

Chinese Politics

Last Updated: Mon, 01/05/2026

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 4331/8803

Section: A/LH

CRN (you may add up to five):

35121 35315

Instructor First Name: Robert

Instructor Last Name: Hines

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

After experiencing decades of rapid economic growth, China has emerged as one of the most powerful countries in the world, and it is already having a profound impact on the global economy and international security. This class seeks to make sense of China's complex political system. The course starts by focusing on modern Chinese history from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the economic reforms of the Reform and Opening Era. It then examines important features of modern Chinese governance such as center-local relations, fragmented authoritarianism, state-society relations, factionalism, the relationship between the CCP and state institutions, surveillance, censorship, the hukou system, and nationalism. The course then focuses on modern challenges in the governance of China including corruption, environmental degradation, slowing economic growth, and a looming demographic crisis. The course finishes by examining China under the leadership of Xi Jinping and how domestic politics influences its behavior on the world stage.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Examine the historical and cultural influences upon modern Chinese politics.
- Assess important concepts about Chinese politics and apply these to examining China's governance today.
- Draw upon concepts and lessons learned about Chinese politics to understand the domestic sources of China's behavior on the world stage.

Required course materials:

Most readings will be available through Canvas or can be found through the library. There is one required book for the course:

Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, W.W. Norton and Company, 1990.

Grading policy:

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 0-59%

Attendance policy:

Your success in this course depends on careful preparation for and active engagement in seminar discussions. You are expected to read and study all assigned materials, come to class prepared to contribute to the seminar, and engage in thoughtful and critical discussions with your classmates and instructor. Attendance is a prerequisite for participation.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broader academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities, and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion