

**UPDATED ON FEBRUARY 20, 2020**

# SINO 2002

## China in the World: Critical Paradigms

Dr. Ji LI

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Office: Rm 119, May Hall

Office hour: Mondays 4:00 – 5:00pm or by appointment

Time: Mondays, 12:30pm – 2:20pm

Venue: LE2 (Library Extension Building LG1/F - LE2) / **Online teaching during the suspension**

### I. Course Description

This course is an undergraduate seminar focusing on the international scholarship on critical issues of China from the early twentieth century through the present. We explore how paradigms on interpreting China have transformed China Studies and brought the field into productive engagements with broader intellectual currents and debates. The course examines key themes and prominent narratives that drive debates on China's place in the world. By employing these thematic topics as useful lenses and analytical tools, this course delves into the complex processes of cultural, social, and political change over the modern century and their implications in the contemporary era. It aims to equip students with critical thinking abilities and analytical skills to reflect on current socio-political and cultural issues as the topics under examination recur in contemporary China in a global context.

### II. Format

The course will be delivered in the format of a weekly class meeting **(in classroom or online-Zoom)** for one semester, accompanying with an on-line discussion forum on Moodle. Students are expected to undertake readings and other preparation before each class meeting in order to participate meaningfully in classroom discussions. There are no tutorials for this course so active participation in the once-a-week meetings and on-line forum are especially important.

### III. Attendance

In accordance with University and School guidelines, attendance at scheduled course meetings is mandatory. Unexcused absences for more than two class meetings may result in a failing grade.

### IV. Learning Objectives and Outcomes

All China Studies major and minor students must take this course. This course is also offered to non-BA/BSocSci students for inter-Faculty broadening purposes. The purpose of this course is to give students a solid understanding of the evolution of global understandings of Chinese politics,

economy, society, culture and China's place in the world. It provides students with the analytical skills to interpret the ideologies underpinning China Studies, to appreciate the impact of global events on China and to comprehend the contributions of scholars from various backgrounds to global China Studies. Students will acquire basic knowledge of the primary issues experienced by historical and contemporary China in a global context. At the successful completion of this course, students will have developed a deeper understanding of China and will increase their competence in analyzing source materials. Students can develop the ability to engage in general critical thinking and to hone academic writing and presentation skills by addressing relevant topics.

## V. Assessment Items

Students will be assessed on the merit of their performance throughout the semester. The coursework grade is composed of active and constructive participation during course meetings and one-week discussion leadership (25%), participation in online discussion forum (15%), two short essays (30%) and one final report (30%). You will not be assessed or judged on the basis of your opinions or beliefs, but rather on the basis of your ability to express them in a logical manner using relevant evidence and proper citations of high-quality sources.

- Active and Constructive Participation during Class Meetings and one-week Discussion Leadership (25%): Every student is required to attend every scheduled class meeting and to participate by listening attentively to other students when they are speaking, and to contribute his or her own comments and questions. **Students will be assigned to lead one week's discussion**. For Student Led Discussion topics and dates, see Table 1.
- Participation on On-line Discussion Forum (15%): Join the on-line discussion forum on Moodle and post your commentary response to assigned readings by midnight on the day before the class meeting. Each response should be at least 100 words. Responses are required for 10 weeks, 1.5 points each. No points for late post. On-line discuss response due dates are indicated in Table 2.
- Two Short Essays (30%): 15 points each, between 750-1000 words in length, double-spaced, 12-point font. Topics should be chosen from weekly "Questions for thinking". **The topic of Short Essay I should be chosen from questions in Week 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 and the topic of Short Essay II from Week 9, 10, 12, 13**. You should choose only 1 question from the list to write the essay. Short Essay I will be due on **March 23** and the Short Essay II will be due on **April 27**. For specific instructions, see P.7.
- One final report (30%): 1500-3000 words in length, double-spaced, 12 point font. Every student should develop one scholarly question as the topic for his/her final report. The question should address one specific academic field. For specific instruction, see P.8. **Final report will be due on May 20 (Wednesday) 5:00 PM by email to [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)**. Please email your essays to the instructor directly at [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)

**Table 1: Student Led Discussion Topics and Dates**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Group 1	March 9	Ng Wing Yan Jamie, Steven Jiang	Politics I: Regime, Party and Legitimacy

