exam had to be missed for medical reasons (doctor’s note) or legitimate personal emergency (documentation from funerals, etc).

The final project for the class is a policy memo writing assignment. This assignment will be turned in in stages, including statement of research question, annotated bibliography, rough
draft for peer review, peer review comments on classmate’s draft, and final draft. More details will be discussed in class.

**Late assignment policy:** Work is due at the times noted in the schedule below and/or within each assignment. Extensions will be provided *only in the case of illness or other serious personal circumstances, and only if I am contacted in advance*. Late assignments will be penalized one full grade for each day past the deadline, and not accepted after one week. In all cases, the decision to award extensions or to provide a makeup assignment is at my discretion.

I have tried to schedule exams/papers to avoid conflicts with religious holidays. If, despite my efforts, it should happen that a due date for an assignment conflicts with your observance of a religious holiday, please let me know during the first two weeks of the semester so we can work on an accommodation.

**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to treat both yourself and your classmates with respect throughout this course. Please do not disrupt the class (do not read the paper, keep your cellphone on – including texting, listen to your MP3 player, clean out your backpack, update your Facebook page, etc.), and respect the views of others at all times. If you fail to adhere to these policies you may be asked to leave the classroom.

This is your only warning regarding academic misconduct. I take the issue of plagiarism very seriously and will use available technology to ensure that everyone is generating original work throughout the semester. I will pursue academic misconduct charges against anyone who violates the University policy.

**Inclusion**
People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform the professor in the first two weeks of class if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the McBurney Disability Office on campus. The McBurney Disability Resource Center can be reached at (608) 263-2741 or via email at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu.

**Course Outline**

January 18: Introduction

Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, 1-33. (skim for overview)

**Historical Legacies**

January 23: Imperial Legacies


January 25: Winning Power


January 30-February 1: Maoist-Era Development and Utopia


February 6: The Legacies of Mao


**Political Elites and Elite Politics**

February 8: Ideology


**In-class midterm # 1**

February 13: Communist Party Organization and Institutions


February 15: Leaders, Governance, Policy Processes


February 20: Getting Along and Ahead in Chinese Politics


February 22: Guest Lecture

TBD

February 27: Political Corruption


**Managing Society: Tools for Control and Stability**

March 1: Laws, Rights, and Obligations


March 6: Stability Maintenance


March 8: Information Control in the Era of Information Revolution


**Paper Proposal Due**

March 13: Interest Articulation: The People’s Voices

Social and Political Issues in Contemporary China

March 15, March 27: Democracy and Democracy Protests


In-class Midterm # 2 March 15

Week of March 20th Spring Break!

March 29: Economic Reform and the State-owned Economy


April 3: Migration and Social Welfare

– Frazier, Mark, “Popular responses to China’s emerging welfare state,” in Gries and Rosen, chapter 12, pp. 258-274.

April 5: Social Inequality

– “Debating China: A Talk with Martin King Whyte”

April 10: Population Planning

Annotated bibliography due.

April 12: Nationalism

– **Podcast Episode

April 17: Religion and the State


April 19: Minority Nationalities and Tibet


Beyond the Boarders of Mainland

April 24: One Country Two Systems: What are SARs anyway?

– ** Readings TBD

Rough draft of final policy memo due.

April 26: China in the World


May 1: Sino-US Relations


Peer-review commends due
Moving Forward

May 3: Research in China: How do we know what we know?

- In-class midterm # 3

Final Exam: Final draft of the policy memo due by May 8 at 12:05pm. You must turn in one digital copy to my email address (vortherms@wisc.edu) and one paper copy to my mailbox in North Hall.