

## Course Outline

### COSM23: Contemporary Chinese Society

15 January to 19 March 2024

Course Convener

*Stefan Brehm*

Contact: [stefan.brehm@ace.lu.se](mailto:stefan.brehm@ace.lu.se)

Teachers:

*Stefan Brehm, Benjamin Davies, Gina Song Lopez, Nicholas Loubere,*

*Marina Svensson, Jinyan Zeng*

Guest lecturers:

*Esther-Maria Guggenmos, Martin Lavička*

Place:

*All lectures and seminars will be held at the Centre for East and South East Asian Studies,  
Sölvegatan 18B, room 005 (downstairs)*

## Module I: History and Demographics

**Lecture 1:** 15 January, 10.15-12.00, From Revolution to Reform (Loubere)

This lecture will trace Chinese history from the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to the initiation of economic reforms in the late 1970s. It will examine the ideologies underpinning the Chinese Communist Party, the revolution, and the Republic. Particular attention will be paid to ideological discourse, land reform and collectivisation, economic planning, mass campaigns, and the Great Leap Forward.

## Readings:

Mao, Zedong. "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship." *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, June 30, 1949. Available at [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4\\_65.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_65.htm) (Links to an external site.)

Spence, Jonathan, *The Search for Modern China*, New York: Norton, 2013. Chapters 19 – 22.

## Lecture 2: 17 January 10.15-12.00, Ideology and propaganda in the PRC (Davies)

In this class, we will learn about the ideological foundations of the PRC and CCP, and how propaganda relates to ideology. We will discuss theoretical questions – such as the meaning of ideology and propaganda – as well as practical ones, such as how the CCP actually does propaganda. The Williams chapter gives background, while the Xie & Zhou article is a concrete and vivid case study of recent propaganda. If students have read other relevant texts and/or have concrete examples of propaganda which they would like to examine, they are welcome to bring them to the class.

## Readings:

Williams, Joseph A. (2019) "Ideology and China's Political Development", in Williams (ed.) *Politics in China*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (chapter 5).

Xie, Kailing & Zhou Yunyun (2021) "The Cultural Politics of National Tragedies and Personal Sacrifice: State Narratives of China's 'Ordinary Heroes' of the COVID-19 Pandemic", *Made in China Journal*, 6(1). 24–29.

## Lecture 3: 19 January, 10.15 – 12.00, Demographic Developments (Brehm)

In this lecture, we will look at population growth as well as spatial patterns of migration and urbanisation. We will discuss how demographic developments are interlinked with social and economic development.

## Readings:

Cai, Fang, "Demographic Transition, Demographic Dividend, and Lewis Turning Point in China," *China Economic Journal*, (2010), 3:2, pp. 107-119.

Cao, Shixiong, Yuan Lv, Heran Zheng, and Xin Wang, "Challenges Facing China's Unbalanced Urbanization Strategy," *Land Use Policy*, (2014), 39, pp. 412-415.

Chan, Kam Wing, and Yanning Wei. "Two systems in one country: the origin, functions, and mechanisms of the rural-urban dual system in China." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 60, no. 4 (2019): 422-454.

Du, Yang, and Cuifen Yang, "Demographic Transition and Labour Market Changes: Implications for Economic Development in China," *Journal of Economic Surveys*, (2014), 28:4, pp. 617-635.

Eggleston, Karen, Jean C. Oi, Scott Rozelle, Ang Sun, Andrew Walder, and Xueguang Zhou, "Will Demographic Change Slow China's Rise?" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, (2013), 72:3, pp. 505-518.

Ong, Lynette H. "State-Led Urbanization in China: Skyscrapers, Land Revenue and 'Concentrated Villages'," *The China Quarterly*, (2014), 217, pp. 162-179.

## Module II: Politics and Economics

**Guest lecture:** 22 January, 10.15 – 12.00, Law and rule of law in China (Lavička)

This lecture will provide an overview of the Chinese legal system and some current debates and challenges.

*Readings:*

Reid, Scott, "China's Five Year Plan For The Construction of a Rule Of Law (2020-2025)," *Global Politics Review*, (2022), 7:1–2, pp. 30-46.

Smith, Ewan, "The Rule of Law in Party Documents." *China Law and Society Review*, (2019), 4:1, pp. 41–69.

The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*. [http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/node\\_2825.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm).

**Lecture 4:** 24 January, 10.15-12.00, Policy process and implementation (Brehm)

This lecture examines the formulation and implementation of policies, and the role of local experiments, pilots, and modelling. In this context, we will discuss the horizontal and vertical distribution of political power, incentives, and imbalances.

