We can forgive Larson's hapless equestrian. China has surprised many people—both its own leaders and people as well as foreign observers, including your humble professor—more often than most of them care to remember, and its recent history poses a profound set of puzzles. The Chinese Communist Party and its government, the People's Republic of China, comprise the largest Communist Party-run surviving state in the world, one of only a handful of any size. It is a rather unlikely survivor. Between 1949 and 1976, it presided over perhaps the most tempestuous of the world's state socialisms. Nowhere—not in Eastern Europe, the USSR, Cuba, Vietnam or North Korea—did anything occur like the Great Leap Forward, when the country tried to jump headlong into communism, or the Cultural Revolution, when some leaders of the socialist state
called on the masses of people to rise up against the socialist state’s own bureaucracy. Indeed, the Cultural Revolution brought China to the brink of civil war. The radical policies of the Maoist period were extremely innovative and iconoclastic, and they accomplished a great deal; but they also severely undermined the foundations of Chinese state socialism. Yet somehow it survived.

Then in 1979 the Chinese state switched course, pioneering broad-gauged structural reform way ahead of any other state socialist country. Economic forms that were quite inconsistent historically and theoretically with rule by a communist party and its government proliferated, taking mixed “market socialist” forms in the 1980s, the social reaction to which almost overcame the socialist state in the famous 1989 protests in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square and across the country. Indeed, the comparison with Russia and Eastern Europe was stunning: in China a huge phalanx of furious citizens engaged in massive demonstrations all over the country lasting almost two months. Nothing like this occurred in Russia and Eastern Europe, where gradual political openings were being contemplated and embarked upon. Yet state socialism there would be brought down amidst popular movements that were minuscule in scope and duration compared with the Chinese. But again the People’s Republic of China managed to survive, this time by moving more sternly, decisively and successfully against popular demands for reform than any other socialist state did at the time.

Starting in the 1990s, China began the transition to full-fledged capitalism — interestingly and paradoxically, without the massive outburst of protest seen in 1989 after a decade of much more tentative change. What can be called market Leninism — China’s combination of repressive politics and free-market economics — has not just lasted a good deal longer than most observers expected, but it seems unexpectedly resilient at least for the foreseeable future. This has defied the confident theories held by western liberals, modernization theorists, and most major western politicians — known as the “Washington Consensus” — that capitalism and markets go hand in hand with democracy (even as the individualism and the rise of a middle class, which are meant to stimulate democracy, have indeed occurred). Moreover, China’s market Leninism has not just survived, but has chalked up significant successes. It has produced repeated spurts of economic growth that have often surprised even its own promoters. Market Leninism has also made China a more influential force on the world stage than ever before in its history. Many scholars, policy makers and politicians are even beginning to speak of a “Beijing Consensus” replacing the “Washington Consensus”.

Yet, today Chinese market Leninism is also shot through with contradictions. The country’s overall quiescence does not necessarily indicate political stability or social peace; on the contrary, protests, strikes, riots and small insurrections have become a daily fact of life. Nor do China’s palpable industriousness and economic dynamism necessarily reflect the happy equilibrium of an upward spiral of development. What powers the Chinese economy today? Will the country consolidate market Leninism or break with it? If it makes a break, will the process be smooth and gradual, or rough and sudden? And what would emerge from such a break? Does China hold out the prospect of a “third way” — a hybrid combining in a new way features of state socialism and capitalism? China is
too complex, its present situation too unprecedented, and social science too indeterminate to permit easy or sure answers. But to make educated guesses, we need to analyze the many contradictory economic, social and political forces at play. Some of them are the subject of Politics 313.

During the first half of the seminar, we will read, contemplate, and discuss some of the best new scholarship on various specialized topics related to Chinese society and politics. In the second half we will work together on research papers on a topic of interest to you, which need not be related to the particular issues we will have studied. In our final weeks, you will present to the seminar early drafts of your research papers, to be circulated in advance. You will also read classmates' drafts and contribute to discussions that will help all of us learn about the subject matter of the various papers, while also providing suggestions to each author about ways to develop the research paper in progress. Finished seminar papers revised on the basis of class discussion and my comments will be submitted at the end of the semester. I will present some of my own work in progress as well.

