**Governing Chinese Society: power and resistance**

Course description

China’s political system entails many contradictions: it is a Leninist regime and ruled by the Communist Party yet joins force with state capitalism; it is authoritarian and repressive yet claims itself as a ‘consultative democracy’; it has a concentrated and top-down power structure yet is responsive to local and popular demands; it is understood to be ‘resilient’ yet is constantly tackling multifaceted crises. How can we understand these contradictions based on China’s socialist history and its trajectory of reform? What are the main theories and arguments surrounding these contradictions? What empirical data and research is available to study these issues? In this course, we will study China’s political system by looking at the ideology and practice behind China’s political *power* and the reception of and *resistance* to such power. The course is divided into five parts with a reading week between each part. The course is reading-centered and writing-heavy: for each of the five topics being discussed in class, the students are expected to write a short essay to construct their own understanding and arguments based on their choice of readings.

The five central topics that we will discuss in class:

1. **Socialism, Maoism, Dengism: the shifting sources of legitimacy**
2. **The History of ‘Democracy’ in China: from concepts to institutions**
3. **The Blackbox of Policy-Making: key actors and milestones**
4. **When Do People Rise? Sources and consequences of popular resistance**
5. **The Future of Chinese Politics: resilience, crisis or the middle-ground**