Group 2	March 23	Basil Cheung, Qin Tianyu	Politics II: International Relations
Group 3	April 6	Consuelo Wun, Ren Yongyi	Economics
Group 4	April 20	Tam Pui Kwan, Lee Ka Seen Rachel	Society I: Social/Media and Public Opinion
Group 5	April 27	Zhang Jingchi	Society II: Gender and Class

**Table 2: On-line discussion Due Date**

On-line Discussion	Due Date, by Midnight (Sundays)
1	February 2, 2020 (done)
2	February 9, 2020 (done)
<b>3</b>	<b>March 8, 2020</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>March 22, 2020</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>March 29, 2020</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>April 5, 2020</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>April 19, 2020</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>April 26, 2020</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>May 3, 2020</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>May 10, 2020</b>

### **Textbook**

*The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power*. Edited by Jennifer Rudolph and Michael Szonyi. Harvard University Press, 2018.

[This book will be abbreviated as **CQ** below]

[This book can be purchased in the University Bookstore. 10% off with student ID]

This newly published book surveys the major topics and paradigms in understanding China in the contemporary world. Thirty of the world's leading China experts—affiliates of Harvard's renowned Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies—answer key questions about where China is headed and what makes its people and their leaders tick.

Weekly Required Readings are mostly chosen from the textbook. Student are required to read them carefully before the class meeting and post comments to the readings in the Moodle on-line discussion forum in the due course. Supplementary Readings are can be downloaded from Moodle. Supplementary Readings are not required but highly suggested especially for students who will lead that week's discussion or plan to write the final report in the relevant field.

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 (Jan 20) A Rising China and Its Key Issues**

Introduction to the course. We will discuss what China Questions mean and how we can approach them. In this class meeting, students should try to find out their own field of interest regarding China Studies.

*Questions for thinking:*

- 1) *What are the key issues in understanding China today and why?*
- 2) *Is China unique? Can we use established theories and methodologies in analyzing China issues?*

### **Week 2 (Jan 27) No Class. Chinese New Year Break**

No Class meeting. During the holiday break, students are required to observe and think over below questions.

- 1) What is the relationship between tradition/past and contemporary Chinese society/present? E.g. students may conduct random interview/survey among friends and family members on questions like “what does Chinese New Year mean to you?” “Why do you insist on returning home on this particular festival?” “What has been changed and what remain traditional for Chinese New Year?” You may design your own questions. One or two interviews will be okay.
- 2) What are the hottest topics on your family reunion dinner table or other holiday gathering occasions? And why?
- 3) Each student is required to take **one photo** relevant to the theme of “Past, present and future of Chinese society” during the holiday break and **upload the photo to Moodle on-line discussion forum** to share with the whole class. Be prepared to discuss the photo and share your observations and thoughts in the next class meeting.

**NOTE:** No written report is required for above questions. But you should post your photo and share your observations and thoughts on the Moodle on-line discussion forum.

### **Week 3 (Feb 3) Past and Present: Tradition and Modernity (Online)**

This week we will discuss key concepts in understanding China. Be prepared to share your photo and observations of CNY to think about the discrepancy/correlation between tradition and modernity, and between intellectual inquiry/scholarly studies and reality of contemporary Chinese society.

**Required Readings:**

- CQ 28: “Who is Confucius in Today’s China?”
- CQ 35: “What is the future of China’s Past?”
- CQ 36: “How Has Study of China Changed in the Last Sixty Years?”

**Supplementary Reading:**

“Introduction: Shifting Paradigms of Political and Social Order”, in Haters, Theodore, R. Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu, eds. *Culture & State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997.

*Questions for thinking:*

1. *How scholars understand the relationship between China’s past, present and future?*
2. *Is today’s China a continuation or a discrepancy of Chinese history and why?*
3. *What are the changes in China Studies in the past sixty years and why?*

**Week 4 (Feb 10) Key Terms I: Ethnicity, Unification and Stability (Online)**

Required Readings:

- CQ 4: “What is the Source of Ethnic Tension in China?” (Ethnicity)
- CQ 12: “(When) Will Taiwan Reunify with the Mainland?” (Unification)

Supplementary Reading:

Frederick Wakeman. “*Hanjian* (Traitor)! Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai”, in Yeh, Wen-hsin, ed. *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

*Questions for thinking:*

1. *What is ethnicity? What are the ethnic issues in imperial/modern China?*
2. *How do you understand the concept of “Hanjian” in Chinese society?*
3. *How do you understand the critical issues about unification and stability in today’s Chinese society?*

**Class suspension on Feb 17 and Feb 24**

**Week 5 (Mar 2) Class Review & Discussion on Ethnicity, Unification and Stability (Online-Zoom)**

This week we are going to use Zoom to conduct interactive discussion and review previous two lectures in order to ensure the smooth transition online Zoom teaching. Students please re-read the uploaded PPTs, marked down your questions on the PPTs, assigned readings, and posts on the online discussion forum in the past two weeks. Interactive online group discussion will be organized and tested.

