This course examines and interrogates what it means to study the intersections between "politics" and "culture" in the People's Republic of China. We will read together a series of new books, mainly published within the last five years, that address this question from a variety of disciplinary approaches, including area studies, history, anthropology, literary studies, the history of science, media studies, and gender studies. Our discussions will pay special attention to research methodology, and students will produce a final research paper that applies methodological approaches discussed in the course to their own work. Ultimately, our goal will be to determine the current and future directions of "cultural studies" as a new paradigm within Chinese studies scholarship. There is no language requirement for this course, as all required readings will be in English.