

TAIWAN'S DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION
Stanford University
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Instructor: Kharis Templeman <i>Email:</i> kharis@stanford.edu <i>Office:</i> C319-J Encina Hall <i>Office Hours:</i> T 2:30-4:30, and by appt. <i>Website:</i> www.kharistempleman.com	EASTASN 143/243 <i>Time:</i> T-Th 10:30-11:50 <i>Classroom:</i> 110-114 (Main Quad) <i>Canvas site:</i> W19-EASTASN-243-01/143-01
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Course Description:

Contemporary Taiwan is one of the leading success stories of the “Third Wave” of democratization. Over the span of about 40 years, Taiwan was gradually transformed from a poor, insecure autocracy ruled under martial law into a prosperous and consolidated liberal democracy. It now features hotly contested elections, a fiercely independent legislature, a diverse and highly critical media, and a vibrant civil society sector. At the same time, it has retained a state capable of effective and responsive governance, from the smooth creation of a widely-admired universal health care system to the construction of world-class mass transit and high speed rail systems.

Yet there are also worrisome challenges facing Taiwan’s democracy today. For the last two decades, bitter partisan fights have hindered government responses to rising inequality, an increasingly unbalanced tax base, an aging population and low birth rates, a worsening cross-Strait security balance, and environmental and energy concerns. The popular legitimacy of government institutions has declined in recent years, contributing to a surge in street protests and culminating most dramatically in a three-week student-led occupation of Taiwan’s legislature in 2014. There is even a dark side to Taiwan’s vaunted press freedom: hypercompetitive media markets have driven a swing toward sensationalist reporting, and professional, accurate, non-partisan journalism has become the exception rather than the norm.

Above all, Taiwan’s politics remains fundamentally divided over its relationship with the autocratic People’s Republic of China (PRC), an economic juggernaut and rising military power that asserts the right to rule over Taiwan. As a consequence, though Taiwan may be one of the most successful cases of democratization in the Third Wave, its long-term security is as imperiled as any democracy in the world today. Yet a social consensus about balancing economic and security interests in the relationship with the PRC remains elusive.

Taiwan is also worth studying because it matters a great deal to today’s world: its global impact far outweighs its geographic size and population. Its economy is among the 20 largest in the world today, and it is a key link in the multinational production chains that criss-cross East Asia and the Pacific. The cross-Strait relationship is also crucial for regional and global security, because it is still the only issue that could plausibly draw the United States and the PRC into an armed conflict. Taiwan is also important as a democratic model: it provides a powerful counterexample to the argument that liberal democracy is inappropriate for Chinese-speaking or “Asian values” societies, including the PRC. And as one of the shining political “successes” of the Third Wave, democratic failure there would be deeply tragic.

This course assumes no previous knowledge of Taiwan, China, or East Asia, but some familiarity with major themes, concepts, and debates in political science is recommended. These include:

- What causes democracy? That is, what leads to authoritarian breakdown, transitions to democracy, and the successful consolidation of democracy?
- What causes development? That is, what leads to economic growth, improvements in living and health standards, and the capacity of the state to deliver public goods and services to its citizens?
- What explains state survival and death, and inter-state war and peace?
- Why nationalism? That is, how are “national” identities formed, and with what consequences for society and politics?
- Who wins elections, and why?
- How can public officials best be held accountable to citizens?
- What is the relationship between democracy and civil society?

Each of these broad questions will motivate our examination of a distinct aspect of contemporary Taiwanese politics, and we will use what we learn about the Taiwan case to critically evaluate the general theories offered by political science and other social science disciplines. Thus, a central goal of the class is to place Taiwan’s contemporary politics in a broader comparative and theoretical perspective, drawing out both the ways in which Taiwan is distinct and the commonalities it shares with other democracies.

Course Materials:

Required Books:

Dafydd Fell, *Government and Politics in Taiwan* 2nd Edition (Routledge, 2018)

Thomas Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (M.E. Sharpe, 1986)

Shawna Yang Ryan, *Green Island: A Novel* (Penguin Random House, 2016)

Other readings will be posted to the Canvas site. Some of the readings are excerpts from books; these are available on reserve at Green Library. Most of the rest are also available online through Stanford University library’s various electronic journal databases (e.g. MUSE, JSTOR).

Newspaper Reading

Because we will refer regularly to current events in this course, you are expected to follow the news in Taiwan on a daily basis. I recommend the *Taipei Times*, Taiwan’s primary English-language daily newspaper, available online at www.taipeitimes.com. In addition to these, I will post a list of other online media resources (both English- and Chinese-language) on the Canvas site.

