Introduction:

This course is an interactive seminar on state power, social protest, and historical memory in contemporary China. It begins with the following questions: What is Politics? What is Political Legitimacy? Do national rulers in China have political legitimacy? If so, how did they get it? How have they sustained it? If not, did they ever have it? If not, how did they lose it if they once had it? If not, what are the implications for state-society relations, for political stability vs. instability, and for the possibility of protest and rebellion from below feeding into an insurgency against the Communist Party-led Central government?

We begin by studying the great catastrophe of Mao-led socialist rule, including how the legacy of the Mao-led post-1949 revolutionary political experiment. We are interested in how this legacy has influenced the legitimacy of the Communist Party-directed state and shaped the course of development in contemporary reform era China. We will focus on how China’s citizens remember the famine of Maoism and (a) the link between popular memory of this famine and the nature of the Cultural Revolution and (b) the way in which popular memory of the famine still influences and shapes popular resistance in present day China. As students of comparative politics and comparative history, we will compare the Maoist inflicted disaster of China's Great Leap Forward Famine with the famine-disasters induced by socialist rulers in the Soviet Union (especially the Ukraine), Cambodia, North Korea, and Ethiopia. Our goal is to understand how people who have survived state-inflicted trauma and loss have seen and related to state power in the aftermath of state repression and state-delivered ruin—and to grasp how memory factors into this process. To this end, we also will compare memories of state violence in post-Mao China with memories of the Holocaust in post-Hitler Germany and with memories of the White Terror in post-Chiang Kai-shek Taiwan.

We then turn to the study of crisis issue areas in contemporary Chinese politics, such as conflict and factional warfare within the ruling Communist Party, rising income inequality between the rural poor and the urban rich, gender issues including the struggles of women against invasive state birth planning, the role of new social media in fostering protest and empowering civil society, civil rights crusaders and progress in instituting the rule of law, regime-centered responses to growing demands for religious and ethnic freedom, and how Beijing's rulers have attempted to accommodate protest in order to defuse it. In studying these crisis issues we will look at how authoritarian rulers have triggered popular resistance but we also are interested in how popular memory of the perils of past Communist Party dominance informs and inflames defiance, protest, and contention. We are especially interested in whether those who rule can survive the rising tide of social protest.
Participation in this seminar requires class attendance and focus on readings, lectures, and films, and internet exercises. You will be responsible for individual and group presentations. We will work harder at the beginning and middle of the term in order to allow us finish the readings and films before the April break. The goal is to enable you to use most of April to write your term paper, which you will present in class on Monday April 28. You have complete freedom to choose any topic in which you are interested. But I will help you choose if you wish. In any event, I will help facilitate your term paper by commenting on your précis, and by working with you to fashion a critique of the first draft of your term paper.

Your grade in this course will be calculated from your performance in the following areas:

(1) Class participation –20% (This includes discussing books, and viewing and discussing films, and discussing new social media representations of Chinese politics and regime legitimacy)

(2) A book review exercise –20%. This will involve a critical review and comparison of the approach and assumptions of two books either on the Great Leap Forward Famine or on the Cultural Revolution. Due Date: February 10.

(3) An out-of-class five to ten page take home essay—20%. In this case, you will be writing a critical and analytical essay on an internet exercise of your choosing, on a film of your choosing, or on a reading assignment (such as a book, a chapter in a book, or an article) of your choosing. Your essay will focus on how we understand the nature of Chinese politics and Communist Party rule in the decades after the Maoist disasters of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, including especially the post-Mao reform era of Deng Xiaoping and his present day successors. I too will participate in this exercise, and we will discuss our findings both in class and over a class dinner if all of us can make it.
Due Date: March 12.

(4) A ten page term paper—40%. Your term paper will be written on a topic that you think is interesting and important. A two page précis of your term paper is due in e-mail to me on March 17. A five page draft of your term paper is due in e-mail to me on March 27. I will return the draft with suggestions for improving it, and I will talk with each of you about your draft. Your term paper is due in class and in e-mail (thaxton@brandeis.edu) on Monday April 28. Be sure that you turn the term paper in on time—late papers will incur a grade penalty.

There are five required books/readings:


*2) Choose any one of the following five books:
*Jasper Becker, Hungry Ghosts (Free Press, 1996)

Dali Yang, Calamity and Reform in China (Stanford, 1996)


Frank Dikotter, Mao's Great Famine (Bloomsbury, 2010)

Zhou Xun, Forgotten Voices of Mao's Great Famine, 1958-1962 (Yale, 2013)

*3) Stephan Feuchtwang, After the Event: The Transmission of Grievance Loss in Germany, China, and Taiwan (Berghahn, 2011)

*4) Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr., Selected Chapters of Force and Contention in Contemporary China, 1978-2013 (Hand-Out)

Some readings which also serve as reference books for your term papers:

(1) Yang Xiguang, Captive Spirits (1997)
(2) Yang Su, Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution (2011)
(2) Elizabeth Perry and Mark Selden, eds., Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance (2000; and the latest version)
(3) Bruce Gilley, Model Rebels (2001)
(4) Jonathan Unger, The Transformation of Rural China (2002)
(5) Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun, China’s Road to Disaster (1999)
(6) Bruce Gilley, China’s Democratic Future (2004)
(8) Kate Xiao Zhou, How the Farmers Changed China (1996)
(10) Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden, Chinese Village, Socialist State (1991)
(12) Minxin Pei, China’s Trapped Transition (2006)
(13) Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (2006)
(14) Teresa Wright, Accepting Authoritarianism: State Society Relations in the Reform Era (2010)
(15) Peter Gries and Stanley Rosen, State, Society, and Market (2010-January Release)

Films for Viewing and Class Discussion:
I. Political History: The Fall of Imperial China

*Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*, Chapter 1

*FILM To Live*

II. The Republican Era and the Rise of Maoist Communism

*Jung Chang, Chapters 2-6*
Friedman, Pickowicz and Selden, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-110

*FILM To Live*

III. The Formation of the Maoist State and the Maoist Political System

*Jung Chang, Chapters 7-11*
Friedman, Pickowicz and Selden, Chapter 4, pp. 159-212 (Rec.)
Shue, *The Reach of the State*, any Chapter.

