We must forgive our hapless equestrian. China has surprised many people — including its own leaders and people as well as foreign observers — more often than most of them care to remember. Its stunning downfall from the apex of world civilization, where it remained for millennia through the early nineteenth century, to the ignoble condition of the “sick man of Asia” by the late nineteenth century, still baffles. Subsequently, China could not consolidate a capitalist economy or a stable polity at a time when some of its neighbors did so. Instead it produced the most massive socialist revolution and transformation in the third world. It experienced several dramatic shifts in the course of doing so. Departing early from the Soviet model, for years it evinced a driving impulse for “continuing revolution” that put it at the extreme left among state socialist countries. Then in 1978 China switched course, pioneering broad-gauged
structural reform way ahead of other state socialist countries. In 1989 it switched back, moving sternly and decisively against reform precisely at a time when most others were being overcome by popular movements for change. Yet within three years it reversed course again, deepening its commitment to structural economic reform even as it has continued to adjure serious political change. Today China holds out the prospect of a “third way”, a hybrid combining in a new way features of state socialism and capitalism that might now be called “market Leninism”.

Politics 110 provides a comprehensive introduction to China’s revolution and the transmutations of its socialism and capitalism, focusing on these puzzles among others. The course is organized chronologically and then topically. It involves the twin tasks of describing Chinese affairs and, on that basis, analyzing them. The course will familiarize you with what has been happening in China through readings, lectures and film. As we gain a base of knowledge, we will venture to come to terms with it through various kinds of conversations: discussions in and outside of class, and exchanges of our questions, concerns and views in writing on our blog.

Before each class I expect you to complete readings on the subject for the day. I will not always address all the readings in class, as I have plenty of other points to explore with you. That is, we need both the readings and class even just to begin to cover the material. But the readings will give you a head start on, and important background about, what will happen in class, and thus will enable you to get much more out of it. If you have not done the reading before class, you may well feel lost.

Blogging is essential to Politics 110.

§ To encourage reflective reading, help you retain what you have read, and help me calibrate what we do in class, once each week I expect you to write on Blackboard a short response to questions I will have posed in advance about the works we are confronting. You’re also welcome to comment there at any time on what others in the class have written. Start a debate! You may also use the blog to raise questions on which you would like help.

§ I use the blogs to promote your learning, not to evaluate it. I want you to think and write your blogs freely and creatively, and to take risks. Therefore I do not grade them. But because I view them as very important for your learning, I do factor heavily into your final grade simply whether you have done them seriously and regularly. If you do 13 of them (which is an average of one per week), you’ve got an “A” for 40% of the course. (See the page below.)

§ Specifically, those of you with surnames beginning A-M should do so by Monday morning at 9:00 AM, and those with surnames M-Z by 9:00 AM Wednesday. The 9:00 deadline is firm — indeed, I close the blog to new entries at that time (though the blogs remain visible) — for two reasons. First, that’s when I start preparing for class, and they are crucial to my doing so. Moreover, the blogs are a process, not a product; the whole point is to do them week-in, week-out, not at the end of the term in order to meet a requirement.

§ If you must miss or inadvertently have missed your appointed day, as will inevitably happen, just post a reply for another day that week; if you miss a week, just do two the following week. The spirit here is to do them regularly, but we can be flexible in doing so. You may, of course, respond more than once each week if you like; the more often you do, the more you will learn.

§ On each morning or early afternoon before class, prepare by taking a few moments to log in to the blog to read what everyone has written.
§ While I always try my best to be flexible and accommodate students’ needs, I will not allow you to make up missed blogs at the end of the term, for the reason stated in the third point above. So, to reiterate, if you fall a bit behind, just double up in subsequent weeks to catch up.

You will also write two open-book, take-home essays of approximately 1,250 words (≈ 5 pages) each. The schedule can be found in the course outline below. These require a command of the material, but they are oriented mainly toward developing your engagement with and analysis and interpretation of it. To give you an idea of what to expect and to help you orient your reading and thinking, starting on page 8 you will find the essay questions used in the most recent offering of the course. You can expect many of the same issues to be treated this time around, perhaps with some of the same or similar questions. I will be happy to review drafts of your papers before you finalize them. And if you are not happy with the outcome of your first paper, you are welcome to rewrite it any time during the rest of the semester.