Additional Readings and Resources

I may occasionally assign other materials, and I will also post additional resources for your research projects on the Canvas site. So, please make sure that you have access to the course Canvas site. I also will make frequent use of the Canvas announcement tool and will keep you up to date of course assignments, activities, and any changes via that system, so double check that you can access your official Stanford email account to ensure you receive these notifications.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation

This course will include a mix of lecture and discussion. In general, I will use Thursday’s class to introduce the topic and motivating questions for that week’s material, and the next Tuesday’s class will be a discussion of the readings. **Assigned readings for each week should be completed before the discussion.**

I expect students to attend every class. Missing any class meeting will have a significant impact on your ability to contribute to the course. More than two unexcused absences (those not due to religious exemptions, major illnesses, or university-approved activities) will lower your final letter grade one interval (e.g. A to A-) per absence. In addition, arriving late to class can be disruptive and is an inconvenience to the rest of us; habitual tardiness will likewise adversely affect your grade.

Discussion

As befits an upper-level seminar, student-driven discussion is a central part of this course. For you and your peers to benefit from this class, your active participation is crucial. You should be talking as much as I am. If you are silent, the rest of us have no way of knowing if you are brilliant or just didn't do the readings for the week: these are observationally equivalent until you open your mouth. If you are anxious about speaking in class, please contact me so that we can work out another way for you to participate.

To this end, you should come to our weekly discussion prepared to talk about **all** of the assigned readings. Note that the reading load is moderate-to-heavy, and that we will only hold discussion once a week; please plan accordingly.

Discussion Questions

Before midnight on the day before our Tuesday meeting (i.e. Monday by 11:59pm), please post a one- or two paragraph question or comment about at least one of the assigned readings to the Canvas discussion page. I will use these to structure our class discussion around what you find odd, perplexing, controversial, or otherwise worth talking about. This question can ask for a clarification—for instance, about evidence or the argument that you do not understand. Or it can be a substantive issue that you think would be helpful to discuss in class—for instance, how does a reading relate to something from the lecture? It can even be a critique—say, “this reading sucks, and I want to talk about why!” **These questions are due before every discussion class** (i.e. once a week). You may miss up to two questions before your discussion grade is adversely affected.

Commentary Paper on a Weekly Topic

One of the most common forms of media content about Taiwan is the “commentary,” such as what you will find in online magazines like [The Diplomat](#), [Foreign Policy](#), [The National Interest](#), and [The Atlantic](#). These typically take one of two forms (and sometimes both): analysis or advocacy. An *analytical commentary* provides a detailed discussion of a contemporary political or social issue, informed by a theoretical framework that is meant to help the reader better understand what is happening and why. An *advocacy commentary* presents a clear opinion, often with a recommended set of principles, policies, or courses of action that the writer seeks to persuade readers should be followed.

To give you practice writing in this genre, you will write an 800-1200 word commentary on one of the first five topics of the course. Your commentary should be on a topic of relevance to contemporary Taiwanese politics and should be clearly related to one of the motivating questions or themes of the course. But you are otherwise free to choose the topic, the analytical framework and the position you wish to advocate for. To help stimulate your thinking, I have included several recent commentaries relevant to each week’s theme in Canvas.

These papers are due no later than the Friday after the discussion section for the theme that you choose. So, for instance, if you choose to write a commentary on the current state of Taiwan’s democracy—the theme of Week 1—you should submit your paper draft by Friday, January 18, by 5pm. Response papers should be submitted by uploading the paper via the Canvas assignment feature. Your paper should be double-spaced and numbered, using 12-point Times New Roman font, with your name, class number,

week and date in the upper left-hand corner. For references, it is now standard in these commentaries simply to include links within the text, [like so](#), rather than footnotes or a bibliography.

Midterm Exam

On February 19, you will be given a take-home midterm exam, covering all of the material from lectures, discussion, and readings up to that point. The midterm will include a set of essay questions from which you may choose several to respond to. **The midterm exam is due on February 26 in class.**

Final Research Paper

Students registered for 5.0 credit hours will need to complete a research paper. (Students registered for 3.0 credit hours are not required to write a research paper, only to give a final presentation.) Your final paper (12-15 pages) will be an original piece of research which tackles one of the “big questions” that motivate the course. This is your chance to explore in much more depth an issue in Taiwanese politics that especially interests you. You should decide on your research topic and cases no later than Friday, February 15th. You will submit a research question and discuss your paper topic with me in office hours the following week of February 18-22.

