Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism

University of Southern California

CMGT580: Chinese Media and Society

Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Yu Hong

Class hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:50 pm

Office hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00pm

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**Course Description**

After having become the largest exporter and then the second largest economy in the world, China is poised to become a global heavyweight in the realm of media and communications. This course examines the political economy, policy issues, and social dynamics characterizing and accompanying China’s explosive development in media, technology, and telecommunications. Through lectures and discussion, it helps students to build analytical frameworks for understanding leading trends and latest phenomena in the contexts of market reforms, state-society relationships, and geopolitical conditions.

The course is divided into four sections: 1) China’s market reform; 2) Mass media; 3) the Internet; 4) Communication and economic restructuring. The goal is to develop conceptual frameworks through which students can critically understand China’s contradictory and dynamic realities and, thereby, build resilience to act well in face of confusing business environments.

**Course Goals**

* To examine how power relations and social processes influence the development of information, communication, and culture;
* To understand regulations and policies relevant to Chinese communication;
* To analyze the social, political, and cultural implications of media and communications on Chinese society;
* To offer students opportunities to reflect and write critically about China’s trends in a globalized context;
* To develop ways in which people can make sense of China’s contradictory and dynamic realities and, thereby, build resilience to act well in face of confusing business environments.

**Course Readings**

It will be helpful if you can get a copy of Yuezhi Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). All the individual readings are available on Blackboard.

**Course Organization**

This course will mix lectures and discussions. Class will begin with a 15-20 minute discussion and will be followed by lectures, presentations, and videos.

**Course Grading Policy**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work

B+/B above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment

B-/C+ needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow-through

C and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

**Expectations**

1. News Digests: 20%

Students are required to collect and report on latest news on communications throughout the semester. You are expected to pick ***one*** unfolding issues and follow them. Each power-point presentation should draw upon at least five news reports atop relevant background information/knowledge. I will grade these as satisfactory or not; if your delivery is not satisfactory, I will ask you to re-do it.

2. Take-home essay exams: 10%

In week 4, a take-home exam based on class readings will be arranged. You are expected to synthesize readings rather than to repeat details.

3. Discussion leadership: 10%

The discussion leader will make a power point presentation of readings, prepare a small number of thoughtful questions to begin the class discussion and, then, the leader will actually lead the discussion for a period of between 15-20 minutes. I will grade this assignment on the satisfactory-or-not scale; if your delivery is not satisfactory, I will ask you to re-do it.

4. Paper proposal: 10%

A 2-3 page proposal is due week 7. **Your topic of the final paper [communication-related topics] has to be decided in agreement with the instructor during the first month of the semester.** To complete the assignment, you should define a topic, identify relevant scholarship, identify primary sources, and propose a research rationale for your final paper. More detailed instructions will be provided. **You are required to meet with the instructor at least once to discuss your paper projects.**

4. Final paper: 25%

Your final paper should build upon your midterm assignments and further original research. **The paper must be empirical and analytical, and deal with a concrete topic**. It cannot be purely theoretical or normative. It should be based on library research, and proper documentation. Again, your topic of the paper has to be decided in agreement with the instructor during the first month of the class. Length is flexible and Quality Matters. However, a good benchmark is about ten long and single-spaced. Quality is measured by the originality of the thinking, and the analytical capacity demonstrated in the paper. The paper cannot be purely descriptive. It is estimated it will take about 40 hours of library research, analysis, and writing during the semester.

5. Project presentations: 10%

Students will make presentations on their projects. These presentations provide good insights into the form of your projects. It is also a good way to learn about the work your peers are conducting.

