

## POL 4 Option E: Mongolia and China

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### Paper Description

The first half of the Paper Option is organized around the messy, contested, and contingent historical trajectories in the first half of the twentieth century that led from **empire** to the **nation-states** that we now know as **China** and **Mongolia**, and eventually to **modernist socialist states** with ambitions to overhaul their societies. The second half of the Paper Option examines the historical trajectories taken, and transformations underwent, by both countries over the last two decades of the twentieth century in response to political protest, social upheaval, and economic pressure. Mongolia embarked on a path of **democratization**, whereas China remained a **Leninist one-party state**. Their divergent political trajectories were accompanied by starkly dissimilar political economic transitions to, and roles within, **global capitalism**. By focusing on these two epochal moments at the beginning and end of the twentieth-century, this Paper Option covers key concepts of comparative political studies, including **nationalism**, **state formation**, and **political regime type**.

On the surface, China and Mongolia are not easily comparable. China has the world's second largest population (1.412 billion people), and Mongolia is the world's most sparsely populated country with 3.343 million people who live on a landmass that is six times larger than the United Kingdom. China's GDP is the second largest in the world, whereas Mongolia's economy is dependent on the extraction and export of mineral resources to China. For these reasons, and to

eschew the perils of **methodological nationalism**, rather than compare each country side-by-side, we will take a historical approach.

The first lecture is an account of how the nation-state of Mongolia was carved out from the disintegration of the Qing Empire, and managed to maintain independent status in relation to the geopolitical aspirations of its neighbours: Republic of China (and its successor, the People's Republic of China) and Tsarist Russia (followed by the Soviet Union). This is not only a story of the Mongolian nation, but also of China's tumultuous histories, contested borders, and forms of political order.

In the second lecture, we will study the contested status of the symbol of Chinggis Khan (colloquially known in English as Genghis Khan) from the perspectives of Soviet internationalism, Japanese imperialism, Mongolian nationalism, pan-Mongolian nationalism, Chinese imperialism, and Maoism. The multiple representations of Chinggis Khan—whether they celebrated or vilified him—offer insight into how political orders find **legitimation** in **history**. Despite being in the past, history is never stable or settled.

The third lecture is devoted to the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) of China. It examines the IMAR's complicated history of quasi-independence, alliance, fealty, incorporation, autonomy, conspiracy, mass murder, and model minority status. Starting from the separation of 'Inner' and 'Outer' Mongolia during the Qing Dynasty to ethnic Mongolians' role in the founding of the People's Republic and their persecution during the Cultural Revolution, the lecture concludes with a reflection on what recent policies in the IMAR suggest about the direction and identity of the nation-state under Xi Jinping.

The second half of the Paper Option focuses on events in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and how they have shaped the present. The fourth lecture addresses the precipitous years of 1989 in China and 1990 in Mongolia. In China, authorities brutally suppressed the students and workers who camped out in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to call for political change. In Mongolia, the ruling party eventually conceded to the demands of protestors who occupied the main square in front of the government palace in Ulaanbaatar (it is important to note that in both cases, protests, including hunger strikes, also happened throughout the country). This lecture examines the political logic of **protest**, **repression**, and **democratisation**.

The fifth lecture traces China and Mongolia's different economic trajectories in the aftermath of political upheaval, revolution, and reform. Although both countries transformed their political economies to integrate with global capitalism, they did so following different processes, and ended up in vastly different positions. China has risen to the status of a global power; by contrast, Mongolia survives at the periphery in a chronic state of sovereign debt. While these outcomes might not seem surprising in retrospect, there is nothing inevitable about them.

For the last lecture, we turn to contemporary Sino-Mongolian relations. We will examine not only the **geopolitics** and **diplomatic relations** between both countries, but will address also how each country appears in the mirror of the other.

## Further Details

For students who are interested, this option serves as an introduction into the themes that will be developed more comprehensively in the third-year paper *POL 16: Politics of Global China*. This Paper Option provides a complementary introduction to that paper next year.

Note: since this is an entirely new Paper Option for Pol 4, previous years' exam questions are not available.

You will have two supervisions for this module. Supervisions will be scheduled early in Michaelmas Term.

In preparing your supervision essays, you are expected to draw on the core readings. You are also encouraged to engage with examples from the supplementary readings to gain a more focused and guided understanding of the central themes and issues.

## Lecture Topics, Supervision Questions, and Readings

Lecture 1: *Out of the Ruins of the Qing Empire*

Lecture 2: *The Ghost of Chinggis Khan and National Imaginaries*

Lecture 3: *The Myth of China's Quiescent Autonomous Region: Inner Mongolia*

Supervision question for Lectures 1, 2, & 3:

What can the struggles over the significance of *Chinggis Khan* tell us about the nation-building projects of China and Mongolia at different junctures of history?

**Core Reading:**

Xiaoyuan Liu, *Reigns of Liberation: An Entangled History of Mongolian Independence, Chinese Territoriality,*

*and Great Power Hegemony, 1911-1950*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press (2006):

Introduction,

Chapters 1 and 2; xvii-xxvii; 3-77.

Sergey Radchenko, "Choilbasan's Great Mongolia Dream," *Inner Asia* Vol 11, No 2 (2009): 231-258.

Uradyn E. Bulag, "Hunting Chinggis Khan's Skull and Soul," in *Collaborative Nationalism: The*

*Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier*, Rowman & Littlefield (2010): 31-64.

Orhon Myadar, "The rebirth of Chinggis Khaan: state appropriation of Chinggis Khaan in post-socialist Mongolia," *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 45, Issue 5 (2017): 840-855.

David Sneath, "Political Mobilization and the Construction of Collective Identity in Mongolia," in *Mongolia Remade: Post-socialist National Culture, Political Economy, and Cosmopolitics*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018: 103-124.

### Further Reading:

#### *For reference:*

Christopher Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongolian Empire*, Facts on File, Inc. (2004)

#### *Nations and Nationalism*

Franck Billé, *Sinophobia: Anxiety, Violence, and the Making of Mongolian Identity*, University of Hawai'i Press (2015).

Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene. "The Mongolian Nationality Lexicon: From the Chinggisid Lineage to Mongolian Nationality (From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century)." *Inner Asia* 8 (2006): 51-98.

J. Boldbaatar, "The Eight-Hundredth Anniversary of Chinggis Khan: The Revival and Suppression of Mongolian National Consciousness," in *Mongolia in the twentieth century: landlocked cosmopolitanism*, eds. Stephen Kotkin and Bruce Elleman, M.E. Sharpe, 1999: 1019-1026.

Christopher Kaplonski, "The Case of the Disappearing Chinggis Khaan: Dismembering the

Remembering,” *Ab Imperio* (2005): 147-173.

Tatiana Linkhoeva, “Samurai and Mongols: How a Medieval Samurai Became Chinggis Khan,”

*Journal of World History*, Volume 34, Number 3 (2023):399-432.

Lars Højer, “Patriots, Pensioners and Ordinary Mongolians: Deregulation and Conspiracy in

Mongolia,” *Ethnos* 85:4 (2020): 749-770.

### *Inner Mongolia*

David Sneath, *Changing Inner Mongolia: Pastoral Mongolian Society and the Chinese State*,

Oxford

University Press (2002).

Uradyn E. Bulag, *The Mongols at China’s Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity*,

Rowman and

Littelfield (2002): 1-28.

Patricia M. Thornton, “Cultural Revolution,” in *Afterlives of Chinese Communism: Political*

*Concepts*

*from Mao to Xi*, edited by Christian Sorace, Ivan Franceschini, Nicholas Loubere,

Verso/ANU Press (2019): 55-62. (For Background)

Wu Di, “The Aftermath of the Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia,” in *Historical Injustice and*

*Democratic Transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe: Ghosts at the table of democracy*, edited

by Kenneth Christie and Robert Cribb, RoutledgeCurzon (2002): 24-37.

Paul Hyer and William Heaton, “The Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia,” *The China*

*Quarterly* No. 36 (1968): 114-128.

Kerry Brown, “The Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia 1967-1969: The Purge of the ‘Heirs

of Genghis Khan,” *Asian Affairs* 38:2 (2007): 173-187.

William R. Jankowiak, “The Last Hurrah? Political Protest in Inner Mongolia,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 19/20 (1988).