Final Presentation

In the last week of the course, you will give a 10-12 minute presentation based on your research findings. This is a chance for you to get feedback from your peers and me before the final version of the paper is due on March 21st. I will provide additional guidelines for the research paper and presentation in a hand-out distributed during the first few weeks of class.

Grading:

For students registered for 5.0 credits, your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Attendance, participation, and discussion: 25%
- Commentary: 20%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- Final paper question: 5%
- Final presentation: 10%
- Final research paper: 20%

For students registered for 3.0 credits, your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Attendance, participation, and discussion: 25%
- Commentary: 25%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final research question: 5%
- Final research presentation: 20%

Other Stuff:

Laptops and Mobile Phones in the Classroom

In order to maximize the value of discussion and minimize disruptions to the other students, **during discussion days this will be a laptop-free class**. Please do not use laptops during our discussions: power down and tune in! I also take a dim view of mobile phones in the classroom—when you arrive to class, please turn them off.

Email

Email is the easiest way to reach me—I check frequently, and will do my best to reply promptly. (The one exception is on the weekends, when I do not typically read email: I will respond on Monday.) I will also send important class announcements to your email account via the Canvas announcement function, so please make sure you have a working email account and check it regularly.

Office Hours

Office hours are for your benefit. I urge you to come to my office hours to talk about any questions you may have about the class or to discuss a topic touched upon in class or in the readings. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, I am happy to schedule individual appointments.

Academic Dishonesty

Per the university, academic dishonest includes “all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism.” Simply put, don’t do it. If I suspect that you have plagiarized a paper or cheated on an exam, I will follow university procedures to the letter, up to and including receiving a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Dishonesty has no place in the classroom. If you are not sure what constitutes a violation of this policy, please ask!

Special Accommodations

I am happy to work with students who feel they may require an accommodation for observance of religious holidays, for a disability, or for other kinds of personal issues that may arise over the term. If you anticipate needing a special accommodation, please see me during office hours, preferably early in the term.

COURSE SCHEDULE

0. Introduction: Taiwan and Its Place in the World

Tuesday, January 8. Introductions, Overview of Course, Historical Background

Background Reading

1. Fell, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-10)

1. The Taiwanese Political Miracle: How, and Why?
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Thursday, January 11. Lecture

Background Reading

1. Fell, Ch. 2, 3 (pp. 11-49)

Required Readings for Discussion: Perspectives on Taiwan’s Democratization

1. Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, 1994. “The First Chinese Democracy: Political Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1986-1994,” *Asian Survey* 34(3): 213-230.
2. Bruce Jacobs, 2016. “Taiwan During and After the Democratic Transition (1988-2016),” pp. 51-67 in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Taiwan*.
3. Dan Slater and Joseph Wong, 2013. “The Strength to Concede: Ruling Parties and Democratization in Developmental Asia.” *Perspectives on Politics* 11(3): 717-733.

4. Chia-lung Lin and Bo Tedards, “Lee Teng-hui: Transformational Leadership in Taiwan’s Transition,” in *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era*, pp. 25-62.

Tuesday, January 15. Discussion of readings

2. The Taiwanese Economic Miracle: How, and Why?

January 17 (Th): Lecture

Required Reading

1. Gold, *State and Society in the Economic Miracle*, full book

January 22 (T): Discussion of Gold, *State and Society*

3. Taiwan in the Interstate System: Free China, Renegade Province, or Client State?

January 24 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading

1. Fell, Ch. 9 (pp.171-195)

Required Readings: Perspectives on Taiwan’s Status and Security in the Interstate System

1. Richard C. Bush, 2017. “A One-China Policy Primer.” Brookings Institution working paper.
2. Steven M. Goldstein and Randall Schriver, 2001. “An Uncertain Relationship: The United States, Taiwan, and the Taiwan Relations Act.” *The China Quarterly*, 165: 147-172.
3. Chengxin Pan, 2012. “Normative Convergence and Cross-Strait Divergence: Westphalian Sovereignty as an Ideational Source of the Taiwan Conflict,” in *New Thinking about the Taiwan Issue*, ed. Jean-Marc F. Blanchard and Dennis V. Hickey.
4. Scott Kastner, 2015, “Rethinking the Prospects for Conflict in the Taiwan Strait,” in *Globalization and Security Relations across the Taiwan Strait: In the Shadow of China*, ed. Ming-chin Monique Chu and Scott L. Kastner.

