MARKET reforms have dramatically transformed China’s economy and society, generating profound consequences not only for China but also the world. Once a deeply impoverished communist country, poorer than Chad, China is today the world’s second largest economy. Politically, the Chinese government has undergone equally deep changes, despite remaining a single-party dictatorship. Yet China’s capitalist transformation is far from over. As the country approaches middle-income status, it confronts a new set of economic and political challenges.

This course introduces you to China’s economic and political development, focusing on the reform period that began in 1978. My teaching emphasizes the following:

1. History: Instead of skipping around random topics, we will first understand the timeline of events and crises that led up to China’s reform, as well as the problems and strategies that defined distinct phases of its reform process. The objective of this historical approach is to help you understand that many “China/s” evolved over time. Between the past and the present, there is both continuity and dramatic change.

2. Local perspective: Contrary to popular media impressions, China is not a monolithic. It has 31 provinces that are as large and populous as mid-size countries. Despite being politically centralized, China is one of the most economically and administratively decentralized governments in the world. Hence, while we will study national policies and politics, we will pay special attention to local states, especially their role in promoting the economy and the accompanying problems of corruption.

3. Stories alongside big ideas & events: As Stalin famously said, “A single death is a tragedy; one million deaths is a statistic.” In learning about big ideas and events, it is necessary to pair the abstract with concrete stories of particular individuals, so that we are reminded that politics and economics affect the lives of real people, bound by a common humanity.
REQUIRED TEXTS


Only assigned chapters from other books and news/magazine articles will be posted on Canvas > resources. All journal articles can be downloaded for free at UM Library website.

The required texts have been placed on reserve at the library.

NO LAPTOP POLICY

Except for the first day of class, laptop and cellphone use is not permitted during lectures.

Lecture slides will be posted on Canvas a week before each lecture, so you may print the slides and take notes in class.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

**Biweekly Quizzes (40%)**

There is a short quiz at the end of almost every lecture. Online quizzes will be administered for three scheduled “film days,” when lectures will be replaced by watching selected films online.

**Wildcard policy:** We will drop 3 quizzes with the lowest grades, meaning, if you miss class or don’t do well on the quizzes for whatever reason, you are automatically excused 3 times.

**Participation in Lectures & Sections (20%)**

*Attendance:* 10 participation points will be allotted for regular attendance in lectures and sections. You will only be excused for missing class if you have a medical note from the doctor, an official note that verifies your participation in competitions, or other official reasons approved by the instructor (for lectures) or GSI (for sections) at least two weeks before class. **Other than that, there will be no exception.** If you have a legitimate excuse approved by me, your absence will not take up the 3 wildcards, described above.

*Quality of participation:* The remaining 10 points will be based on your quality of class participation, scored according to the grade scale. An excellent course is not the responsibility of the instructor alone. To achieve quality time during lectures, you, the students, must pay attention. When you arrive late to class, chat, nap, or behave in other distracting or disrespectful ways, you will negatively affect the entire class. Hence, if you are often late or distracting, we will deduct your participation score. Your GSI will elaborate on the evaluation of participation quality during sections.
Response to Guest Lecture (10%) 

We will have four guest lectures this semester. Write a response on ONE lecture. To post your response, go to Canvas > assignments > response. Your response should be about two single-spaced pages in length. Write the title and date of the event at the top of the page. In 1-2 paragraphs, summarize the speaker’s arguments or findings. Share your responses (e.g., what you’ve learned, how it relates to class, whether you agree/disagree with the argument).

You need only to write ONE response. The deadline for submission is December 11, 5 pm. However, you have the choice of resubmitting a second response if you submit a first one by November 13, 5 pm. If you are not satisfied with your grade on the first submission, you can resubmit a second response by Dec 11. We will count the response that earns a higher grade.

Late submissions for the optional first response are not accepted. If you submit your response after the Dec 11, 5 pm deadline, 5% of your grade will be deducted for every day of lateness. Even if you submit only a few minutes after 5 pm, this will count as one day of lateness.

Midterm and Final (30%) 

The mid-term will take up 20% of your grade and final is 10%. The mid-term will cover materials from Class#5-14, and the final from Class#17 to 27. Both will be conducted in class.