**6**. \*\*\***Participation (not based solely on attendance)\*\*\*: 15%**

* Do all assigned readings before the class—doing so will help the lecture and I will draw upon both required and outside readings in my lectures. You won’t have time to learn material for the first time during the exam. Be prepared for heavy reading loads in the first few weeks.
* **Don’t wander off to social media while using your laptop.**
* You are responsible for taking notes. It is students’ responsibility to get notes for missed lectures. You are encouraged to trade notes and form study groups.
* Attendance is required. **Unexcused absence will lead to loss of credit**. Class discussion is a vital part of the effectiveness of this course and **you are expected to speak up.**
* This is a seminar course where we collectively grapple with issues and aim to build upon each other’s ideas. Students bear at least 50% responsibility for making this class successful. In order to get a satisfactory grade, you need to make thoughtful, active, and respectful contributions to class discussion throughout the semester. Sitting there in silence or working on something else, whether related or unrelated to the class, with your laptop will lead to a low grade.
* Meet with me if you have questions or concerns about the course or any of the assignments. You will NEVER offend me by asking for help. In fact, I will take it as a sign of your intellectual commitment.

7. For all the assignments, **no late delivery will be accepted**. It is your responsibility to request an extension prior to the due days.

**Policies and Procedures**

**A. Plagiarism**

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Please see the *SCampus* (<http://scampus.usc.edu/1300-academic-integrity-review/>) for the university’s Student Conduct Code.

**USC School of Communication Policy on Academic Integrity**

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Communication’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators.

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

**B. Additional Policies**

***Instructor:*** Add any additional policies specific to your class that students should be aware of: missed classes, attendance expectations, checking USC e-mail, use of technology in the classroom, etc.

**C. Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

**D. Stress Management**

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

1. **Sexual Assault Resource Center**

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

**F. Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**(I will make minor alterations, so please pay close attention as we go along)**

**Week 1 (Week of August 25)**

**Introduction**

Introduction, Mechanics, and Topics of the Course

Lesson activity: Choose discussion topics and readings

Discuss and explore project topics

**Week 2:**

**Historical Context: Market Reform**

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* New York: Oxford University Press (2005), p.1-19 & 120-151.

He Qinglian, “A Listing Social Structure,” in Chaohua Wang, One China, Many Paths, pp. 163-188.

Mark Selden, “The Social origins and limits of the Chinese democratic movement” in *The Political Economy of Chinese Development*, pp. 206-230.

Yuezhi Zhao, “The Trajectory of Media Reform,” in *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

*Lesson activity: Write a paper proposal with initial description of topics and explanation of importance (to be discussed on Wednesday)*

Check out https://libraries.usc.edu/research/reference-tutorials

**Week 3:**

**The Politics of Media Reforms**

**Chapter 1 in *Communication in China: political economy, power, and conflict* / Yuezhi Zhao, pp. 19-74.**

*Lesson activity: Search for existing literature on topics. The “literature” refers to the existing bodies of knowledge relevant to your problem primarily in the forms of academic journal articles and books. (to be discussed on Wednesday)*

**Week 4**

**Creation of Media/Culture Industry**

“The Growth of Media in China” (<https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-growth-china-2008.pdf>)

Chapter 2 **in *Communication in China: political economy, power, and conflict* / Yuezhi Zhao, pp. 75-136.**

**Yu Hong, “**Recasting the Media System: Network Convergence and Digital TV.” **in *Networking the Nation: Communications and Economic Restructuring in China* (UIP, 2017).**

***Lesson activity: Take-home Essay***

**Week 5:**

**Transnational and Private Capitals**

Philip P. Pan, “Making Waves, Carefully, on the Air in China,” Newsbytes, Sep 19, 2005, *Washington Post Foreign Service*, retrievable from Lexis-Nexis.

Chapter 4 in Zhao’s book, ***Communication in China*, pp. 195-244.**

Michael Curtin, “Murdoch’s Dilemma, or ‘What’s the price of TV in China?’ *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2005), 155-175 (skipping the first section, “speculative theories of global media).

Yuezhi Zhao (with Dan Schiller) “Dances with Wolves? China’s Integration into Digital Capitalism,” Info, 3:2 (April 2001), pp. 137-151.

***Lesson activity: search for primary sources on topics,*** *including newspaper articles, government white papers, trade publications, and blog posts, etc.*

**Week 6:**

**Mediaspheres**

Berg, Daria. 2011. A new spectacle in china's mediasphere: A cultural reading of a web-based reality show from shanghai. The China Quarterly 205 (205): 133-51.

