

MGCS 5024

China in Comparative Perspective

Professor Kellee Tsai

Course Description

This course explores the empirical and analytic value of studying China in comparative perspective. Empirically, China has been compared to other communist regimes, former socialist countries, newly-industrialized economies, large developing countries, and advanced industrialized countries. In these comparisons, social scientists typically draw on concepts and theories derived from other contexts to explain political, economic, and social phenomenon in contemporary China. What can we learn about China from these efforts? Analytically, the course also considers how the study of China can contribute to concept formation and broader debates in social science, especially political science and political economy.

The seminar is divided into three parts. The first part of this seminar reviews the comparative method; the evolution of Western social science literature on China's domestic politics; and some of the approaches that have been used to explain politics in modern China. The second part of the course turns to frameworks in the political economy of development. The final section of the course analyzes explanations for regime durability, and explores the comparative puzzle of communist resilience in China in light contentious politics among rural and urban citizens.

Class Schedule

NO.	THEME
L1	Introduction
L2	China in Western Political Science
L3	Comparative Method & Political Culture
L4	Comparative-Historical Analysis: State Formation.
L5	Late Industrialization & the Developmental State
L6	China as a Case of Comparative Capitalism
L7	Comparative Politics of Labor
L8	Capitalism without Democracy
L9	Competitive Authoritarianism vs. Communist Resilience
L10	Contentious Politics under Authoritarianism
L11	Adapting Authoritarianism: Good Governance

Requirements and Grading:

Class attendance and active class participation (15%); In-class class news presentations (15%); Required readings; Critical Memos (30%); Research Paper (40%)

Major Readings:

Yuen Yuen Ang, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

Wenkai He, *Paths toward the Modern Fiscal State: England, Japan, and China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Scott Kennedy, ed., *Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China's Capitalist Transformation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Dorothy J. Solinger, *States' Gains, Labor's Losses: China, France, and Mexico Choose Global Liaisons, 1980-2000* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

Kellee S. Tsai, *Capitalism without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).