A Dragon Threading the Eye of a Needle: major issues in China Today

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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
California State University, Sonoma
Rohnert Park, California
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Flag of the Peoples Republic of China, 1949-present
6 week Lecture Schedule

Lecture 1: Contemporary China: Some Reflections on an Enigma
Lecture 2: Xi Jinping: China’s “New CEO?” “New Emperor?” or both?
   and China’s Third Revolution: Changing, not changing, yet changing?
Lecture 4: Hong Kong 1997-2020: The promise and Dilemma of “1 China and 2 Systems”
Lecture 5: The Uyghurs: Terrorists or Oppressed Ethnic-Religious Minority?
Lecture 6: Some Perspectives about the Future of China:
   Global Strategic Engagement, Chinese style: Is China a Reliable Global Team Player? or A Rogue Nation Seeking to “Make China Great Again?”
8 week Lecture Schedule

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Lecture 7: Remaking the Chinese Landscape: China’s Urban-Regional Planning, A new template for Global Urban-Regional Development?
Lecture 8: Some Perspectives about the Future of China
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Lecture 1:
China, Some Reflections on an Enigma

1. East and West: A Gordian Knot of Faulty Misperceptions and False Expectations
2. How to properly synchronize Tradition with Modernity?
3. China: The Dilemma of having to Re-Invent oneself so many times
4. Domestic Chaos (1951-1978): What happened While We Slept?
5. The World Beyond China, So Everyone else was awake?
6. So Napoleon was right? China is Awakened and is on the move
7. Moving Beyond the Gordian Knot, Why China Really Matters today
8. Contemporary Issues in China that impact the world
1. East and West: Historically, A Gordian Knot of Faulty Misperceptions and False Expectations

1) Geographically, historically, and culturally distant since remote antiquity.

2) Opportunity to view and ability to understand each other has been an extremely problematic and perplexing task.

3) *Gordian Knot* of Faulty Misperceptions and Unrealistic Expectations.
The perception of China as different, often a mixture of positively ascribed qualities and loathsome attributes, yet always seemingly enigmatic and unpredictable.

Voltaire (1694-1778) French Philosophe    Napoleon (1769-1821) French Emperor

In his work, *Essay on Morals*, talked about China. He observed that China did not have God and it had gotten along quite well without him.

Napoleon warned that China was a sleeping giant. Let it sleep, for when she wakes, she will move the world.
China as Splendid and Special
Aerial view of the Forbidden City, the main entrance is from the south end, at right side of photo
Close-up view of the Hall of Supreme Harmony
The Imperial dais and Throne inside the Hall of Supreme Harmony
Close-up view of the throne in the Hall of Supreme Harmony
Nineteenth-Century Negative stereotyped views of the Chinese People
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Nineteenth-Century Negative stereotyped views of the Chinese People
The awesome power of the state and unavoidable Social Change
China as a Reliable Partner or Arch-Rival/Enemy?
2. How to Properly Synchronize Tradition and Modernity?
In 1900, Chinese Tradition and Modernity in an uneasy equilibrium

A moribund, anachronism, in an advanced state of decay.... with latent seeds of modernity and growth
3. How to properly synchronize Tradition with Modernity Then 1872-1915?

Following negotiations by mission graduate Liang Dunyan, a new group of students were sent to American universities in 1911, their
How to properly synchronize Tradition with Modernity Now in the 21st Century?
3. China: The Dilemma of having Re-Inventing oneself so many times!

Sun Yat-sen assumed office as provisional president of the Chinese republic on January 1, 1912.
4. Domestic Chaos 1951-1978: What happened while we slept?
5. The World Beyond China, So Everyone Else was Awake?
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The World Beyond China, So Everyone Else was Awake?
Photos of Nixon Visit to China February 1972

Soldiers from the People's Liberation Army forming a well-disciplined crowd at a sports and gymnastics exhibition staged for the Americans on February 23.

The crucial first handshake between Nixon and Chou.
Photos of Nixon Visit to China February 1972

Another handshake between Nixon and Mao, for the cameras. Both the Americans and the Chinese were anxious to overcome the memory of the infamous snub when John Foster Dulles refused to shake Chou En-lai’s hand in Geneva in 1954.

with pictures of Mao, the wall of the Forbidden City, and Tiananmen Square of Beijing.
Photos of Nixon Visit to China February 1972
6. So Napoleon was Right? China Awakened and on the move!

China under Deng Xiaoping 1978-1997

A very fortunate situation where the last man standing happened to be a 74 year old man of extraordinary ability, determination, and vision, who managed to live, work, and lead China for nearly 20 years.

His Four Modernizations and Five Warnings Agenda sets an irreversible course for China’s 21st Century
7. Moving Beyond the Gordian Knot, Why China Really Matters Today?

**China as a series of superlatives**

1. One of world’s oldest continuing civilizations
2. World’s biggest country with 1.4 billion people
3. World’s 3rd largest country by area, Russia #1, Canada #2 US #4
4. China now 2nd largest economy in the world, likely to replace US as the largest economy in 2024

**China’s strategic role in Today’s world**

1. Major Regional Power, dominates East Asia, & by extension all of Asia
2. Dominant Global Economic power and rising global military power
3. Preferred role as a team player in foreign relations, anti-hegemonism, 5 principles of peaceful co-existence, skilled in leveraging consensus
4. Engaged in unrivaled world wide pursuit of material wealth and economic advantage

China can not and must not be ignored!
Six Contemporary Issues in China that Impact the World

Lecture 2: Xi Jinping: China’s “New CEO?” “New Emperor?” or both?
and China’s Third Revolution: Changing, not changing, yet changing?

Lecture 3: China and the Covid-19 (Wuhan) Pandemic 2019-2020,
Public health, Public security, and Public Relations

Lecture 4: Hong Kong 1997-2020: The promise and Dilemma of “1 China and 2 Systems”

Lecture 5: The Uyghurs: Terrorists or Oppressed Ethnic-Religious Minority?

Lecture 6: Some Perspectives about the Future of China
Global Strategic Engagement, Chinese style: Is China a Reliable Global Team Player? or A Rogue Nation Seeking to “Make China Great Again?”
Seven Contemporary Issues in China that Impact the World

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