**Week 6 (Mar 9) Politics I: Regime, Party and Legitimacy (Online-Zoom)**

**Student Led Discussion Group 1: Ng Wing Yan and Steven Jiang**

Required Readings:

- CQ 1: “Is the Chinese Communist Regime Legitimate?”
- CQ 3: “Does Mao still Matter?”
- CQ 7: “Can the Chinese Communist Party learn from Chinese Emperors?”

Supplementary Reading:

David Strand. “Community, Society, and History in Sun Yat-sen’s *Sanmin Zhuyi*”, in Haters, Theodore, R. Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu, eds. *Culture & State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997.

*Questions for thinking:*

1. *What is democracy and how to define democracy in modern China?*
2. *Discuss Mao Zedong and Mao’s legacy in today’s Chinese society.*

**Week 7 (March 16) University Holiday. No Class.**

## **Week 8 (March 23) Politics II: International Relations (Online-Zoom)**

### **Student Led Discussion Group 2: Basil Cheung and Qin Tianyu**

#### Required Readings:

- CQ 8: "Will China Lead Asia?"
- CQ 9: "How Strong are China's Armed Forces?"
- CQ 11: "Is Chinese Exceptionalism undermining China's Foreign Policy Interests?"

#### *Questions for thinking:*

1. *What is nation-state and how to understand today's international relations based on different interests of each national-state?*
2. *How China understands the world in history? Compare the term of "Middle Kingdom" with China's positioning in contemporary international relations.*

**Short Essay I is due on Mar 23 (Tuesday) 5 PM. Please email your essay to the instructor at [lijj66@hku.hk](mailto:lijj66@hku.hk)**

## **Week 9 (Mar 30) Meet the Director: A Dialogue with Documentary Director Jiang Nengjie**

Please Note: the originally scheduled "Documentary Review Week" is cancelled. Students are now required to watch the documentary *Children at a Village School* by themselves before the class. Remember to post a short film review to the on-line discussion forum before the due time.

Film link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww\\_eMY3873M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww_eMY3873M)

#### Required readings:

- Zhou, Minhui, Rachel Murphy, and Ran Tao. "Effects of parents' migration on the education of children left behind in rural China." *Population and Development Review* 40, no. 2 (2014): 273-292.
- "Documentary filmmaker chronicles lives of China's left-behind children", SCMP, 2017/5/7 (<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2093123/documentary-filmmaker-chronicles-lives-chinas-left-behind>)

#### Supplementary reading:

- Shen, Shuang. "From deconstruction to activism: the Chinese independent documentary and the crowd." *Modern China* 41, no. 6 (2015): 656-679.

#### *Questions for thinking:*

- 1) *What are critical social issues of Chinese society demonstrated by the film?*
- 2) *Do you think the education gap and urban/rural gap in today's Chinese society are increasing (or decreasing) and why?*
- 3) *What does "independent documentary movement" mean to today's China?*

## **Week 10 (Apr 6) Economics**

### **Student Led Discussion Group 3: Consuelo Wun and Ren Yongyi**

Required Readings:

- CQ 15: "Is the Chinese Economy Headed toward a Hard Landing?"
- CQ 16: "Will urbanization save the Chinese economy or destroy it?"
- CQ 19: "How can China Teach us about Fighting Poverty?"

*Questions for thinking:*

- 1) *What is development and what does development mean to China?*
- 2) *Deng Xiaoping famously said "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice." This is taken to mean that as long as the economy works, it is a good economy. Please comment on this statement. You may read this newspaper article. (<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201808/02/WS5b728ae4a310add14f385b4a.html>)*

**Week 11 (April 13) Public Holiday. No Class.**

**Week 12 (Apr 20): Society I: Social/Media and Public Opinion**

**Student Led Discussion Group 4: Tam Pui Kwan and Lee Ka Seen Rachel**

Required Readings:

- CQ 5: "What Should We Know about Public Opinion?"
- CQ 30: "Why Do Intellectuals Matter to Chinese Politics?"
- CQ 33: "Has Chinese Propaganda Won Hearts and Minds?"

