

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
University of Southern California
COMM400: Communication and Social Change in China
Spring 2013
Monday, 2:00-4:50 PM

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Course Description

This course uses communication as an entry point to assess China's political-economic circumstances and socio-cultural environments. To offer an understanding of particular media and communication conditions in China, this course also examines local policies, institutions, and power relations. The course is divided into four sections: 1) China's market reform; 2) Mass media, the state, and capitals; 3) Telecommunications, the Internet, and creative industries; 4) Future trends. 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 global 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

Required book:

Fairbank, John K., *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985*. New York: Harper&Row, Publishers, 1986.

Yuezhi Zhao, *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Other individual readings are available through course site 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, films, and presentations.

Expectations

1. News Digest: 10%

Students are required to collect and report latest news on Chinese communications throughout the semester. They will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

2. Take-home essay exam: 10%

In week 4, an early semester exam based on class readings will be arranged.

3. Discussion leadership: 15%

The discussion leader will write up a reading response, 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.

4. Paper drafts: 15%

The assignment, made up of a sequence of projects, serves as steppingstones towards your final research paper. **Your topic of the final paper 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, provide a literature review, and propose a research rationale for your final paper. More detailed instructions will be provided.

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. Quality matters. 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. 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%

Class discussion is a vital part of the effectiveness of this course. This is a seminar course where we collectively grapple with issues and aim to build upon each other's ideas.

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. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section

11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

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. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776

COURSE OUTLINE

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

Week 1:

Introduction

Introduction, Mechanics, and Topics of the Course

Lesson activity: Choose discussion topics and readings

Discuss and explore project topics

Week 2:

A Brief Chinese History

Fairbank, John K., *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985*. New York: Harper&Row, Publishers, 1986.

Fewsmith, Joseph, "Historical Echoes and Chinese Politics: Can China Leave the Twentieth Century Behind?" in *China Briefing* pp. 11-48

Week 3

Historical Context: Market Reform
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David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press (2005), pp.1-19, 120-151.

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

Week 4:

Social and Geographical Reconfiguration
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He Qinglian, "A Listing Social Structure," in Chaohua Wang, *One China, Many Paths*, pp. 163-188.

David S. G. Goodman and Xiaowei Zang, "The New Rich in China: The Dimensions of Social Change," in David S. G. Goodman, *The New Rich in China*, pp. 1-20.

Wang Yi, "From Status to Contract?" in Chaohua Wang, *One China, Many Paths*, pp. 189-197.

Li Changping, "The Crisis in the Countryside," in Chaohua Wang, *One China, Many Paths*, pp. 198-218.

Lesson activity: Take-home essay exam

Week 5:

The Politics of Media Reforms

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in *Communication in China: political economy, power, and conflict* / Yuezhi Zhao, pp. 19-136.

Lesson activity: Search for secondary sources on topics

Week 6:

Chinese Media and Transnational Capital
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Chapter 3 in Zhao's book, *Communication in China*, pp. 134-193.

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).

Lesson activity: Search for primary sources on topics

Week 7:

Chinese Media Moguls

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

Lesson activity: research methodology due (including a list of sources)

Week 8

Individual Meetings with the Instructor
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Lesson activity: work on your paper proposal

Week 9

From Propaganda to Soft Power

Xin Xin, *How the Market Is Changing China's News: The Case of Xinhua News Agency*, Lexington, 2012, selections,

Jonathan Hassid, "Controlling the Chinese Media: An Uncertain Business." *Asian Survey*. Vol. 48, No. 3, (May/June, 2008), 414- 30.

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

Optional: Anne-Marie Brady. *China's thought management*, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012.

Week 10

Creation of Culture Industry

Zhang Xiaoming. "From Institution to Industry: Reforms in Cultural Institutions in China." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2006, 9: 297.

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

Midterm Assignment Due: A formal paper proposal due, which addresses what, why, and how and includes an outline

Week 11:

China and Digital Capitalism

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

Martin Hart-Landsberg, "The U.S. Economy and China Capitalism, Class, and Crisis," *Monthly Review*, 2010, Vol. 6, issue 9, pp. 14-18.

Hong, Bar, and An, "Chinese Telecommunications on the Threshold of Convergence: Contexts, Possibilities, and Limitations of Forging a Domestic Demand-Based Growth Model," *Telecommunications Policy*, forthcoming.

Lesson activity: Write a section of literature review and comments on peers' writings

Week 12:

China's Telecommunications Revolution

Eric Harwit, *China's Telecommunications Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2008. Selections

Week 13:

ICT and Labor

Cara Wallis, *Technomobility in China: Young Migrant Women and Mobile Phones*, NYU Press, 2013, selections.

Week 14

Crisis and Restructuring

Yu Hong (2011), "Reading the Twelfth Five-Year Plan: China's Communication-Driven Mode of Economic Restructuring." *International Journal of Communication*.

Week 15

Future research

Student Presentations

Week 16

Final paper is due!