*Readings:*

Ahlers, Anna L., and Gunter Schubert, "Strategic Modelling: 'Building a New Socialist Countryside' in Three Chinese Counties," *The China Quarterly*, (2013), 216, pp. 831–849.

Heilmann, Sebastian, "From Local Experiments to National Policy: The Origins of China's Distinctive Policy Process," *The China Journal*, (2008), 59, pp. 1–30.

Joseph, William A. *Politics in China: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 9)

O'Brien, Kevin J., and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," *Comparative Politics*, (1999), 31:2, pp. 167–186.

Ong, Lynette. Fiscal federalism and soft budget constraints: The case of China. *International Political Science Review*, (2012), 33:4, 455–474.

Smith, Graeme, "Measurement, Promotions and Patterns of Behavior in Chinese Local Government," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, (2013), 40:6, pp. 1027–1050.

**Lecture 5:** 26 January, 10.15-12.00 Towards a socialist market economy (Brehm)

In this lecture, we analyse hybrid economic institutions that emerged out of China's gradualist approach to Reform and Opening. Counter to mainstream economic thought, these hybrid institutions paved the way towards rapid economic growth, which outperformed the big-bang transition economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

*Readings:*

Ferchen, Matt, "Whose China Model is it Anyway? The Contentious Search for Consensus," *Review of International Political Economy* (2012), 20:2, pp. 390-420.

- Grivoyannis, Elias C., *The New Chinese Economy: Dynamic Transitions into the Future*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012 (Chapter 1) (e-book available via LubCat).
- Montinola, Gabriella, Yingyi Qian, and Barry R. Weingast. "Federalism, Chinese style: the political basis for economic success in China." *World politics* (1995): 50-81.
- Naughton, Barry. "What is distinctive about China's economic transition? state enterprise reform and overall system transformation." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 18, no. 3 (1994): 470-490.
- Perotti, Enrico C., Laixiang Sun, and Liang Zou. "State-owned versus township and village enterprises in China." *Comparative Economic Studies* 41, no. 2-3 (1999): 151-179.

**Lecture 6:** 29 January, 10.15-12.00 A global economy with Chinese characteristics? (Brehm)

In this lecture, we look at the past decade of economic development and change in China. The country has pursued a consistent path of liberalisation, marketization, and privatization. At the same time, communist authoritarian institutions remain effective.

**Readings:**

- Hsing, You-tien, "Land and Territorial Politics in Urban China," *The China Quarterly*, (2006), 187, pp. 575-591.
- Kennedy, David, and Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Law and Economics with Chinese Characteristics: Institutions for Promoting Development in the Twenty-First Century*, 2013 (Chapter 6) (e-book available via Lovisa).
- Ong, Lynette, "Between Development and Clientelist States: Explaining Rural Industrialization in China," *Comparative Politics*, (2012), 44:2, pp. 191-209.
- Pun, Ngai, Chris Chan, and Jenny Chan, "The Role of the State, Labour Policy and Migrant Workers' Struggles in Globalized China," *Global Labour Journal*, (2010), 1:1, pp. 131-151.
- Wang Yingyao, "The Rise of the 'Shareholding State': Financialization of Economic Management in China," *Socio-Economic Review*, (2015), 13:3, pp. 603-625.

Seminar paper 1: 30 January (9.00) – 6 February (17.00)

**Seminar 1:** 31 January, 10.15-12.00 Economics & politics (Brehm)

In this seminar, you will use the insights you gained in the politics and economics module to analyze recent issues raised in international media. This seminar consists of group work and a group presentation.

**Module III: Civil Society**

Film screening: A Young Patriot, at home before 5 February

**Lecture 7:** 5 February, 10.15-12.00, Youth: Values and prospects (Svensson)

In this lecture we will discuss the situation of youth (age group 18-25) in China today while bearing in mind that they are a quite heterogeneous group (as to socio-economic conditions etc). How does young people, many of whom are the only child, deal with the pressure in society coming from both parent's expectations and those of the CCP? What characterize this group of people who have grown up in the reform period in terms of values and aspirations when it comes to studies, work, amidst increasing youth unemployment, and love and marriage? There are many discussions today among both youth themselves and others in Chinese society about these issues and the lecture will address some of those.