I will evaluate your work according to the following weightings:

- Blog comments: 40%
- Papers: 30% each
- Active listening and quality (not quantity) of participation in class: A “fudge factor”

Please take careful note of these proportions. The heavy weighting of the blogs reflects my conviction that the daily process of the course is as important to your learning as the two papers you will write. In the past students who assumed that the papers were their only significant responsibilities for the course have been unpleasantly surprised at the end of the semester. ☹

We will have to depart from our normal schedule several times during the semester. Look for those dates IN BOLDFACE below, and PLEASE PLAN FOR THEM.

You should keep up with the news from China.


§ Official news from China can be found in the *Beijing Review* (a weekly magazine, in Mudd) and *China Daily* ([http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/home/](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/home/)). Even though they are official state publications, they are actually fairly lively, somewhat objective, and often even critical.

§ The Chinese Embassy to the US web site contains official government news releases and other basic information: [http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/](http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/)

Newspapers and cyberspace can provide timely information; but information is not knowledge. For that, we still need, among other things, analyses contained in books. Each year Americans spend five times as much on dog food as on college books. Politics 110 is doing its part to help us get our priorities right. The Bookstore has stocked:

- Marc Blecher, *China Against the Tides: Restructuring Through Revolution, Radicalism and Reform* (third edition [N.b. avoid earlier editions])
- Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson, eds., *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households and Gender in China* (cumbersome e-book also available through OBIS)
- William Hinton, *Fan Shen* (cumbersome e-book also available through OBIS)
- William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*
- Gordon White, *Riding the Tiger: The Politics of Economic Reform in Post-Mao China*
These books are also available on reserve, though in insufficient quantities for you to be able to rely on getting them whenever you need them; i.e., reserve will not substitute for owning your own copies. Articles and book chapters are also available on Blackboard (under “Readings”). All this is indicated in the schedule below.

Please consult our schematic chronology (page 10) and guide to the rudiments of Chinese pronunciation (page 14). The timeline can help bring some order to the complex sequence of events we will be studying. The pronunciation guide will help you discharge your responsibility as students of China to pronounce Chinese words and names properly, or at least better than much of the broadcast news media.

CRUCIAL ADVICE: Social science should be read differently than other kinds of material. DON’T BE A DUMB READER, by which I mean don’t let the author (including me) lead you around by the nose.

§ Don’t start with the first word and continue to the last word. Try to figure out the overall argument before you begin reading, by looking for summaries at the beginning or end of each section or chapter. This isn’t a detective novel, so it’s better to know the conclusion before you set out.

§ Have questions in mind whose answers you are seeking out. The blog questions will help you in this respect by providing them, though you should of course add your own.

§ Don’t get bogged down. Once you know what you’re looking for, it’ll be easier to choose which paragraphs and sections to read carefully and which you can skim. Yes, skim. And if there’s material you can’t apprehend after a serious try, jot down your question to ask in class or on the blog — or send me an e-mail — and then move on.

Schedule of Classes, Topics, Readings and Assignments

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

August 28-30: Imperial China
Marc Blecher, China Against the Tides, Introduction and pages 1-7
William Hinton, Fanshen, chapter 4
Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, pages 162-187 (on Blackboard)
Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, pages 67-80 (on Blackboard)
Screen the first ten minutes of China in Revolution (on Blackboard)

SEPTEMBER 4: NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

September 6: The Republic of China
Blecher, pages 7-9
Moore, pages 187-201, 433-452
Skocpol, pages 147-154, 236-251
Screen the remainder of China in Revolution (on Blackboard)
September 11-13: The Communist-Led Revolution
Blecher, pages 9-32
Mao Zedong, “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership” (on Blackboard)
Moore, pages 201-227
Skocpol, pages 112-117, 252-262

II. THE MAOIST DECADES, 1949-78

September 18-25 The Socialist Transition, 1949-57
A: September 18 and, possibly, first part of September 20: Consolidation and Socialist Beginnings
Blecher, pages 27, 32-34
Vivienne Shue, “Mutual Aid” (on Blackboard)
B: September 20 and, possibly, first part of September 25: Accelerated Socialist Transformation in Urban Areas, 1953-57
Blecher, pages 34-38
Selden, ed., pages 290-314 (on Blackboard)
Stephen Andors, “From Reconstruction to the Great Leap Forward” (on Blackboard)
C: September 25: Accelerated Socialist Transformation in the Rural Areas, 1955-56
Blecher, pages 38-43
Shue, “Collectivization” (on Blackboard)
Selden, ed., pages 350-358, 364-373 (on Blackboard) — and:
D: September 25: Sharpening Political Conflict, 1956-57
Blecher, pages 43-middle of 47
Selden, ed., pages 314-330 (on Blackboard)