Sep 29th: attend the “China Card: Politics Vs. Policy” conference (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-china-card-politics-vs-policy-tickets-26729500656>)

*Lesson activity: write research methodology, including a list of* ***primary sources***

**Week 7:**

**China’s (Lack of) Soft Power**

Wendy Su, “New strategies of China's film industry as soft power,” *Global Media and Communication 2010* 6: 317.

Yuezhi Zhao, “China’s quest for soft power: imperatives, impediments and irreconcilable tensions,” *Javnost-the Public*, forthcoming.

*Midterm Assignment Due by Friday 5:00 pm: A formal paper proposal due, which addresses what, why, and how and includes an outline*

**Week 8:**

**No Formal Class Meeting**

One-to-one meeting with the instructor

**Week 9:**

**Embracing Digital Capitalism**

Sean Starrs, “China’s Rise is Designed in America, Assembled in China,” China’s World 2, issue 2, 2015.

Yuezhi Zhao “After Mobile Phones, What? Re-embedding the Social in China’s Digital Revolution,” *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007), 92-120

Yu Hong, “Driving Capitalism to Western China: IT and the Unwieldy Export-Processing Regime,” **in *Networking the Nation: Communications and Economic Restructuring in China* (UIP, 2017).**

**Week 10:**

**The Ascent of Cyberpower**

“A Giant Cage,” Economist, <https://www.economist.com/sites/default/files/20130406_china_and_the_internet.pdf>

“Trailblazers,” Economist, Aug 16th, 2016

Simon Hansen, “China’s Emerging Cyberpower: Elite Discourse and Political Aspiration.” <https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/chinas-cyberpower-international-and-domestic-priorities/SR74_China_cyberpower.pdf>

Will Shield, “The Middle Way: China and Global Economic Governance,” Survival: Global Politics and Strategy 55, no. 6 (December 2013-January 2014), 147-168.

Yu Hong (under review) “Reading the 13th Five-Year Plan: Reflections on China’s ICT Policy.”

**Week 11**

**Democratic Infrastructure?**

Yu Hong, “Forging Broadband for Commanding Height Economy: State-Business Relations in Networking,” **in *Networking the Nation: Communications and Economic Restructuring in China* (UIP, 2017).**

Jeffrey Wasserstrom (September 30, 2015), “Mark Zuckerberg, Joshua Wong, and the Curious Lure of the Chinese Market,” <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/mark-zuckerberg-joshua-wong-and-xi-jinping-tech-ceos-chinese-market>

Eric Harwit, 2014. “The rise and influence of weibo in china,” Asian Survey 54 (6): 1059.

Sullivan, Jonathan. 2014. China’s weibo: Is faster different? *New Media & Society* 16, (1): 24-37.

http://www.voachinese.com/media/video/voa-interview-luo-yufeng-20160324/3254332.html

**Week 12**

**A New Digital Economy**

<https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/documents/files/preventing_deglobalization_1.pdf>

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/38fc5b88-fad9-11e3-8993-00144feab7de.html#axzz45jq0IXeK>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AB3D801ka0&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2016-04-21/didi-kuaidi-rebrands-as-didi-chuxing-and-teams-up-with-lyft>

Yu Hong (2016) “Media Giants in the Making: Tencent, China Mobile, and Shanghai Media Group,” in Global Media Giants edited by Janet Wasko, Rodridgo Gomez, and Benjamin Birkinbine

Listen to Vincent Mosco - To the Cloud Big Data in a Turbulent World

**Week 14:**

**Communication and Economic Restructuring**

Documentary: Young and Restless in China

Recap of course materials

Yu Hong (2011), “Reading the Twelfth Five-Year Plan: China’s Communication-Driven Mode of Economic Restructuring,” International Journal of Communication (5) 2011, 1-20.<https://usc.academia.edu/YuHong>

Yu Hong & Wei Wang (In Press), "Embracing Communication: China’s Post-2008 Economic Restructuring and Labor," The Routledge Companion to Labor and Media, edited by Richard Maxwell.<https://usc.academia.edu/YuHong>

Peer review of paper drafts

**Week 15:** Student presentations