#### Readings:

- China State Council White Paper, Youth of China in the New Era, 2022, accessed at <https://english.news.cn/20220421/ad0c7490f6db42f2bd6539794f3ca1af/c.html>
- Fu Yu and Gui Yong, "The Five Intriguing Paradoxes of Contemporary Chinese Young People", Reading the China Dream, 2023, translated from Chinese, accessed at <https://www.readingthechinadream.com/fu-yu-and-gui-yong-on-chinas-1990s-generation.html>
- Li Lin and Diego Gullotta, "Disarticulating Qingnian: Chinese Youth beyond 'Rising Tides' and 'Lying Flat,'" Made in China Journal, 6 March, 2022, accessed at <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2022/03/06/disarticulating-qingnian/>
- Svensson Marina. (2023), "Chinese Youth and the CPC: Cultivating a Loyal Generation through Ideological and Political Education," China: An International Journal, Vol. 21 no. 2, 2023, p. 72-91.
- Xu Jilin, "Houlang and Houlang Culture" China's Generation Z? What are houlang and houlang Culture?, Reading the China Dream, translation from Chinese, 2020 <https://www.readingthechinadream.com/xu-jilin-houlang-and-houlang-culture.html>
- The Economist, (2023), "China's defeated youth," <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2023/08/17/chinas-defeated-youth>

#### Lecture 8: 7 February, 10.15-12.00, Women and patriarchy (Zeng)

In this lecture, we will discuss contemporary Chinese's desire, love, sex, and marriage under the impact of patriarchy. We will investigate the concept of women in Chinese context, and how generational and gendered power dynamics and state policy are reshaping Chinese's personal, family, and public life choices.

#### Readings:

- Documentary (TBC): *We Are Here* (Dir. Shi Tou and Zhao Jing, 2015, 60 mins), a documentary made to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. (watching on canvas)
- Harrell, Stevan and Santos, Gonçalo, "Introduction". *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016, 3-36. 33 pages (PDF of the chapter will be uploaded on canvas)
- Wang, Jiayuan. "In the 'Three-Child' Era, China Must Confront Embedded Misogyny." *Diplomat*, no. 80, Trans-Asia Inc., July 2021, pp. C80-85. 6 pages
- Yan, Yunxiang. "The Inverted Family, Post-Patriarchal Intergenerationality and Neo-Familism." *Chinese Families Upside Down: Intergenerational Dynamics and Neo-Familism in the Early 21st Century*, edited

by Yunxiang Yan, Brill Academic Publisher, 2021, pp. 1–30. 31 pages (PDF of the chapter will be uploaded on canvas)

**Seminar 2:** 9 February, 10.15-12.00, Feminism (Zeng)

In this seminar, we trace the organizational and individual feminist projects in contemporary China. We aim to identify key actors, issues, forms, strategies, and impacts of Chinese feminism.

*Readings:*

- Han, Lin. “Dependency as Situated Knowledge: A Reflexive Politics of Location on the Positionalities of Chinese Feminist Scholars.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2 Nov 2022. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221134843>. 16 pages
- Ling, Qi, and Sara Liao. “Intellectuals Debate #MeToo in China: Legitimizing Feminist Activism, Challenging Gendered Myths, and Reclaiming Feminism.” *Journal of Communication*, vol. 70, no. 6, Dec. 2020, pp. 895–916. 22 pages
- Zeng, Jinyan. “Desiring Feminism in Chinese Documentary.” *Chinese Independent Cinema Observer*, (3), 2022, pp. 142–178 (EN & CN). 21 pages
- Zhou, Yunyun. ““Being a Good Daughter of the Party”? A Neo-Institutional Analysis of the All-China Women’s Federation Organisational Reforms in China’s Xi Era.” *China Perspectives*, no. 2, French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC), June 2019, pp. 17–28. 12 pages

**Film screening:** 9. February, 13.00-15.00, Asia Library, *Hooligan Sparrow* (Dir. WANG Nanfu, 2016, 91 mins).

Seminar paper 2: 13 February (9.00) – 20 February (17.00)

**Lecture 9:** 12 February, 10.15-12.00, Ethnicity (Zeng)

In this lecture, we will explore China’s ethnic policies and practices of language, education, domestic life, economic development, health, environment, and political governance. We also analyse Han intellectual debates on ethnic issues to understand perspectives from those working in China’s institutions.

