

TAIWAN'S DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION

Stanford University
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Version 1.1

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EASTASN 143/243

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Classroom: 240-201 (Main Quad)

Canvas site: W22-EASTASN-243-01/143-01

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 liberal democracy. It now features free, fair, and hotly contested elections, a fiercely independent legislature, a diverse and 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. Taiwan’s public health authorities also responded to the COVID-19 outbreak with admirable speed and efficiency, striking a careful balance between effective public health measures and the protection of civil liberties that contrasts well with the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, 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.

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. A consensus about how to balance economic and security interests in the relationship with the PRC remains elusive. 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.

Taiwan 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, and it is a key link in the multinational production chains that criss-cross East Asia and the Pacific. It is also the home base of one of the world’s most strategically important companies, TSMC, which grew with state backing into the dominant producer of the most advanced semiconductor chips that power everything from smartphones to spy satellites. The cross-Strait relationship is crucial for regional and global security, too, and it remains the only issue that could plausibly draw the United States and the PRC into an armed conflict against one another. Finally, Taiwan is 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 it is one of the shining political “successes” of the Third Wave. Democratic failure there, whether through internal unrest or external invasion, 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?
- When do social movements arise, and how and when do they succeed?
- Where does state capacity come from?
- How can public officials best be held accountable to citizens?

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 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.

Zoom and Other Challenges of an Online Teaching Environment

Per university policy, for the first two weeks of the quarter (fingers crossed it is not longer!) we will run this class through the assigned Zoom classroom space linked on the course Canvas page. Since we are all participating remotely—AGAIN—this format poses some obvious challenges, different time zones and spotty internet access being the most obvious. In addition, as we have all learned over the last two years, Zoom fatigue is a real thing! It is hard to pay attention to anything online for an hour straight; if you have several classes in the same day you may well be braindead by the time you get to this one.

So, I am going to record class lectures, and I will make slides and the recording available for asynchronous viewing to anyone registered for the course. You are encouraged to attend the lectures and show your (virtual) face in Zoom in real time, and to ask questions there. But I recognize this may not be feasible for everyone for all kinds of legitimate reasons, and you will not be penalized if you are unable to attend lectures live. My plan is to continue this practice even when we are back in person starting in week three, since it is quite possible some of us may have to isolate and avoid contact at some point during the quarter.

However, roughly half our class meetings will be discussions, rather than lecture. These *are* important to attend live: they are your chance to interact directly with me and your peers in a less-structured environment. So if you have to triage and decide which sessions to attend live and which to watch later, please prioritize the discussion days. If you think you might struggle regularly to attend the discussion sections, please contact me directly to work out an accommodation.

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 a 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, COVID-19-related or other 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.

That said, I acknowledge that we are all still dealing with the effects of the pandemic this quarter, which makes participation, especially remote participation, harder—family members need something pronto, your dog starts barking and won't shut up, construction workers have picked today to jackhammer right outside your window and you need to relocate to someplace quieter—and I will be as lenient as I can be on this requirement. The simple rule of thumb here: if something outside your control comes up and prevents you from participating in class one day, let me know as early as you can, and we will work out a way to get you caught up.

Discussion

As befits an upper-level seminar, student-driven discussion is a central part of this course. 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 Comments

Before 8am on the day of our discussion session, please post a one- or-two paragraph question or comment about at least one of the assigned readings or recent news items 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 or recent development in Taiwan relate to something from the lecture? It can even be a critique—say, “this reading sucks, and I want to talk about why!”—or a response to something one of your peers has written. These comments are due before every discussion class (i.e. once a week). You may miss up to two comments before your discussion grade is adversely affected.

Also, since for at least the first two weeks we will be in an all-online format and it is hard to engage in free-wheeling conversation over Zoom, I encourage you to use these discussion prompts to engage with each other as well. If one of your classmates posts a discussion question, you can also make your contribution for the week by responding to that question in the forum. This prompt is a chance for you to speak directly with (and argue with—respectfully, of course!) your peers.

A final note here: **if you are responsible for a recap (see next item), you are not required to post a discussion question** for that week—just concentrate on preparing a good recap!

Lecture and Panel Recaps

At the beginning of each discussion section, we will have one student give a 5-8 minute summary of the previous lecture and/or panel presentation. This presentation should be verbal (so no power points or handouts!)—think of it as a “cliff notes” briefing of the topics discussed in the previous session. This assignment has a couple objectives: to remind everyone what we previously covered, and to set the stage for that day’s discussion. You will each be responsible for giving one summary presentation to the class. I will pass around a sign-up sheet for recaps on Thursday, January 6.

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 a ~1000 word commentary on one of the 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 our motivating questions or themes. 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.

The first draft of your commentary will be due on **Friday, January 28, by 5pm**. I will review these and provide feedback on your drafts, and you are encouraged to revise them. Final drafts are due on **Friday, February 11, by 5pm**. Submit your commentary by uploading the paper via the Canvas assignment feature. Your draft 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 17, 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 22 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 (8-12 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 11. You will submit a research question and discuss your paper topic with me in office hours the following week of February 14-18.

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:*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.

