This introductory course presents Chinese politics and society through the stories of specific people and places and events, with autobiographical, biographical, and documentary film sources to enliven an investigation of important issues. The main focus is on China today, although we will spend our first two meetings setting the context by investigating the legacy of the past. The first book listed below is a standard textbook; we will read much, but not all, of this book. The other two books we will read in their entirety: the first is an autobiographical account of a Chinese youth in Mao’s Cultural Revolution and after; the second is a Chinese-American’s search for the new urban China through the eyes of young rural migrants to the city. All are available for purchase at the University Bookstore.


**EXPECTATIONS, ASSESSMENT AND DUE DATES**

My expectations are simple: (1) show up in class on time, having completed the readings and ready to engage in discussion, (2) take notes in class and review last week’s notes before class begins, (3) think carefully and consult with me to identify a tractable term paper topic that really interests you—and then work hard to follow through, (4) review your readings and notes to prepare for the final examination. I expect to see all of you, without exception, at the final examination on December 21.

In-class quizzes: I count your five best of six in-class quizzes, 3 points each

Term paper: 10 points for abstract, 5 points for bibliography, 30 points for paper
Abstract and bibliography due November 5, paper due December 10

Final exam: 25 points for pre-assigned essay question, 15 points for in-class short-answers
Final exam essay question assigned in class December 10, due December 21 at 5:05

**SCHEDULE**

**September 10: Introduction**
Discussion: Who Is CHEN Guangcheng and what questions about Chinese politics and U.S.–China relations does his story suggest?

**September 17: Maoist–Era Cultural Revolution**
Reading selection: Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution*. 
Discussion: Is LIANG Heng unusually politically naïve, extraordinarily astute, or a typical youth making the best of his circumstances? Explain your view.

September 24: What Is Communist about China?

October 1: The Other Big Election in Fall 2012
Discussion: Who is XI Jinping and how did he become the most powerful man in China? For biographical material on Chinese leaders, you may wish to begin with http://www.chinavitae.com.

October 8: Information Explosion Behind the "Great Firewall"
Reading selections: (1) Gloria Davies, "Discontent in Digital China," (2) Jeremy Goldkorn, "Behind the Great Firewall," (3) "Voices from the Blogosphere I" and "Voices from the Blogosphere II," all from China Story Yearbook 2012.
Discussion: Reading through selections in the Blogosphere I and II, do you think the Internet is a serious threat to communist rule in China? Why or why not?

October 15: Corruption
Discussion: Is corruption in China a problem that stems from the system itself? If so, what would you prescribe to reduce corruption? If not, why not?

October 22: Population Planning
Discussion: Is Chinese population planning a spectacular success or a terrible failure? Explain your view.

October 29: Migrant Workers and the Chinese Economic Miracle
Discussion: The new generation of Chinese rural-to-urban migrant workers have different aspirations than the first generation. Does fulfilling their dreams require political change?

November 5: Almost a Revolution in 1989?
Media clip: http://www.tsquare.tv/film/gateExcerpts.php#5. This is a clip from a 189-minute documentary film "Gate of Heavenly Peace." If you care to watch more, the film is on reserve for this
class at the College Library.
Discussion: In what sense did the 1989 protest movement pose a serious challenge to the Chinese political system? Was it almost a revolution? A democracy movement?

**November 12: Documentary film: “The Revolutionary”**
This new documentary, which will take up most of our class time, tells the story of Sidney Rittenberg, an American civil rights organizer who went to China in 1944, joined the Chinese Communist Party, and worked for decades in China as a "foreign expert." Rittenberg was deeply involved in Chinese politics and spent years in a Chinese prison. He returned to the United States in 1979.
Discussion: I have invited Chinese and American graduate students to lead discussion of this film.

**November 19: Law, Social Order, and the New Political Dissidence**
Discussion: Protest and petitions have become everyday practices in China. Is this a sign of the regime's fragility or resilience?

**November 26: Tibet**
Discussion: Are prospects for a real Tibetan autonomy diminishing or improving?

**December 3: Grassroots and Local Elections: Farce, Safety Valve, Democracy?**
Discussion: What should we make of grassroots and local elections in China? Are they a farce, safety valve for social pressure, a reflection of democratization, or all of these?

**December 10: The Politics and Economics of U.S.–China Relations**
Media clip: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTSQozWP-7M
Discussion: If you were advising the President of the United States, would the point of departure for your advice focus on the Chinese threat, China's political fragility, or common Sino-U.S. interests? What would be your central message?

**Friday, December 21, 5:05–7:05**
**FINAL EXAM**
Check Learn@UW course website for location.