*Readings:*

- Abramson, Kara. “Gender, Uyghur Identity, and the Story of Nuzugum.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2012, pp. 1069–91. 23 pages
- Baranovitch, Nimrod. “Others No More: The Changing Representation of Non-Han Peoples in Chinese History Textbooks, 1951–2003.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 69, no. 1, 2010, pp. 85–122. 38 pages
- . “Ecological Degradation and Endangered Ethnicities: China’s Minority Environmental Discourses as Manifested in Popular Songs.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 75, no. 1, 2016, pp. 181–205. 25 pages
- Grose, Timothy A. “If You Don’t Know How, Just Learn: Chinese Housing and the Transformation of Uyghur Domestic Space.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, July 2020, pp. 1–22. 23 pages

Ma, Rong. "Reflections on the Debate on China's Ethnic Policy: My Reform Proposals and Their Critics." *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 15, no. 2, Mar. 2014, pp. 237–46. 10 pages

Su, Xin, Neil Harrison, and Philip Roberts. 2018. "Becoming Familiar Strangers: An Exploration of Inland Boarding School Education on Cultural Wellbeing of Minority Students from Xinjiang Province." *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education ISSN:1839-7387* 28: 3.1-3.12. 12 pages

**Guest lecture 2:** 14 February, 10.15 – 12.00, Religion and Politics (Esther-Maria Guggenmos)

This lecture elaborates on the link between politics and religion. The lecture will historicize the relation between politics and religion, clarify concepts, and discuss contemporary phenomena.

Readings:

Chau, Adam Yuet. "A different kind of religious diversity – ritual service providers and consumers in China" in Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz: *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, Palgrave MacMillan 2013: 141-154

Chen, Heller. "Politics and Religion: Politics and Chinese Religion." *Eliade Encyclopedia of Religion*, (2005): 7266-7270.

Goossaert, Vincent. "The concept of religion in China and the West." *Diogenes* 52.1 (2005): 13-20.

**Lecture 10:** 16 February, 10.15-12.00, Social movements (Song Lopez)

In this session we will look into concepts of social mobilization and civil society and how these translate into the Chinese context. We will discuss social movements in their political and cultural forms and focus on examples of different movements to explore the boundaries and types of mobilization.

Readings:

Gåsemeyr, Hans Jørgen. "Networks and campaigns but not movements: collective action in the disciplining Chinese State." *Journal of Civil Society* 12, no. 4 (2016): 394-410. (16 pages)

Liu, Jingfang, and G. Thomas Goodnight. "China's green public culture: Network pragmatics and the environment." *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 23. (22 pages)

Leggett, Angela. "Bringing green food to the Chinese table: How civil society actors are changing consumer culture in China." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 20, no. 1 (2020): 83-101. (18 pages)

**Lecture 11:** 19 February, 10.15-12.00, Media and Internet (Svensson)

In this lecture we will briefly address traditional media but focus more the role and development of the Internet in Chinese society. This includes looking at both the state's regulations and censorship, and new ways of propaganda, and the different ways different groups of individuals use the internet and social media to voice their opinions and grievances. The general questions we will focus on are: How does the internet change state-society relationships? Are we seeing the development of a surveillance state/digital authoritarianism, and if so how does it manifest itself?

## Readings

- Brady, Anne-Marie, "Plus ca Change? Media Control under Xi Jinping," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2017, 64:3-4, pp. 128-140.
- Joseph, William A. Red. *Politics in China: An Introduction*, University Press, 2019, chapter 15.
- Jiang, Yue and Xianwen Kuang (2023), "Selective Censorship on Rightists and Leftists? An Observation and Analysis of Censored Social Media Posts in China," *Problems of Post-Communism* 2023, Vol. 70, No. 3, 266–276
- Repnikova, Maria, and Kecheng Fang, "Digital Media Experiments in China: 'Revolutionizing' Persuasion Under Xi Jinping." *The China Quarterly* 2019, 239: 679–701.
- Yi Yang (2022) "Pandemic and memory: Online memory narratives of COVID-19 survivors in China," *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 15:4, 611-634

## **Seminar 3:** 23 February, 10.15-12.00, Protests (Svensson) with paper

Papers to be peer-reviewed and discussed at the seminar on 1 March.

### *Readings:*

- Chen, Yen-Hsin, Philip Paolino, and T. David Mason. "Who protests and why: hierarchical government trust and protest participation in China." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 21, no. 3 (2021): 499-513.  
14 pages
- Göbel, Christian, "The Political Logic of Protest Repression in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2020, online first.
- Tai, Benny Tai, Scott Veitch, Fu Hualing and Richard Cullen, "Pursuing Democracy in an Authoritarian State: Protest and the Rule of Law in Hong Kong," *Social & Legal Studies*, 2020, Vol. 29(1) 107–145
- Wright, Teresa, *Popular Protest in China*, Cambridge: Polity, 2018 (ca 50 pages), introduction plus a chapter of your choice on a specific type of protest.