I also repost this notice from the Office of Accessible Education (OAE):

“Stanford is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students. Disabled students are a valued and essential part of the Stanford community. We welcome you to our class.

If you experience disability, please register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate your needs, support appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Academic Accommodation Letter for faculty. To get started, or to re-initiate services, please visit oae.stanford.edu.

If you already have an Academic Accommodation Letter, we invite you to share your letter with us. Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared at the earliest possible opportunity so we may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course.”

COURSE SCHEDULE

0. Introduction: Taiwan and Its Place in the World

Tuesday, January 4. Introductions, Overview of Course, Historical Background

Background Reading

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

1. The Taiwanese Political Miracle: How, and Why?

Thursday, January 6. 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 11. Discussion of readings

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

January 13 (Th): Lecture

Required Reading

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

January 18 (Tu): Discussion of Gold, *State and Society*

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

January 20 (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. Scott Kastner, 2018. "International Relations Theory and the Relationship across the Taiwan Strait." *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 1(1): 161-183.
2. 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.
3. Richard C. Bush, 2017. "A One-China Policy Primer." Brookings Institution working paper.
4. Shelley Rigger, 2018. "Has China's Taiwan Policy Failed? And If So, What Next?" in Jonathan Sullivan and Chun-Yi Lee, eds., *A New Era in Democratic Taiwan: Trajectories and Turning Points in Politics and Cross-Strait Relations*, pp. 142-155.

January 25 (Tu). Discussion of national security readings

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

January 27 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading

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

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

1. Rwei-ren Wu, 2020. "Nation-State Formation at the Interface: The Case of Taiwan," in Ryan Dunch and Ashley Esarey, eds., *Taiwan in Dynamic Transition*, pp. 47-79.
2. Robert Edmondson, 2002. "The 2-28 Incident and National Identity," in Stephane Corcuff, ed., *Memories of the Future*.
3. Allen Chun, 1994. "From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31: 49-69.
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*.

*****January 28 (F). Commentary drafts due by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas*****

February 1 (Tu). Discussion of national identity readings

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

February 3 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading

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

Required Readings*:

1. 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*.

2. Yoonkyung Lee, 2014. "Diverging Patterns of Democratic Representation in Korea and Taiwan: Political Parties and Social Movements," *Asian Survey* 54(3): 419-44.
3. Kharis Templeman, 2020. "How Taiwan Stands Up to China," *Journal of Democracy* 31(3): 85-99.
4. Jonathan Sullivan, Ming-Yeh T. Rawnsley, Chien-san Feng, and James Smyth, 2018. "The Media in Democratic Taiwan," in *A New Era in Democratic Taiwan*, pp. 104-122.

February 8 (Tu). Discussion of parties and elections readings

6. Civil Society and Social Movements

February 10 (Th). Lecture

Background Reading:

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

Required Readings*:

1. Chang-ling Huang, 2016. "Civil Society and the Politics of Engagement," in *Taiwan's Democracy Challenged: The Chen Shui-bian Years*.
2. Szu-chien Hsu, 2017. "The China Factor and Taiwan's Civil Society Organizations in the Sunflower Movement," in Dafydd Fell, ed., *Taiwan's Social Movements under Ma Ying-jeou*, pp. 134-53.
3. Chin-en Wu and Yun-han Chu, 2020. "Populism in Taiwan: A Bottom-up Model," in *Populism in Asian Democracies*, pp. 38-58.
4. Richard Madsen, 2008. "Religious Renaissance and Taiwan's Modern Middle Classes." In *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, pp. 295-322.

*****Research paper topics due by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas*****

*****February 11 (F). Revised commentaries due by 5pm, uploaded to Canvas*****

February 15 (Tu). Discussion of civil society and social movements readings

February 17 (Th). Class review for midterm exam.

*****Take-home midterm exam distributed at the end of class*****

7. Pandemic Politics: Taiwan's Response to COVID-19

February 22 (Tu). Lecture -- **Midterm Exams due at beginning of class**

Background Reading*:

1. TBA

*No Required Readings***8. Grappling with the Past: Authoritarian Legacies and “Transitional Justice”****February 24 (Th).** Lecture***Background Reading:***

1. Vladimir Stolojan, 2016, “Transitional Justice and Collective Memory in Taiwan: How Taiwanese Society is Coming to Terms with Its Authoritarian Past.” *China Perspectives* 17(2): 27-35.

Required Readings:

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

March 1 (Tu). Discussion of *Green Island***9. How Democratic Is Taiwan?****March 3 (Th).** Lecture***Background Readings*:***

1. Larry Diamond, 2001. “How Democratic Is Taiwan?”
2. Bruce Dickson, 2019. “The Quality of Democracy in Taiwan,” in *Taiwan’s Political Realignment and Diplomatic Challenges*, ed. Wei-chin Lee, pp. 33-47.

10. Wrap-up**March 8 (Tu).** Student Presentations**March 10 (Th).** Last Class – Student Presentations**March 15 (Tu).** FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE AT NOON, UPLOADED TO CANVAS

*Readings may be subject to change.

GOOD LUCK ON FINALS AND HAVE A GREAT SPRING BREAK!