Extra Credit (Up to 3 points)

The Center for Chinese Studies will host several lectures on contemporary China on Tuesday at 12 pm: Cole on Sep 26; Jia on Oct 3; Zhang on Oct 31; Osburg on Nov 7; Buoye on Nov 14; Manion on Dec 12. Check the center’s website for event details. Another event you may review is Evans’ lecture on Sep 8 (Friday) 12 pm at the Center for South East Asian Studies.

Write a response on any one of these lectures. Your review should: (1) Summarize the talk, briefly; and (3) Discuss your reactions, such as, what did you learn from it? Did it change your mind about anything? Did it spur your curiosity to know more about something? (3) Discuss its connection to the course, if you see any (optional). Recommended length is 1,000 words.

You can expect to receive at least some credit if you submit a reasonably good response. But only truly deserving reviews—thoughtful and well-written—will obtain the maximum score.

This assignment is due on December 14, 5 pm. Post your review on Canvas > Assignment > extra credit. Late submissions are not accepted.

Grade Scale

Final grades for the course will be determined as follows: A+ (101+); A (95-101); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72)

In computing your grade, we do not round off. For example, if your final grade is 94.9, it is an A-, not an A. There is no bargaining around this rule.
COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>China in comparative and historical context</td>
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Course theme; teaching objectives; assignments

**Required**
Louise Levathes. *When China Ruled the Seas*. Prologue; Chap 4 (Treasure Fleet); Chaps 9 (Last voyage)

**Supplemental**

Discussion themes:
- Diamond: The rise of the West through industrialization and colonization. Why Europe, why not China?
- Levathes: China’s glorious past as seen through Zheng He’s expedition. Why was China’s economic and political power not sustained? Why did China decline?
- Fukuyama: What political features from the Ming Dynasty still persist in China today? Does China still suffer from the “bad emperor” problem?

**9/18**
NO LECTURE—Watch documentary and take online quiz

Watch *China: A Century in Revolution (Part I), 1911-1949*. (**Don’t watch the wrong part. This is the part on 1911-1949***)
You can view the video on youtube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7C40M9GM3k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7C40M9GM3k) or in Media Gallery on Canvas. We have also reserved the DVD in the library.

After watching the video, go to “Canvas > Quiz” to take the quiz. It should take about 20 minutes to complete.

Questions for thought:
- From the end of the Qing Dynasty to 1949, China was ravaged by foreign invasion, civil war, and abject poverty. What is the impact of this tumultuous period on post-1949 China?

**9/20**
The Socialist Era I (Land reform)

Huang. *The Spiral Road*. Introduction, Chapter 1 (Prologue), Chapter 3 (The Liberation) pp. 41-49

Discussion question:
- How does a planned economy work? Why and how was the land reform carried out?
• Bottom-up view (Huang, Liao): Following CCP rule, what fundamental changes happened in rural China?

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<th>The Socialistic Era II (Great Leap Forward)</th>
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Required
Yang Jisheng. Tombstone. Chap 1 (Epicenter of Disaster)
Huang. *The Spiral Road*. Chapter 4 (Hunger, Hunger)

Supplemental

Questions:
• What happened during the Great Leap Forward?
• What explains such a tragic disaster? What particular aspects of authoritarian rule made such a disaster possible?
• What remnants of the GLF might we still see in reform-era China?

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<th>The Socialistic Era III (Cultural Revolution)</th>
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Vogel. *Deng Xiaoping*. Chap 1 (Background), Chapter 2 (Banishment & Return).

Questions:
• What happened during the Cultural Revolution? What explains the “ten years of madness” during the CR? Do the effects of the CR continue to linger in present-day China?
• What did Deng go through under Mao’s rule? What do you think he learned from his personal setbacks and traumas? How did these experiences influence Deng’s vision of reform?

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<th>Market Transition Part I (Growing out of the plan)</th>
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Vogel. *Deng Xiaoping*. Chapter 7, pp. 245-248 (on the Third Plenum), Chapter 14 (Experiments)
Huang. *The Spiral Road*. Chapter 8 (Prosperous Years), pp. 136-150

Discussion Questions:
• Why are China’s reforms divided into two distinct phases, before and after 1993?
• What were the distinctive goals and features of the pre-1993 reform?
• What role did capitalist experiments in Southern China (Guangdong and Fujian) play in national reforms? How did the reformers cope with political resistance?