September 27: The Great Leap Forward: Radical Communist Experimentation, 1958-61
Blecher, pages middle of 47-50
Hinton, *Shenfan*, chapters 29-34 (*N.B. THIS IS NOT FANSHEN*) (on Blackboard)
Selden, ed., pages 467-482 (on Blackboard)

October 2: Readjustment and Emergent Two-Line Struggle, 1962-65
Blecher, pages 50-54
Jack Gray, “The Two Roads” (on Blackboard; also in Stuart Schram, ed., *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* [on reserve], pages 109-158)
Selden, ed., pages 530-541 (on Blackboard)
FIRST PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

October 4-9: The Cultural Revolution
A: Narrative and Political Sociology
Blecher, 54-62
Marc Blecher and Gordon White, *Micropolitics in Contemporary China*, chapters 2-6 (on Blackboard; chapter I recommended to provide context)
B: Radical Critique of Political Economy and Its Critics
Peer Møller Christensen, “The Shanghai School and Its Rejection” (on Blackboard)
Mark Selden, ed., pages 651-662 (on Blackboard)
October 11: Summary of Maoist Period
Blecher, 143-145

OCTOBER 12, NOON: FIRST PAPER DUE

SPRING BREAK

OCTOBER 23-25: CLASS CANCELED DUE TO MY PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL TO TAIWAN — USE THIS WEEK TO GET AHEAD ON THE READING AND FILM SCREENINGS FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK.

III. STRUCTURAL REFORM, 1978-PRESENT

October 30: Politics, I: Theory and Ideology
Blecher, pages 63-65, 167-169
Gordon White, Riding the Tiger, chapter 5

OCTOBER 30, 4:30 (NOTE THIS SPECIAL MAKEUP TIME): Politics II: The State
Robert Benewick and Stephanie Donald, The State of China Atlas, maps 18-22
Blecher, chapter 4
White, chapter 6
Screen China from the Inside, Part 1 (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN])

November 1 (ANOTHER SPECIAL DOUBLE MAKEUP SESSION FROM 3:00-5:50): Politics
III: The State and Society
A: Overview
Benewick and Donald, map 23
Blecher, pages 109-118, 172-184
White, chapter 7
Ching-kwan Lee, “State and Social Protest” (on Blackboard)
Screen China From the Inside, Part 4 (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN])

C: Urban and Labor Protest
Screen both parts of The Gate of Heavenly Peace (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN]) — N.b. This stunning film is THREE HOURS LONG, and well worth it.
Blecher, pages 76-80 (re-read), 125-127
Tang Tsou, “The Tiananmen Tragedy” (on Blackboard)
Mary Gallagher, “China’s Workers Movement & the End of the Rapid-Growth Era”,
(on Blackboard)

D: Rural Protest
David Zweig, “To the Courts or to the Barricades: Can New Political Institutions Manage Rural Conflict?” (on Blackboard)

November 6-8: Political Economy
A: November 6, first part: Overview
Blecher, pages 131-132
White, chapters 1-2
Barry Naughton, “China’s Economy: Complacency, Crisis & the Challenge of Reform” (on Blackboard)
Benewick and Donald, maps 9-17
B: November 6, second part, and November 8, first part: Rural Political Economy
   The Maoist Model
   Blecher, pages 132-133, 137-138, 140-144
   Structural Reform
   Benewick and Donald, map 12 (again)
   Blecher, pages 147-148, 150-151, 152-153, 161-164
   White, chapter 3
   Screen All Under Heaven (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN])

C: November 8, second part: Urban Political Economy
   The Maoist Model
   Blecher, pages 133-140, 144-145
   Structural Reform
   Benewick and Donald, map 13 (again)
   Blecher, pages 145-147, 148-150, 151-161, 165
   White, chapter 4

November 13-15: Gender and Family
   A: The Maoist Period
   Blecher, pages 119-123
   Entwisle and Henderson, eds., Re-drawing Boundaries, chapters 5-6
   B: Structural Reform
   Benewick and Donald, map 7
   Blecher, pages 123-125
   Entwisle and Henderson, eds., chapters 7-8
   Sara Friedman, “Women, Marriage and the State in Contemporary China” (on Blackboard)
   Screen Small Happiness and China From the Inside (Part 2) (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN]).

November 20
   Benewick and Donald, maps 5-6
   Deborah Davis, “Demographic Challenges for a Rising China” (on Blackboard)

NOVEMBER 22: CLASS CANCELED FOR THANKSGIVING

November 27: The Environment
   Benewick and Donald, maps 33-35
   Elizabeth Economy, “Environmental Governance in China: State Control to Crisis Management” (on Blackboard)
   Screen China From the Inside, Part 3 (on Blackboard [N.B. OFF CAMPUS, USE VPN]).

SECOND PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

November 29 & December 4: The Politics of Music and Art
   Richard Kraus, “The Arts” (on Blackboard)
   Terry Hsieh, Jazz Meets East (on reserve and Blackboard)

December 6: Conclusion: A Chinese “Third Way” Toward the Future?
   Blecher, chapter 9
   White, chapter 8

DECEMBER 16, 11:00 AM: SECOND PAPER DUE
ESSAY QUESTIONS FROM THE MOST RECENT OFFERING OF THE COURSE

First Essay Topics

1. Discuss some significant ways in which legacies from China’s history before 1949 affected the course of its socialist development in the Maoist period. In doing so, you should try to deploy — critically or agreeably — some of the structural concepts and arguments advanced by Moore, Skocpol and me while also combining them with points about “agency” (i.e., political actions chosen by real people (leaders and “masses”) and even “contingency” (accidents). Be sure to be specific not just about the pre-1949 period but also about what in the post-1949 period you are explaining by reference to elements of the past.

2. What does the Chinese case teach us about class structure and class struggle under state socialism?

3. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were both radical efforts to resolve some basic problems of Chinese socialism. Compare them along one or more of the following dimensions: the problems they were attempting to address; the specific policies they involved; the kind of politics they involved, within the state and between the state and society; their successes and failures (in terms of their own avowed goals and/or in terms of other criteria you may wish to bring to bear). Account for the similarities or differences you have discovered.

4. Compare the “open-door rectification” of the land reform period (what Hinton called “the gate”) with the Cultural Revolution. Discuss their respective goals, methods and outcomes. Account for the similarities or differences that you find. (Hint: a good way to do this question is to re-read the relevant portions of Fanshen and Micropolitics in Contemporary China.)

5. How can the marked swings of the 1950s — from the moderate policies of the reconstruction period to the First Five Year Plan to the Great Leap Forward — be explained? Is there any underlying logic at work here? If so, does it reflect political intentions of the leadership or just their efforts to cope?

6. Choose one or more key moments in China from the revolutionary period up to the end of the Maoist period. Assess the relative role of the top leadership, middle- and/or lower level officials, and ordinary Chinese citizens in accounting for what occurred. Be careful not to assume that the people played no significant role because China is not a Western-style democracy. They often constrained the top- and middle-level leadership in various ways, and they always provided the context within which the leadership made its choices. Think hard about all this as you formulate your response.

7. “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.” (Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte). Yet revolutions are precisely about breaking down and transforming preëxisting structures (“circumstances”, in Marx’s terms). As Mao wrote, “The people and the people alone are the motive force in the making of world history.” (“On Coalition Government”) Choose one or more key moments we have studied, and analyze the relationship of structure, agency and contingency in shaping the problem and the outcome.

8. Write out your own question, discuss it with me (a necessary step), and then respond to it in writing.
Second Essay Topics

1. Discuss some significant ways in which particular legacies from China’s history before 1949 and/or the Maoist period affected the structural reforms after 1978. If you wrote on this topic last time, take this opportunity to reevaluate your ideas.

2. “The rural structural reforms were based in significant ways upon the achievements of the socialist transformation of the countryside that preceded them, even as they also undid many of those achievements.” — A. Nonimus

Comment.

3. Choose a major difference between the urban and rural structural reforms that you want to explain, and identify some factors that do the explaining. Possible explananda (differences to explain) and explanans (factors that do the explaining) among which you can choose might be: ownership forms; constituencies (i.e., peasants/workers); incentives; economic coordination (plan/market); distributive effects (equality/inequality); effect on economic performance; pace; the preexisting structures and problems in each sphere; politics (e.g., support and opposition, controversy, the roles of state and society). These are just suggestions; you may well think of others to bring into either side of the analysis.

4. Evaluate and account for China’s population control policy in both the Maoist and structural reform periods, and relate it to wider questions about China’s politics and state. For example, do the various successes and failures reflect some basic features of the state and politics? Does the imperative of population control demand or promote a particular kind of state and politics, or limit the possible forms that the state and politics can or should take?

5. “The spring 1989 popular demonstrations appeared to be about democracy, but at their bottom lay something else.” — Kurt Remarque

Comment, reflecting also on the movement’s social composition.

6. Account for the leadership’s response to the spring 1989 popular demonstrations, both before and after the infamous night of June 4, in light of what you have learned about Chinese history, politics, society, economy and/or culture.

7. The structural reform period is considered by some to be the first time since 1949 in which society began to emerge as a political actor and have some impact upon the state. Others think it was there all along, constraining or even influencing the Maoist state at various moments and in various ways. Still others believe it is not yet a significant factor in Chinese politics. Discuss some aspects of state-society relations in the Maoist and structural reform periods.

8. Compare some of the kinds of political resistance seen in the Maoist period (e.g., the 100 Flowers, the Cultural Revolution) with those we have studied for the structural reform period.

9. Compare two kinds of political resistance under the structural reforms, choosing them by their focal issue (e.g., labor, rural land grabs, abuses of local cadre power, the environment) and relevant constituencies. Account for similarities and/or differences in terms of wider aspects of the structural reforms and of the political system.

10. Compare one or more significant aspects of gender relations in the Maoist and structural reform periods. Be sure to locate the matter within the wider constellations of political and economic forces operating in China. Reflect upon the possible routes to increased gender equality, grounding your prognostications and possible proposals squarely in your understanding of the realities of China today.

11. Has China “gone capitalist” since 1978?

12. Using art as a case, discuss China’s encounters during the Maoist and structural reform periods with its own historical culture and with foreign cultural forms, relating the issue
to relevant aspects of politics, society and/or economy. (It may help to remember that China had a “cultural” revolution. Or the concept of hegemony may prove relevant. These are just suggestions, though; how you shape this question is entirely your call — and, in fact, your job!)

13. “In contrast to Maoist policies, which explicitly focused on the arts, Deng’s economic reforms affected the arts indirectly, yet profoundly.” — Richard Kraus

Discuss, offering your own thoughts.

14. China faces myriad pressing social and economic problems, including a potential population explosion and serious environmental degradation. Account for the differences between the population policy and implementation on the one hand and environmental policy and implementation on the other. What does this comparison tell you about the Chinese state and its much vaunted high capacity?

15. Write your own question, clear it with me (an essential step), and then answer it.

SCHEMATIC CHRONOLOGY OF CHINESE POLITICS

c. 500 B.C.E. Confucius (and other Zhou thinkers, including Daoists & Legalists)
c. 220 B.C.E. First Emperor of Qin unifies China, makes virtual revolution
c. 200 B.C.E. - 200 C.E. Han Dynasty founded (and Buddhism from India)
c. 600 C.E. Turkic ruling houses regenerate the empire in Sui and Tang
c. 750 Mid-Tang revolution (capita taxes to land, migration north to south)
c. 1000-1300 Song (policy-making traditions; culture stronger than army)
1368 Ming expels the Mongols’ harsh and short Yuan Dynasty
1644 Manchus come to power after the Ming falls in a peasant rebellion
1840 Opium War (unequal Treaty of Nanjing in 1842)
1850-64 Taiping Rebellion (Han gentry/proto-warlord armies save the Qing)
1895 Sino-Japanese War ends with China’s loss
1898 Hundred Days of Emperor’s reform ended by Empress Dowager & friends
1905 Confucian exams abolished for posts: Sun Yatsen founds proto-Guomindang
1911 Fall of the empire; Republican Revolution
1915 21 Demands (Japan wants China as protectorate); Yuan Shikai attempts to restore the monarchy and make himself emperor
1919 May 4 Movement protests Versailles gift of Shandong enclaves to Japan
1921 Chinese Communist Party founded (then a minor event, in Shanghai)
1923 First United Front of Guomindang and Communist Party (Sun-Joffe Agreement)
1925 Sun Yatsen dies
1926 Beginning of Northern Expedition of Jiang Kaishe to unify warlords under Guomindang
1927 Jiang attacks Communist Party in “White Terror”, forces it to countryside, begins “Nanjing Decade”
1929-34 Jiangxi Soviet (land reforms); Jiang’s “encirclement campaigns”
1931 Japan seizes Manchuria (N.E. China), later installs Qing emperor there
1934-35 Long March ("go north to resist Japan"), Mao becomes head of Communist Party
1936 Xi'an Incident (anti-Japanese Guomindang generals kidnap Jiang temporarily)
1937 World War II begins: Japan invades N. China Plain & coasts; Guomindang-Communist Party "Second United Front"
1941 Pearl Harbor (U.S. enters war); Guomindang-Communist Party military conflict in Anhui
1945 Japanese surrender; cities given to Jiang's Army: civil war resumes
1948 People's Liberation Army attacks in North and Central China; US aids Jiang
1949 "Liberation": October I founding of People's Republic of China
1950 Korean War (June 25; China enters, October 25); land, labor, & marriage laws
1951 Main land reform; patriotic bourgeois support for CCP in war; truce talks
1952 "Three-anti/five-anti" campaigns to purify & scare bureaucrats and businessmen in cities
1953 Stalin dies; Korea truce
1954 Constitution, centralization; rations; Gao & Rao (regional leaders) purged for being pro-Soviet; lower-stage agricultural coöps
1955 Higher-stage agricultural coöps; First Five Year Plan (1953-57) announced
1956 Hundred Flowers campaign
1957 Anti-rightist Campaign; intellectuals and critics "sent down"
1958 Great Leap Forward (oversized communes, new factory capital, mobilization)
1959 Defense Minister Peng Dehuai purged for criticizing Mao; revolt in Tibet
1960 Famine in post-Leap economic depression; Soviet technicians leave China
1961 Retrenchment to smaller communes, last of "3 bad years"
1962 Border war with India
1963 Socialist Education Campaign: workers & peasants advantaged in jobs, education
1964 Atom bomb successfully tested; army organizes movements for proletarian pride
1965 "On Dismissal of Hai Rui"/"People's War" (pre-Cultural Revolution radical tracts, Yao Wenyuan/Lin Biao)
1966 Cultural Revolution begins with red guards from cadres' families, then among ex-bourgeois & contract labor; Liu Shaoqi purged
1967 Cultural Revolution at height: red guard factional coalitions, civil wars
1968 Clean class ranks: soldier-worker-cadre teams force order; USSR invades Prague
1969 Lin Biao named "Mao's successor"; May 7 cadre schools; Ussuri River fighting between China and USSR
1970 Zhou Enlai-Mao Zedong political coöperation: Mao supports "Gang of 4" too
1971 Lin Biao's fall; Kissinger's secret flight to Peking; China takes UN seat
1972 People's Liberation Army budget cut; official violence ebbs a bit; Shanghai Communiqué between China and US
1973 Commanders shifted among military regions: Deng reappears after being purged in 1966
1974 “Criticize Confucius” (an allegory: radicals criticize Zhou); leaders ill
1975 Deng Xiaoping quasi-premier for Zhou's Four Modernizations (removed, 1/76)
1976 Zhou, Mao die (January & September); Hua Guofeng Premier (February), Party Chair (September); “Gang” jailed (October)
1977 Four Modernizations new line, but under old-style leader Hua; admission exams for colleges
1978 Deng in charge at Third Plenum; “democracy wall”; Carter-Hua Communiqué (US-China relations)
1979 “Rightists” exonerated: rural reforms extend; Vietnam invasion
1980 “Gang of Four” tried: some communes become townships; Zhao Ziyang becomes Premier
1981 Rural incomes up, amid urban shortages: Hu Yaobang replaces Hua as Party Chair
1982 US defense weapons to Taiwan, but US-China agreement on fewer future sales
1983 Spiritual Pollution Campaign stirs doubts in Communist Party about reform, but campaign ends soon
1984 Industrial reforms announced; Hong Kong accord
1985 Old cadres retired at autumn congress; Gorbachev heads USSR
1986 Students protest delay of political reforms, but Communist Party is slow to accommodate them.
1987 Dismissal of Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang; movement against “bourgeois liberalization”
1988 Abortive price reform; inflation; beginning of economic austerity
1989 Broad popular protests followed by repression and martial law; rise of hard-line leadership
1990 Hard-liners in power
1991 Consolidation of post-1989 leadership; economic austerity
1992 Deng's “Southern Tour”: economic austerity ends; debate on appropriate pace of growth
1993 Some releases from prison of 1989 protesters; economic overheating; rural discontent erupts
1994 High inflation; continuing expressions of discontent
1995 Corruption a major issue; death of Chen Yun; economic soft landing; Taiwan Straits heat up
1996 Economy stabilizes; Taiwan Straits conflict heats up; US-China relations difficult
1997 Death of Deng Xiaoping; return of Hong Kong; 15th Party Congress: Jiang Zemin consolidates leadership and state enterprise reform; Jiang visits US
1998 At National People's Congress, Premier Li Peng is the first top Chinese leader in history to vacate his position in accordance with the Constitution; President Clinton visits China; hard-liners rise at end of the year
1999    China tense in face of political demonstrations by workers and Falungong spiritual practitioners; US bombs Chinese embassy in Belgrade, provoking popular patriotic outrage and state-approved popular demonstrations.
2000    Hard-liners remain in control, keeping political atmosphere repressive
2001    Tensions in US-China relations; China joins WTO
2002    16th Party Congress chooses younger, Hu/Wen leadership; China joins WTO
2003    SARS rocks China; Three Gorges Dam begins operation; Chinese in space
2004    Continued economic growth and tight political control
2005    Hu promotes “harmonious society”; serious chemical spill covered up but then revealed
2006-7  Continuing economic growth and political authoritarianism; new labor laws passed
2008    China hosts the Olympics; huge Sichuan earthquake
2009    Broad political stability amid slowed economic growth and key anniversaries; massive ethnic riot in Xinjiang
2010    Resurgent economic growth; strikes win wage increases
2011    Worsening inflation; major rail crash highlights problems of high-speed development
2012    Major political blowout around Bo Xilai and the “Chongqing model” in the run-up to the major, decennial change of the top leadership, in which Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang take charge.
2013    Hard line continues. New leadership tackles corruption. Lurid trial, no longer stage managed, in which Bo Xilai actually defends himself vigorously.
2014    Anti-corruption campaign targets many top élites. Pollution so bad that it's starting to drive foreigners and some Chinese out of the country. Politics 110 strives yet again to understand all this.
2015    Deepened hardline politics, with tough restrictions and crackdowns on NGOs and intellectual work.
2016    Economic growth falls under 7%, which had been the government’s “red line” for preventing social unrest due to unemployment
2017    Politics 110 struggles yet again to understand all this.

