Course coverage and objectives

In this course we will investigate contemporary Chinese society, defined as the post-Mao era, with a focus on history, politics, economics, social structures, and culture. Upon successfully completing this course, each student will:

- analyze the political, economic, societal, and cultural structures of contemporary China;
- understand the ways in which race, ethnicity, gender, and class inform individual and collective identities;
- demonstrate a knowledge of the beliefs, values, and issues that influence Chinese society;
- develop and nurture his or her critical reading, writing, and speaking skills;
- and understand China’s impact as a world power.

There are no prerequisites for the course.

General Expectations

It is expected that students will spend approximately 10-12 hours/week completing the assignments for this course (5-6 hours for each topic). All work will be online. Each student is invited to fully participate in the cooperative learning environment. Each participant has an obligation to his or her classmates to be prepared, to share ideas, and to offer constructive, analytical feedback.

Course Texts


**Course Requirements**

**Reading and critically viewing videos:** Since this is an online class, it is imperative that each student complete all reading assignments and watch all videos. Rather than reading or viewing passively, you should set aside time to focus on the material, take notes, pause and consider additional questions, and compare what you are learning with other sources of information. If you are not reading and watching the videos, it will be extremely difficult to pass this course.

**Critical thinking assignments:** You will be required to submit at least two critical thinking assignments each week. Specific details regarding each assignment are available on the course web platform (Canvas).

**Group work:** Some of the weekly assignments will require group work. You should consider your own strengths and weaknesses when approaching group projects. Ask yourself, "Am I a couch potato? Am I a hitchiker?" How do you cope with others who may be? See this essay from the Stanford Center for Teaching and Learning for help in this regard.

**Research project:** Each student will either write a 10-15 page paper, create a 25-minute multi-media presentation (such as an online lecture or documentary), design a website, or create a digital poster. Additional research project ideas are welcomed. Speak with the instructor for approval.

**Research presentation:** Upon completing your research project, you will present it to the class in a digital format. If you have created a multi-media presentation, that will be sufficient for your presentation. If you have written a research paper, designed a webpage, or created a digital poster, you can record a video to introduce your findings. Regardless which format you choose, your presentation should be interesting, informative, and well organized. It should provoke conversation for the members of the class.

**Extra Credit:** Unless otherwise noted, there is no extra credit available for this class.

**Grading Scale and Qualitative Standards**

With each assignment, specific instructions and requirements will be provided in class and/or in writing. Students who most completely fulfill these requirements, who demonstrate original and critical thought, and who clearly articulate their ideas will earn the highest grades. Average work will earn 75% of the possible points, or roughly a "C." Above average work is required for more than 80% of the possible points (an "A" or "B"). Work that does not meet the minimum requirements will earn less than 70% of the possible points (a "D" or an "F"). For example: In a "C" essay, the student meets the minimum requirements in a logically organized fashion. He or she presents information to support his or her argument. However, that information frequently is of a general rather than specific nature. The essay is more summary rather than critical analysis. In a "B" essay, the student presents more detailed information than found in a
"C" essay while avoiding and factual errors. At the same time, he or she presents the information in a thought-provoking and critical fashion. In short, it is above average in terms of presentation, critical analysis, and mastery of information. In an "A" essay, the student demonstrates exceptional ability to organize sophisticated concepts in a persuasive form. He or she will recall and incorporate a wide variety of specific details and will skillfully organize those details into a smooth, articulate argument. An "A" essay is considered well above average.

I am happy to discuss a grade with you at any time. Talking to me about your graded assignments is a great way to learn how to improve throughout the semester. If you wish to have a grade reconsidered, you must first submit to me a written statement outlining your reasons, along with the paper or exam. This allows you to collect your thoughts and make your best case for a higher grade. In order for the assignment to remain fresh in both of our minds, you must submit this appeal within a week of receiving the grade.

Points can be earned as follows:

Daily Assignments: 30% of final grade
Research Project: 40 %
Exams: 30%

For an interesting perspective on grades and grading, read Art Carden's Forbes essay available online.

**Academic Honesty**

I expect each student to adhere to the pledge of integrity which he or she signed. As the pledge states:

- Academic Dishonesty -- including cheating and plagiarism -- constitutes a serious breach of academic integrity. Academic work is expected unequivocally to be the honest product of the student's own endeavor.
- Cheating is defined as the giving or receiving of unauthorized information as part of an examination or other academic exercise. What constitutes "unauthorized information" may vary depending upon the type of examination or exercise involved, and the student must be careful to understand in advance what a particular instructor considers to be "unauthorized information." Faculty members are encouraged to make this definition clear to their students.
- Plagiarism is defined as taking and using the writings or ideas of another without acknowledging the source. Plagiarism occurs most frequently in the preparation of a paper, but is found in other types of course assignments as well.
- Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) fabrication, falsification, or invention of information when such information is not appropriate. To knowingly help or attempt to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty is considered to be an equivalent breach of academic integrity and is treated as such.

Students who violate the standards of academic integrity can normally expect a grade of F on the assignment or in the course and/or possible dismissal from the College.
Acceptable Documentation Standards

For this course, each student should use the Chicago footnote documentation style. For more information, see either Keys for Writers or the High Library "Putting it Together" help page.

Important Dates to Remember

All important dates are listed on the course calendar on Canvas. You are responsible for being aware of these dates and submitting your work on time. Nearly all assignments will be due on Monday or Thursday.

Late Work Penalties

Students should complete all assignments by the specified time. Late work will be penalized 10%. Unless you have a doctor’s excuse, you cannot make up missed group work, including discussion boards.

Student Consultations

You are welcome to call or email me at any time. My office hours are listed on Canvas.

Disability Disclosure

If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements, you must:

1.) Contact the Director of Disability Services in the Center for Student Success, BSC room 228 by calling 361-1227.

2.) Meet with me (the instructor) within two weeks of receiving a copy of the accommodation letter from Disability Services to discuss your accommodation needs and their implementation.

REMINDER: Students must bring to my attention accommodations they may use in order complete this course. Students will be accommodated as law requires, but remember, by law, initiation must be made by the individual student, not the instructor.