## **Module IV: Global impact**

### **Lecture 12:** 26 February, 10.15-12.00, Domestic and global environmental governance (Brehm)

China is a major economic and political power and one of the key actors for shaping global climate governance. At the same time, the country is a main emitter of greenhouse gases. In this lecture, we will discuss China's problems with environmental degradation and what the government is doing to try to tackle these issues. We will assess China's approach to assume responsibility in international climate negotiations and how these goals are locally implemented.

### *Readings:*

- Albert, Eleanor and Beina Xu, "China's Environmental Crisis," Council on Foreign Relations. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-environmental-crisis> (Links to an external site.)
- Chan, G., P. K. Lee, and L. H. Chan, "China's Environmental Governance: The Domestic–international Nexus," *Third World Quarterly*, (2008), 29:2, pp. 291-314.



- Delman, J., "China's 'Radicalism at the Center': Regime Legitimation through Climate Politics and Climate Governance," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, (2011), 16:2, pp. 183-205.
- Hilton, I., and O. Kerr, "The Paris Agreement: China's 'New Normal' Role in International Climate Negotiations," *Climate Policy*, (2017), 17:1, pp. 48-58.
- Meckling, J., "The Developmental State in Global Regulation: Economic Change and Climate Policy," *European Journal of International Relations*, (2018), 24:1, pp. 58-81.
- Schreurs, M., "Multi-level Climate Governance in China." *Environmental Policy and Governance*, (2017), 27:2, pp. 163-174.

**Lecture 13:** 28 February, 10.15-12.00, Sustainability in China – Concepts and policies (Song Lopez)

In the face of local environmental issues and global climate challenges China has increasingly aimed to position itself as an 'Ecological Civilization'. In this session we will look at how this 'socio-technical imaginary' permeates environmental policy narratives and the 'greening' of governance efforts in China.

*Readings*

- Hansen, Mette Halskov, Hongtao Li, and Rune Svarverud. "Ecological civilization: Interpreting the Chinese past, projecting the global future." *Global Environmental Change* 53 (2018): 195-203. (8 pages)
- Liu, Chen, Lily Chen, Robert M. Vanderbeck, Gill Valentine, Mei Zhang, Kristina Diprose, and Katie McQuaid. "A Chinese route to sustainability: Postsocialist transitions and the construction of ecological civilization." *Sustainable Development* 26, no. 6 (2018): 741-748. (8 pages)
- Li, Yifei. "Bureaucracies count: environmental governance through goal-setting and mandate-making in contemporary China." *Environmental Sociology* 5, no. 1 (2019): 12-22. (10 pages)

**Lecture 14:** 4 March, 10.15 – 12.00, Mass migrations (Loubere)

This lecture will cover the history of Chinese migration both domestically and internationally. We will start with a discussion of Chinese overseas communities and historical internal migration events. The majority of the lecture will be dedicated to the mass labour migration that has occurred since the reform and opening. We will examine the ways in which this unprecedented movement of people has shaped contemporary China's society and economy, and the impact that migration has had on the lives of individuals, families and communities at both the origins and destinations.

*Readings:*

- Jacka, Tamara, "Migration, Householding and the Well-Being of Left-Behind Women in Rural Ningxia," *The China Journal*, (2012), 67:1, pp. 1-22.
- Loubere, Nicholas, and Gordon Crawford, "There and Back Again: Conceptualising the Chinese Gold Rush in Ghana." In *Made in China Yearbook 2016: Disturbances in Heaven*, eds. Ivan Franceschini, Kevin Lin, and Nicholas Loubere, (2017), Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 116-121.
- Woon, Yuen-fong, "The Voluntary Sojourner among the Overseas Chinese: Myth or Reality?" *Pacific Affairs*, (1983), 56:4, pp. 673-690.

**Seminar 4:** 8 March, 10.15-12.00, Linkages between domestic and global China (Loubere)

Exam questions sent out 11 March at 9.00, deadline 15 March at 17.00.

**Re-take**

Seminar paper 1: 20 – 27 March (handout 9.00, submission 17.00)

Seminar paper 2: 2 – 9 April (handout 9.00, submission 17.00)

Seminar paper 3: 10 – 17 April (handout 9.00, submission 17.00)

Final paper: 18 – 25 April (hand out: 9.00, submission: 17.00)