January 29 (T). Discussion

4. Nationalism and National Identity: Is Taiwan Chinese, Taiwanese, or Both?

January 31 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading

1. Fell, Ch. 8 (pp. 150-170)

Required Readings: Perspectives on Taiwan’s Competing National Identity Projects

1. Robert Edmondson, 2002. “The 2-28 Incident and National Identity,” in Stephane Corcuff, ed., *Memories of the Future*.
2. Allen Chun, 1994. “From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31: 49-69.

3. Stefan Fleischauer, 2016. "Taiwan's Independence Movement," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Taiwan*.
4. Winnie King, 2011. "Taiwanese Nationalism and Cross-Strait Marriage: Governing and Incorporating Mainland Spouses," in *Taiwanese Identity in the 21st Century: Domestic, Regional, and Global Perspectives*.

February 5 (T). Discussion

5. Parties and Elections: Is Taiwan's Democracy Precocious or Distorted?

February 7 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading:

1. Fell, Ch. 5-7 (pp. 66-149).

Required Readings*:

1. Cheng-tian Kuo, 2000. "Taiwan's Distorted Democracy in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 35(1): 85-111.
2. Yoonkyung Lee, 2014. "Diverging Patterns of Democratic Representation in Korea and Taiwan." *Asian Survey*
3. TJ Cheng and Yung-ming Hsu, 2015. "Long in the Making: Taiwan's Institutionalized Party System," in Allen Hicken and Erik Kuhonta, eds., *Party System Institutionalization in Asia*.
4. Jens Damm, 2016. "Politics and the Media," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Taiwan*, pp. 184-198.

February 12 (T). Discussion

6. The Taiwanese Civil Society Miracle: How, and Why?

February 14 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading:

1. Fell, Ch. 10 (pp. 196-222).

Required Readings*:

1. Michael Hsiao and Ming-sho Ho, 2010. "Civil Society and Democracy Making in Taiwan: Re-examining the Link." In *East Asia's New Democracies: Deepening, Reversal, Neo-liberal Alternatives*, pp. 43-64.
2. Yoonkyung Lee, 2009. "Divergent Outcomes of Labor Reform Politics in Democratized Korea and Taiwan," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 44: 47-70.
3. Richard Madsen, 2008. "Religious Renaissance and Taiwan's Modern Middle Classes." In *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, pp. 295-322.
4. Chang-ling Huang, 2016. "Civil Society and the Politics of Engagement," in *Taiwan's Democracy Challenged: The Chen Shui-bian Years*.

February 15 (F). Research paper topics due by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas

February 19 (T). Discussion of Civil Society Readings + Review.

Midterm Exam will be distributed at end of class.

February 21 (Th). NO CLASS – WORK ON MIDTERM EXAM

7. Governance and the Rule of Law: How Accountable Is the Taiwanese State?

February 26 (T). Lecture -- Midterm Exams due at beginning of class

Background Reading:

1. Fell, Ch. 4, Ch. 11 (pp. 223-248)

Required Readings*:

1. Joseph Wong, “Deepening Democracy in Taiwan.” *Pacific Affairs* 76(2): 235-256.
2. Christian Goebel, 2016. “Taiwan’s Fight against Corruption.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 124-138.
3. Tay-sheng Wang, 2017. “The Legal Development of Taiwan in the 20th Century: Toward a Liberal and Democratic Country,” in *Public Law in East Asia*, ed. Albert H.Y Chen and Tom Ginsburg.
4. Jeffrey Martin, 2007. “A Reasonable Balance of Law and Sentiment: Social Order in Democratic Taiwan from the Policeman’s Point of View,” *Law and Society Review* 41(3): 665-697.

February 28 (Th). Discussion of governance and rule of law readings

March 5 (T). NO CLASS -- ATTEND TDSP WORKSHOP SESSION

8. Grappling with the Past: Authoritarian Legacies and “Transitional Justice”

March 7 (Th). Lecture + Discussion of *Green Island*

Required Reading:

1. Shawna Yang Ryan, 2016. *Green Island: A Novel*.

9. How Democratic Is Taiwan?

March 12 (T). Lecture

Background Readings:

1. Larry Diamond, 2001. “How Democratic Is Taiwan?”

2. Ian McAllister, 2016. "Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan in Comparative Perspective." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1(1): 44-61.

10. Wrap-up

March 14 (Th). Last Class – Student Research Presentations

March 21 (Th). FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE AT NOON, UPLOADED TO CANVAS

*Readings may be subject to change.

GOOD LUCK ON FINALS AND HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!