Effective learning requires a strategy of active study, thinking and interchange. To encourage reflective reading, by 9 AM on Tuesday of each week you will write on our Blackboard blog a brief reflection on the book or draft research paper we will have read; you are also invited to comment there on what others in the class have written there. You may also use the forum to raise questions on which you would like help from me or from fellow students. You should also read the forum on Tuesday before class, to find out what everyone else in the class is thinking. All this preparatory work will help make our discussions more productive. I also expect you to participate regularly in class discussions, which are the lifeblood of a seminar.

I will evaluate your work in Politics 313 according to the following weightings:

- Weekly computer forum comments: 25%
- Quality (not quantity) of participation in class: 25%
- Paper: 50%

**PLEASE TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THESE PROPORTIONS.** They reflect my conviction that the week-to-week process of participating in the course through reading, thinking and contributing to everyone else's learning in discussion is as important to your learning as the paper you will write. In the past students who assumed that the paper was their only responsibility for the course were surprised at the end of the semester. 😎

Please consult the schematic chronology (below) and the guide to the rudiments of Chinese pronunciation (below). The latter will help you to discharge your responsibility as advanced students of China to pronounce Chinese words and names properly.

You should keep up with the news from China. There are several possibilities:

§ The best China journalism in major US papers can be found *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, all available in Mudd or on line. Chingching Ni, a writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, is a veteran of Politics 313, which, I like to think, helps account for her penchant for stories about the human costs of China's very rapid development.
§ Official news from China can be found in the *Beijing Review* (a weekly magazine, in Mudd) and *China Daily*. They are not as boring and slanted as they used to be. The *China Daily* is available online: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/home/

§ Yahoo provides a reasonably comprehensive source of Western wire-service reports at: http://asia.news.yahoo.com/china.html

§ So does the *Financial Times*: feed://www.ft.com/rss/world/asiapacific/china

§ The Chinese Embassy to the US website contains official government news releases and other basic information: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/

Newspapers and cyberspace can provide timely information; but information is not knowledge. For that, we still need analyses contained in books. Each year Americans spend five times as much on dog food as on college books. Politics 313 is doing its part to help us get priorities right. The following books are available for purchase at the Oberlin Bookstore:

Marc Blecher, *China Against the Tides*, third edition
Bruce Dickson, *Wealth Into Power: The Communist Party’s Embrace of China’s Private Sector*
Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics*
Ching-kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt*
William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style* (any edition)
Kellee S. Tsai, *Capitalism Without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China*
Yongnian Zheng, *Globalization and State Transformation in China*

...
March 2: Capitalists and the State
    Bruce Dickson, Wealth Into Power: The Communist Party’s Embrace of China’s Private Sector

March 9: Globalization
    Yongnian Zheng, Globalization and State Transformation in China

March 16: Labor and Labor Protest
    Ching-kwan Lee, Against the Law: Labor Protests in China’s Rustbelt and Sunbelt

March 23: State-Society Relations and Protest
    Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance (2nd edition [Nb. Do not read the first edition.])

April 5: Research proposals due

April 6: Individual meetings to discuss research proposals

April 12: Annotated bibliographies due

April 13: Class meeting to discuss specialized research sources

April 19: Detailed outlines due

April 20: Individual meetings to discuss outlines

April 27, May 4: Class presentations of research paper drafts

May 11: Conclusion
    Marc Blecher, China Against the Tides, chapter 9.

