

Georgetown School of Continuing Studies

BALS Program

Debating Human Rights in China: from Tibet to the Internet Fall 2010 Syllabus

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September -December
6:15-8:55 PM

Course description: Americans are well aware of the prominence of human rights issues among the many controversies now raising the tension level in US-China relations. What is less well understood is that the concept of an international human rights regime itself is both controversial and relatively recent, a post-World War II phenomenon that nations often apply variously to fit their various political, economic and social goals. The first part of the course examines this human rights regime and China's place in it as a developing nation with distinctive roots in Chinese/Asian culture and politics. The second part 1) explores tensions over Tibet in the context of the human rights condition of China's ethnic minorities as a whole and 2) looks at the role of the Internet in China as a constantly renegotiated space that the government seeks to both encourage and control. The course has two goals. One is to raise students' China consciousness and general level of China knowledge. The second is to provide students with a wider understanding of China's current position on human rights, a complex balancing act between maintaining stable growth on the one hand and adapting to international norms and standards on the other.

Teaching Method and Requirements: Material will be presented through lectures, DVDs, and guest speakers. Students are expected to attend each and every class and to arrive on time to avoid disrupting the session which will begin promptly at 6:15. If a student must be absent for emergency reasons, he/she is responsible for all make-up work. Should a student miss more than two classes, his/her status in the class will be reviewed with the Associate Dean.

Ninety percent of the course grade will be based on two essays and a take-home final examination, the three assignments weighted equally. The essays should be 5-7 pages long and may be of three types: a) an explorations paper, b) a policy paper, and c) a critical book or film review. Detailed requirements for the papers, including the allowable citation system, will be discussed at the first meeting of the course. Due dates are as follows: first essay due October 20; second essay due November 17, final exam handed out December 8 and due December 15.

Class participation will account for 10% of the final grade. Key factors considered here are evidence of consistent, careful reading of assigned materials and seriousness of purpose in selecting current media reports on China to be shared at each class session. Please note that late papers will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances and that incomplete grades must be requested before the last class (December 8). For an explanation of the official undergraduate grading system, please see the BALS Student Handbook.

Resources and Policies:

Georgetown Honor Code: All students are expected to adhere to the provisions of the honor code absolutely without exception. Please read the honor code material available at www.georgetown.edu/honor, in particular, Honor Council Pamphlet, “What is Plagiarism?” “Sanctioning Guidelines,” and “Expedited Sanctioning Process.” When submitting material in fulfillment of requirements for this course, keep in mind the Georgetown honor pledge as follows:

“In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.”

Any student in violation of the honor code will be subject to academic penalties, including failure of the course which is automatic in the case of plagiarism. Please note that papers in this course may be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Writing assistance: In writing your essays, I would encourage you to take advantage of the free coaching available at the University Writing Center. Both beginning and experienced writers can benefit from suggestions made by perceptive readers. You can find out more about the center and make an appointment at <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>

Disabilities: If you have a disability, contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 for information about accommodations.

Recommended books for purchase at the University Bookstore (also on reserve at Lauinger Library)

Sautman, Barry and June Treufel Dreyer eds, *Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region* (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2006) ISBN 0-7656-1357-3

Yang Guobin, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0-231-14420-9

Topics and Reading Assignments

I. Introduction

Session 1: Review of syllabus and course plan

Session 2: China Briefing: geography, population, economy, political institutions.

PowerPoint presentation

DVD: “China: Food for a Billion Plus”

II. Human Rights as Ideology and Law

Session 3: History of the Human Rights Idea

Louis Henkin, “Human Rights: Ideology and Aspiration, Reality and Prospect,” in Samantha Power and Graham Allison, eds., *Realizing Human Rights: Moving from Inspiration to Impact* (NY: St Martin’s Press, 2000), 3-39

Session 4: Human Rights as Law

John R. Bolton, “Is There Really ‘Law’ in International Affairs?” *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems* 10 (2000), 1-47

Harold Hongju Koh, “Transnational Legal Process After September 11th,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 22 (2003-2004), 337-354 available online

Chen Dingding, “China’s Participation in the International Human Rights Regime: A State Identity Perspective,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2 (3) 399-419 (available through Lauinger, electronic version)

Briefly examine Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/> for an overview of how the UN human rights system works

Session 5: Human Rights and the Asian Values Debate

Ann Kent, “Chinese Values and Human Rights” in *Human Rights in Asia: A Reassessment of the Asian Values Debate* (MacMillan, 2008), 83-97

Theodore deBary, “Asian Values and Confucianism,” *Asian Values and Human Rights* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 1-17

Andrew Nathan, Andrew Scobell, “Human Rights and China’s Soft Power Expansion,” *Human Rights in China (HRIC)* No. 4, 2009 available online, www.hrichina.org