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<th>Market Transition Part II (Tiananmen)</th>
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Vogel. *Deng Xiaoping*. Chapter 21 (Tiananmen), Chapter 23 (Deng’s finale).
Jan Wong. “Red China Blues.” Chapter 13 (people power).
Discussion Questions:

• What led to the Tiananmen Incident? People’s quality of life generally improved after reforms. So why were people still unsatisfied and took to the streets?
• Student protestors in Tiananmen pressed for democracy. What did they understand by democracy?
• How did Deng respond to the Tiananmen crisis? What strategies did he use during the Southern Tour? How did he build support for continued market reforms? What are his legacies?

Yingyi Qian & Jinglian Wu. “China’s Transition to a Market Economy: How Far Across the River?” in *How Far Across the River*

Discussion Questions:

• How are the features of the second phase of market transition? How is it distinguished from the first phase?
• Why did the second phase of reform involve changes in governance? Specifically, what governmental reforms were conducted?

Required

Supplemental

Discussion questions:

• What are the problems of China’s model of economic growth in the past 30 years?
• What are the main elements of reform proposed in the 2030 report? What do you think are the challenges of implementing these reforms?
• Make a prediction. What will China’s economy be like in 10 years? 30 years?

Read in the following order:

Discussion questions:
- What are the core components and characteristics of the U.S. political system? How do these American features compare to those in China’s political system?
- In China, what is the relationship between the party and the state, and between central and sub-national governments?
- In what way is power fragmented in China? Does such fragmentation constitute constraints on power? Are there checks and balances in China’s political system?

Read in the following order:
[1] “Why China can’t fix its environment simply by adjusting targets,” Public Administration Review. LINK.

Discussion questions:
- Why are targets and cadre evaluation so important in China’s political system?
- What are the limitations of target-setting? How might it backfire? (hint: falsification)
- How have targets evolved from the Maoist period, reform period, and until the present day? Why has it evolved in this direction? What is the impact of these changes?

11/13  Mon  No lecture – Film + Online quiz

Watch The Mayor, then take online quiz.

The movie can be streamed on Canvas > Media Gallery. We also placed the DVD on reserve.

11/20  Mon  No lecture – Film + Online quiz

Watch The Utopia, then take online quiz.

The movie can be streamed on Canvas > Media Gallery.

11/27  Mon  Developmental role of local governments, Part I

Required
Weiping, Wu. “Fiscal decentralization, infrastructure financing, and regional disparity.” In China's Local Public Finance in Transition

Supplemental
Naughton. The Chinese Economy. Chapter 12 (Rural Industrialization)
“Local-government debt, Bridging the fiscal chasm,” The Economist, Feb 22, 2014

Discussion questions:
• Evans: What is a developmental state? Why might strong state intervention be especially important for late-developing economies?
• Oi: How is China’s developmental model different from East Asia’s?
• How did the developmental role of China’s local governments shift from the 1980s-1990s to the present decade? What explains this shift? What are its consequences?

“Visualizing China’s anti-corruption campaign,” China File, Jan 21, 2016. LINK.

Supplemental
Alex Cobham, Foreign Policy, “Why the CPI falls short”

Discussion questions:
• In this and the next lecture, we will explore this big question: China has achieved record-breaking growth rates in the past 35 years, yet it appears to have a serious corruption problem. Why has the Chinese economy boomed despite widespread corruption?
• In today’s lecture, we will begin by unpacking the concept and measures of corruption: What constitutes corruption? How is corruption usually measured?
• The most commonly measure of corruption is the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). What is China’s CPI score compared to other countries? What are the limitations of the CPI?

Required
How China Escaped the Poverty Trap, pp. 146-183
“With its corruption crackdown, China is also stamping out innovation,” The Conversation, November 7.

Supplemental

Discussion questions:
• What do we assume about the relationship between corruption and economic performance?
• What are the different types of corruption and how might their economic consequences differ?
• How would you characterize the prevalent type/s of corruption in China? How have they changed over time?
• Finally, let’s get back to answering our motivating question: Why has the Chinese economy boomed despite widespread corruption?