May 18: Papers due. (This deadline is firm, due to strict College rules.)
Schematic Chronology Of Chinese Politics Since 1978

1978  Deng in charge at Third Plenum; “democracy wall”; Carter-Hua Communiqué (US-PRC relations)

1979  “Rightists” exonerated; rural reforms extend; Vietnam invasion

1980  “Gang of Four” tried; some communes become townships; Zhao Ziyang Premier

1981  Rural incomes up, amid urban shortages: Hu Yaobang replaces Hua as Party Chair

1982  US defense weapons to Taiwan, but US-China agreement on fewer future sales

1983  Spiritual Pollution Campaign stirs doubts in Communist Party, but campaign ends soon

1984  Industrial reforms announced; Hong Kong accord

1985  Old cadres retired at autumn congress; Gorbachev heads USSR

1986  Students protest delay of political reforms, but Communist Party is slow to accommodate them.

1987  Dismissal of Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang; movement against bourgeois liberalization

1988  Abortive price reform; inflation; beginning of economic austerity

1989  Broad popular protests followed by repression and martial law; rise of hard-line leadership

1990  Hard-liners in power

1991  Consolidation of post-1989 leadership; economic austerity

1992  Economic austerity ends; debate on appropriate pace of growth

1993  Some releases from prison of 1989 protesters; economic overheating; rural discontent erupts

1994  High inflation; continuing expressions of discontent

1995  Corruption a major issue; death of Chen Yun; economic soft landing; Taiwan Straits heat up

1996  Economy stabilizes; Taiwan Straits hot; US-China relations difficult

1997  Death of Deng Xiaoping; return of Hong Kong; Jiang Zemin consolidates the country’s leadership at the 15th Party Congress, and then visits US

1998  At the National People’s Congress, Premier Li Peng is the first top Chinese leader in history to vacate his position in accordance with the Constitution; President Clinton visits China; hard-liners rise at end of the year

1999  China tense in face of political demonstrations by workers and Falungong spiritual practitioners; US bombs Chinese embassy in Belgrade, provoking popular patriotic outrage and state-approved popular demonstrations; Politics 3/13 tries once again to grasp Chinese politics and political economy

2000  Hard-liners remain in control, keeping political atmosphere repressive
2001 US-China relations tense due to collision or military aircraft; China joins WTO
2002 In smooth transition, Hu Jintao succeeds Jiang Zemin as Party General Secretary; massive labor protest in northeast; China joins WTO
2003 Hu consolidates power, appoints Wen Jiabao as Prime Minister
2004 Jiang Zemin resigns Military Commission chair, marking full transition to new generation of leadership; rapid economic growth continues
2005 Anti-Japanese protests; major chemical spill exposes political and policy weakness; Bush visits; economy continues to grow
2006-7 Continuing economic growth and political authoritarianism; new labor laws passed
2008 China hosts the Olympics
2009 Broad political stability amid slowed economic growth and key anniversaries; massive ethnic riot in Xinjiang

Guide To Chinese Romanization

As a student of Chinese politics, it's your responsibility to try to pronounce Chinese words correctly. There are three major systems of romanization used in the general literature. The first can be called the "post office system", though it is totally unsystematic. It is mainly used for place names, such as Peking, Canton, and Amoy.

The other two are Wade-Giles, which was commonly used through the 1970s, and pinyin, which is the official system of the People's Republic, and has now almost completely replaced Wade-Giles. You will have to discern which one your source is using by inspection. (Our readings use pinyin.) The pinyin system is distinguishable by any of the following: x, q, z, zh, r, g, d, b, ong. By contrast, the Wade-Giles system contains apostrophes and hyphens.

Once you have deduced which system a text uses, you apply a few rules. The main general rule is that practically all words you see, except family names, contain two syllables. Sound them as containing two syllables, even if the letters suggest three or more to you. A few system-specific rules are noted below. The left side of each equation is the romanization, as you might see it on a page; the right side is a usual and approximate English equivalent sound.

**PINYIN**

\[\begin{align*}
x &= sy \\
z &= dz \\
zh &= j \\
c &= ts \\
ong &= ung \\
ian &= len \\
uil &= way
\end{align*}\]

\(i\) is variable: "-ee" after most initials; "-r" after ch, r, sh, zh; or a deep "-uh" or no sound after c, s, & z.

**WADE-GILES**

When not followed by apostrophes: \(k = g\) \(p = b\) \(t = d\) \(ts = dz\) \(ch = j\). When followed by apostrophes, these all have English sounds.

Also: \(j = r\) \(ih = r\) \(ui = way\) \(yu = yo\) \(y\u02b0 = y\) \(hs = sy\)