*FILM: The Great Wall of China*
*FILM: The Mao Years*

IV. The Maoist Disaster: The Great Leap Forward and Its Famine

*Jung Chang, Chapters 12-13*
Friedman, Pickowicz and Selden, Chapter 9, 214-246.
*Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, all (Group Report and Class Discussion)*
V. Comparative Socialist Disasters

The Soviet Union:

Paddington, Arch. “Denying the Terror Famine: Was the 1933 Ukrainian Famine the Result of A Failed Policy – or was it the Policy Itself?” *National Review* (25 May 1992 Vol. 44)

Cambodia:


North Korea:

To be assigned.

Ethiopia:

To be assigned.

VI. The Maoist Era, 1966-1978

*Jung Chang, Chapter 14
Rae Yang, *Spider Eaters* (recommended)
Friedman, Pickowicz and Selden, pp. 246-288 (Rec.)
Yang Dali, Part II, pp. 71-179

VII. The Cultural Revolution

*Jung Chang, Chapters 15-27
Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution*, all.
VIII. Reform from Above vs. Reform from Below

Kate Xiaozhou, *How the Farmers Changed China*, all
*Thaxton, *Force and Contention in Contemporary China*, Chapters 8-9, Conclusion.

IX. State and Economy in the 1980s and 1990s: Overview

Friedman, "Is China a Model of Reform Success?" in
*National Identity and Democratic Prospects, in Socialist China*, Chapter 10, pp. 188-201

X1. State and Society in the 1980s and 1990s: The Urban Sector (intellectuals and students)

Liu Binyan, *Tell the World* (Rec.)
Michael Dutton, *Street Life China*

X2. State and Society in the 1980s and 1990s: The Rural Sector

Lieberthal, Chapter 11, pp. 292-313 (Rec.)
Yang Dali, Part III, pp. 183-252
Dai Ruifu, Chapter 8, in progress

FILM: *The Story of Qiu Ju*

X3. Rural Migration and The In-Between Sector

Guldin, *Farewell to Peasant China*
Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*.

XI. Predatory Socialism, Urban Massacre, Peasant Anarchism, Prelude to What?
Friedman, "Some Continuities Are Radical Ruptures," in National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China, pp. 311-343
Lawrence Sullivan, "The Chinese Communist Party and the Beijing Massacre - The Crisis in Authority," in Goodman and Segal, China in the Nineties, pp. 87-104
James Miles, The Legacy of Tiananmen.

FILM: Tiananmen and/or In the Heat of the Sun

XII. Economic Reform, Enrichment, and Displaced Trauma

Oi, Rural China Takes Off
Cheng Li, Rediscovering China (Rec.)

Can the Center Hold? Challenges to Socialist Governance and Stability.


XIII. The Plague of Political Corruption and the Issue of Democracy

Bruce Gilley, China’s Democratic Future, Chapter s 5-8.
*Thaxton, Force and Contention in Contemporary China, Chapters 4-6.

XIV. Conclusion: Some Reflections on Seeing the Present through the Traumatic Past

*Thaxton, Force and Contention in Rural China, Chapter 9.
*Thaxton, Force and Contention in Contemporary China, Conclusion.
*Feuchtwang, After the Event, all.
Additional List of books that will prove useful for the course:


R. MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Parts I, II, & III.*

Merle Goldman and R. MacFarquhar, eds., *The Paradox of China’s Post-Mao Reforms*

D. Goodman and G. Segal, *China Deconstructs*

Liu Binyan, *Tell the World*

K. Lieberthal, *Governing China*

B. Brugger and S. Reglar, *Politics, Economy and Society in Contemporary China*

Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution: Reform After Mao*

Yang Dali, *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change Since the Great Leap Forward*

Vivienne Shue, *The Reach of the State*

Marc Blecher and Vivienne Shue, *Tethered Deer*

Edward Friedman, Paul Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State*

Edward Friedman, *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*


Kate Xiaozhou, *How the Farmers Changed China*

David G. Goodman and Gerald Segal, eds., *China in the Nineties*

Yue Daiyuan and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm*

Gregory Eluju Guldin, *Farwell to Peasant China*

Joe Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienue Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces*

Dorothy J. Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*

Cheng Li, *Rediscovering China*
Gilley, Bruce. Model Rebels.

Gilley, Bruce. China’s Democratic Future.

Michael Dutton, Street Life China

James Miles, The Legacy of Tiananmen

Lynn T. White, III, Unstately Power

Jude Howell, Governance in China

Jonathan Unger, The Transformation of Rural China

List of Academic Journals that are useful for your research:

- China Quarterly
- Modern China
- China Journal
- Journal of Contemporary China
- Asian Survey
- Pacific Affairs
- Journal of Asian Studies
- World Politics
- Comparative Studies in Society and History
- Comparative Politics
- Theory and Society

Internet/Web Resources: Key Source is China Digital Times.

Other Sources to Be Reviewed in Class: