Tentative Syllabus
IR 280 Politics and Economy of China

Office Hours:
My office is Harkness 109D (Wallis Institute of Political Economy). My office hours are Monday 4:00pm-6:00pm or other time by appointment. I will be delighted to discuss any issues or questions that arise from lectures, precept, or the readings; to discuss potential ideas or challenges that you may have with your written work; or, just to have a conversation about political economy, political science or economics.

If you are unable to see me during my office hours and would like to schedule an appointment, please send me an email (gdongchen@gmail.com) in which you propose three different times that you can meet during the week. I will respond with the preferred time. Please make every effort to attend office hours, and only schedule an appointment, separately, if your timetable will not allow you to attend the Thursday slot.

It is important that you do not wait until the last minute to contact me with urgent questions or problems.

Assessment:
Midterm Exam — 20% of the grade. The midterm is scheduled for Thursday March 5 from 11:05 am to 12:20 pm (in class).
Final Exam/Project — 40% of the grade.
Homework assignments — 30% of the grade. These assignments will be a mix of short (1-2 page) essays and problem sets.
Class participation — 10% of the grade.

Homework assignment and Late Papers Policy
Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned homework which is due on specified dates, unless stated otherwise. Late homework will be subject to an automatic deduction of one half of the grade that would have been awarded had the work been handed in by the deadline. Work submitted more than 24 hours after the deadline will receive no credit.

The nature of the homework assignments will vary; some will require a written response to the week's readings and others will be in the form of problems that you must solve. In all cases, I ask that you present your answers with a care for legibility and clarity.
Course Materials
We will extensively use and read several academic research papers or parts of books. Some items are posted on Blackboard under Course Materials. The Blackboard web site of the course is available only to students registered for the course.

Strategies for Effective Reading
Whenever you read any scholarly work in social science, you should ask the following questions:

(1) What thesis does the author advance?
(2) Does the author provide a clear definition of key terms, and is this definition applied consistently throughout the argument?
(3) What assumptions are required for the author's inference to be successful? Does the author make explicit note of these assumptions and discuss their appropriateness in the given context?
(4) Does the author bring empirical evidence to bear on her argument? Is this evidence appropriate for the given theoretical argument?

When reading more technical material, you do not need to absorb every detail of any game-theoretic or econometric models that you encounter. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend that you do your best to follow the broad argument; I will always be on hand in office hours to fill in the gaps.
Course outline

We do not intend to provide a comprehensive list of all the important academic papers about China's political economy. Instead, the following papers/books are selected for the purpose of facilitating the lectures of the course.

1. Introduction


2. Institutional Foundations : Formal Institutions


3. Regional Competition: the Facts!


Persson, Petra and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "The Limits of Career Concerns in Federalism: Evidence from China." working paper


4. State-owned Enterprises, Macro-economy and Investment


Song, Zheng, Chang-Tai Hsieh, "Grasp the Large, Let Go of the Small: The Transformation of the State Sector in China." working paper

5. The Puzzle of High Saving Rate


6. Housing and Urbanization


7. Income Inequality, Public Opinion and Redistribution


8. Rural Economy and Governance


9. Collective Property Rights


10. Social Mobility and Civil Service Exam System

Jia, Ruixue, and Ying Bai, "Elite Recruitment and Political Stability: The Impact of the Abolition of China's Civil Service Exam System." working paper
Jia, Ruixue, and Xiaohuan Lan, "Capitalism for the Children: Entrepreneurs with Cadre Parents Under Big Government." working paper

11. Business and Politics


12. Media and Information Manipulation


13. Authoritarian Responsiveness


14. Other topics such as investment in Africa, international trade, financial sector reform, shadow banking, etc will also be discussed.