*Questions for thinking:*

- 1) *What is civil society and do you think we have civil society in China?*
- 2) *What is public opinion and do you think we have public opinion in China?*
- 3) *What is public intellectual and how do you understand the roles public intellectuals have played or can play in Chinese society?*

**Week 13 (Apr 27): Society II: Gender and Class**

**Student Led Discussion Group 5: Zhang Jingchi**

Required Readings:

- CQ 23: "How Are China and Its Middle Class Handling Aging and Mental Health?"
- Xie, Yu. "Gender and family in contemporary China." *University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research* (2013): 1-10.

Supplementary Reading:

Davis, Deborah S. "Privatization of marriage in post-socialist China." *Modern China* 40, no. 6 (2014): 551-577.

*Questions for thinking:*

- 1) *What is class and who are the middle class in today's Chinese society?*
- 2) *What are the major issues about women and gender in today's Chinese society? Are they "Chinese issues" or "global issues"?*

**Short Essay II is due on April 27 (Monday) in hardcopy in class if back on campus. Otherwise, please email your email to the instructor at [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)**

### **Week 14 (May 4) Class Forum: Coronavirus, State Management and the Future of China**

This week, we are going to hold a class forum to discuss critical issues in current Chinese society, that is the outbreak of Coronavirus, the corresponding actions from the state and provincial governments, and the future of China. Each student is encouraged to select **ONE PHOTO** from media/social media to illustrate his/her own opinion on the anti-Coronavirus campaign in the mainland, Hong Kong or other places in the world. Students are encouraged to comment on the photo in relation to the future of China. **Please upload your photo to Moodle before the class for convenient sharing.** Guest speakers (e.g. specialists on China politics or/and public health) will be invited to join us. The purpose of the forum is to help students think over what China Studies should address to respond to the needs of the society.

#### Online Forum Post:

1. Please upload your photo to the online forum on Moodle.
2. Please add a paragraph to comment on the photo in relation to the anti-Coronavirus campaign and the future of China.

### **Week 15 (May 11) Final Report Review Session**

Students are required to send their FINAL PROJECT TITLE (title only, that is the research question you plan to ask) to the INSTRUCTOR ([liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)) before **May 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday midnight**. In the class meeting, we will review all topics and contribute to help each other prepare for his/her final project.

#### Online Forum Post:

By reviewing the main topics and discussions covered by this course, please comment on which reading or which discussion is the most inspiring to you and why.

**Final Report is due on May 20 (Wednesday) 5:00 PM by email to the instructor: [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk).**

## **Assignment Guidelines**

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### **Short Essay**

- Students will be required to select two topics from weekly *Questions for Thinking* and write two short essays during the whole semester.
- The topic of Short Essay I should be chosen from questions in **Week 1, 3, 4, 6, 8** and the topic of Short Essay II from **Week 9, 10, 12, 13**.
- The essay should be 750-1000 words, double-spaced, 12 point font.
- The response paper should: 1) Answer the selected question by presenting your own argument; 2) use information and evidences from the lectures, readings or other scholarly studies to support your argument; 3) include full footnotes.



- Short Essay I will be due on **March 23 by email to [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)** and the Short Essay II will be due on **April 27 in class.**

### **Student Led Discussion**

- Students are assigned to lead one-week's class discussion.
- Discussion leaders should first share his/her comments on the assigned readings, and prepare a few questions to facilitate the class discussion. After we return to campus, discussion leaders are encouraged to involve different forms of interaction such as role-play, debate, visual or audio-materials to stimulate the discussion.

### **Final Report**

- Each student will develop one scholarly question as the topic of his/her final report. The question should address one specific academic field.
- The final report should answer the question by: 1) Summarizing main arguments in the field; 2) Identifying at least two influential scholarly works relevant to this topic; 3) Developing logical answers to your own question; 4) Citing evidences from both primary sources (including historical documents or interviews/surveys) and secondary sources (research results from scholarly publications).
- The final report should be 1500-3000 words in length, double-spaced, 12-point font.

**Final Report is due on May 20 (Wednesday) 5:00 PM by email to [liji66@hku.hk](mailto:liji66@hku.hk)**

### **Important Course Guidelines**

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- Assignments are to be completed and submitted at the time specified. No late submission will be accepted.
- Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the University's rules about citations and plagiarism ([www.hku.hk/plagiarism](http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism)). These rules will be enforced in this class.