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GUIDE TO CHINESE ROMANIZATIONS

As students of Chinese politics, it is both respectful and incumbent on us to try to pronounce Chinese names, places and phrases correctly.

There are three major systems of romanization used in the general literature. The first can be called the “post office system”, though it is totally unsystematic. It is mainly used for place names, examples include Peking, Canton, and Amoy.

The other two are Wade-Giles, which was commonly used through the 1970s, and pinyin, which is the official system of the People’s Republic, and has completely replaced Wade-Giles in current writing. You will have to discern which one your source is using by inspection. (Our readings use pinyin.) The pinyin system is distinguishable by any of the following: x, q, z, zh, r, g, d, b, ong. By contrast, the Wade-Giles system contains apostrophes and hyphens.

The left side of each equation is the romanization, as you might see it on a page; the right is a usual and approximate English equivalent sound.

PINYIN

x = sy  z = dz  zh = j  c = ts  ong = ung  ian = ien  ui = way  z = dz
i is variable: “-ee” after most initials; “-r” after ch,, sh, zh; or a deep “-uh” or no sound after c, r, s, & z.

WADE-GILES

When not followed by apostrophes: k = g p = b t = d ts = dz ch = j. When followed by apostrophes, these all have English sounds.
Also: j = r ih = r ui = way yu = yo yü = yü hs = sy