III. Minority Rights in China: Tibetans, Uighurs and Others

Session 6: China’s Ethnic Minorities: Overview

Colin Mackerras, Introduction and “Historical Background, 1949-1989,” 1-37 and “The Realm of the Mind, Religion, and Education,” 113-134, *China’s Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (Routledge, 2003)

Barry Sautman, June Treufel Dreyer, “The Tibet Question in Historical Perspective,” in Sautman/ Dreyer eds, *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region* (New York, M.E.Sharpe, 2006) , 3-25

Session 7: Economic Status of China's Ethnic Minorities

Guest speaker: World Bank China Department

Bjorn Gustafsson, Ding Sai, "Temporary and Persistent Poverty among Ethnic Minorities and the Majority in Rural China," Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Discussion Paper No. 3791, October 2008 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3papers.cfm?abstract_id=1293583

Margaret Maurer-Fazio, James W. Hughes, Dandan Zhang, "A Comparison and Decomposition of Reform-Era Labor Force Participation Rates of China's Ethnic Minorities and Han Majority," IZA Discussion Paper No. 148, April 2009 <http://ftp.iza.org/dp4148.pdf>

Hu Xiaojiang and Miguel A. Salazar, "Market Formation and Transformation," *Contemporary Tibet*, 166-188

Melvyn Goldstein, Ben Jiao et al, "Development and Change in Rural Tibet," in *Contemporary Tibet*, 193-211

Session 8: Human Rights and Politics in Tibet

Robert Barnett in Anne-Marie Blondeau/Katia Buffetrille eds, *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*, (University of California Press, 2008) 81-93

Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer, "The Tibet Question in Contemporary Perspective," in *Contemporary Tibet*, 3-17

Xu Ming Xu and Yuan Feng, "The Tibet Question: A New Cold War," in *Contemporary Tibet*, 305-316

A. Tom Grunfeld, "Tibet and the United States," in *Contemporary Tibet*, 319-342

DVD: "Heart of Tibet"

Session 9: Tibet Protests 2008

Andrew Nathan, Robert Barnett, Robert Thurman, "Tibet's Long Shadow: China's Bitter Relationship with Its Highland Neighbor and the Dalai Lama," *Columbia Magazine*, May 2008 http://www.columbia.edu/cu/alumni/Magazine/Spring_2008/feature2.html

Robert Barnett, "Thunder from Tibet," *New York Review of Books*, May 2008 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/21391>

"Tibet" in Kate Merkel-Hess/Kenneth L. Pomeranz/Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *China in 2008: A Year of Great Significance* (Rowan & Littlefield, 2008), 38-55

IV. The Internet and Human Rights Activism

Session 10: China's Internet Growth and Policies

Nagy Hanna, Christine Zhen-wei Qiang, "Development of China's Rural Information Infrastructure," *Rural Informatization in China* (World Bank, 2009), 3-11

Gudrun Wacker, "The Internet and censorship in China," *China and the Internet: Politics of the digital leap forward* (Routledge, 2007), 58-82

Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, *Who Controls the Internet: Illusions of a Borderless World* (Oxford, 2008), 1-10, 87-104

Guobin Yang, "Online Activism in an Age of Contention," *The Power of the Internet in China*, 25-43

Session 11: Google and China

Clive Thompson, "Google's China Problem (and China's Google Problem)," *New York Times*, April 23, 2006, 1-15

Human Rights in China (HRIC) www.hrichina.org Take a look at recent Google-related articles

Guo Liang, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. See <http://dialogue.media-culture.org.au/node/17?page=0%2C1> (video interview). Download 2007 Internet Media Reports <http://www.wipchna.org/en>

Rebecca Fannin, "Baidu—China's Boldest Internet Start-up," *Silicon Dragon: How China is Winning the Tech Race* (McGraw Hill, 2008) 3-19

Session 12: The Internet and Political Dissent

Yang Guobin, "The Politics of Digital Contention" and "Transnational Activism Online," *The Power of the Internet in China*, 44-63 and 185-208

Edward Wong, "Petition Urges China to Free Dissident," *New York Times*, December 23, 2008. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/24/world/asia/24china.html>

DVD: "China on the Rise: Political Freedom and the Economy"

Session 13: The Internet and Civic Activism

Yang Guobin, "Environmentalism: The Style of the New Citizen Activism" and "Civic Associations Online," *The Power of the Internet in China*, 94-102 and 125-154

Zheng Yongnian, "The Internet as a Tool for Public Expression" and "The Rise and Fall of Internet Mediated Collective Actions," *Technological Empowerment: The Internet, State and Society in China*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2008), 122-134 and 142-165

V. Concluding Thoughts

Session 14: US Perspectives on China's Human Rights

Thomas Lum, Hannah Fischer, "Human Rights in China: Trends and Policy," Congressional Research Service, June 12, 2009, 1-40

<http://italy.usembassy.gov/pdf/other/RL34729.pdf>