

INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE POLITICS AND SOCIETY, 3 ECTS

Free online certificate course offered in collaboration with leading European institutions of Chinese studies.

Pilot course period: October 2 – December 17, 2023.

GOALS

This course provides learners with a solid foundational understanding of contemporary Chinese politics and society. By the end of the course, participants will be able to identify China’s key political and administrative institutions, while also gaining a comprehensive grasp of the policy implementation processes within the country. Moreover, learners will explore significant issues prevalent in Chinese society, including migration, inequality, an aging population, digitalization, and the role of civil society.

CONTENTS

This course comprises six thematic modules. It commences with an introductory module designed to impart fundamental knowledge about China's geography and population. The second module delves into China's modern history spanning from the mid-19th century up to the present day. A solid grasp of this historical backdrop is essential for comprehending contemporary developments. These initial modules are succeeded by four subsequent ones that center on politics and society.

The module titled "Political System: The Party-State" elucidates the organization of the Communist Party and the state administration. It further expounds on their interconnections and hierarchical structures, extending to the grassroots level. The subsequent policy-focused module introduces China's mechanism for policy implementation, along with the dynamics of central-local relations. Within this module, policy implementation is dissected through a case study on environmental policy.

The first of the society-oriented modules elucidates China's demographic challenges and the intricate patterns of domestic migration. Additionally, it delves into the disparities in life choices that confront the youth across various societal strata. The final module confronts the pervasive digitization in China's landscape. It scrutinizes the challenges encountered by China's civil society, encapsulating both online and offline forms of protest.

COURSE MODULES

1. Introduction to China
2. Short Overview of Modern History
3. Political System: The Party-State
4. Policy Planning and Implementation
5. Population Issues
6. Digitalization, and Civil Society

MATERIALS

The core materials consist of short (20 min) recorded lectures and slideshows that are prepared by leading European experts on China. In addition, the versatile learning materials include timelines, infographics, podcasts and open access online materials. Learners will also get acquainted with central sources of information about China, including selected Chinese webpages.

The learning experience is enriched by various types of automatically graded assignments. These encompass quizzes, drag-and-drop exercises, and branching scenarios. The latter empowers students to navigate distinct choices within a Chinese context and observe their resultant outcomes. Moreover, each module culminates in a multiple-choice exam, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the knowledge assimilated.

TAKEN AS

Each module consists of learning materials, assignments and an exam. The assignments vary in length and difficulty, and have limitless attempts. The exams consist of six randomly selected multiple-choice questions. There are three attempts for each exam. In order to complete the course and receive a course certificate, students need to pass all assignments and exams within the course period.

The course is graded pass/fail. When students have successfully completed all assignments and exams, you may produce an automatically generated course certificate of completion. The certificate can be digitally verified.

The course will be run during October 2 – December 17, 2023 in the DigiCampus learning platform. Students can sign up on this page <https://digicampus.fi/course/view.php?id=4206> using this course key “ReConnect23”.

EXECUTION OF THE COURSE

The development of the course is funded by the EU-project “ReConnect China” and it’s executed by the Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS) of the University of Turku, Finland. Dr Outi Luova, vice director of CEAS, is in charge of the execution of the course. The planning of the syllabus is overseen by an academic board that consists of Prof. Bart Dessein (Ghent University), Dr Beatrice Gallelli (Ca’Foscari University of Venice, Istituto Affari Internazionali) and Prof. Lauri Paltemaa (University of Turku). The course materials are produced in collaboration with leading European institutions of Chinese studies.

For more information, please contact Dr Outi Luova at outi.luova@utu.fi

More about the ReConnect China project: <https://www.reconnect-china.ugent.be/>.