Enze Han, “The dog that hasn’t barked: assimilation and resistance in Inner Mongolia, China.” *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol. 12, No. 1(2011) 55-75.

Nimrod Baranovitch, “The 2011 Protests in Inner Mongolia: An Ethno-environmental Perspective,” *The China Quarterly* (2016): 214-233.

Uradyn E. Bulag, “Dying for the Mother Tongue: Why have people in Inner Mongolia recently taken their lives?” *Index on Censorship*, Volume 49, Issue 4 (2020): 49-51.

Thomas White, “Pastoralism and the State in China’s Inner Mongolia,” *Current History* (2021): 227-232.

Christopher Atwood, “Bilingual Education in Inner Mongolia: An explainer,” *Made in China Journal*, August 30, 2020: <https://madeinchinajournal.com/2020/08/30/bilingual-education-in-inner-mongolia-an-explainer/>

**Lecture 4: *Political Turmoil and Transition***

**Lecture 5: *Post-Socialist Economic Trajectories***

**Lecture 6: *Sino-Mongolian Relations***

**Supervision question for Lectures 4, 5, & 6:**

How did the *political responses* to protests in 1989 and 1990 shape the different *economic trajectories* of both China and Mongolia?

**Core Reading:**



Dingxin Zhao, "A Brief History of the 1989 Movement" in *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society*

*Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*. University of Chicago Press, 2001: 145-208.

Wang Hui, "The Year 1989 and the Historical Roots of Neoliberalism in China," *positions* Volume 12, No. 1 (2004): 7-70.

Morris Rossabi, "Mongolia: A Peaceful Transition" in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists*, University of California Press, 2005: 1-29.

Rebecca Empson, "Democracy and its discontent" in *Subjective Lives and Economic Transformations in Mongolia: Life in the Gap*, UCL Press (2020): 57-78.

Dulam Bum-Ochir, *The State, Popular Mobilization, and Gold-Mining in Mongolia*, preface, introduction, chapter 3.

### **Further Reading:**

#### *Tiananmen Square*

Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 49/4 (1990): 835-865.

Zhang Yueran, "1989: Workers at Tiananmen" in *Proletarian China: A Century of Chinese Labour*, eds. Ivan Franceschini and Christian Sorace. Verso Books, 2022.

Deng Xiaoping, "June 9 Speech to Martial Law Units"

<http://www.tsquare.tv/chronology/Deng.html>

***Suggested Film:***

The Gate of Heavenly Peace Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Gtt2JxmQtg&t=6005s>

The Gate of Heavenly Peace Part 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0lgc4fWkWI&t=37s>

*China's Economy Post-1989*

Marc Blecher, *China Against the Tides: Restructuring through Revolution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Routledge (2010):

Chapters 3 and 6; 63-91; 131-165.

Mary Gallagher, E. "Reform and Openness,': Why China's Economic Reforms Have Delayed Democracy," *World Politics* (2002): 338-372.

Barry Naughton, *Growing Out of the Plan: Chinese Economic Reform, 1978-1993*. Cambridge University Press (1995).

*Democracy in Mongolia*

Paula L. W. Sabloff, *Does Everyone Want Democracy? Insights from Mongolia*, Routledge (2013).

Christopher Kaplonski, "Democracy comes to Mongolia" and "The symbols of democracy" in *Truth, History and Politics in Mongolia: The Memory of Heroes*. Routledge, 2004: 48-91.

M. Steven Fish, "Mongolia: Democracy Without Prerequisites," *Journal of Democracy* (July 1998):

127-141.

Christian Sorace, “Democratic Corpses and Communist Specters: Between the Liberal Democratic and Post-Socialist State,” in *The Future of the State: Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Artemy Magun, Rowman and Littlefield (2020): 205-232.

### *Mongolia’s Capitalist Transition*

Lhamsuren Munk-Erdene, “Mongolia’s Post-Socialist Transition: A Great Neoliberal Transformation” in *Mongolians after Socialism: Politics, Economy, Religion*, edited by Bruce M. Knauft and Richard Taupier, Admon Press (2012): 61-65.

Lars Højer and Morten Axel Pedersen, “Lost in Transition?” in *Urban Hunters: Dealing and Dreaming in Times of Transition*. Yale University Press, 2019: 35-64.

David Sneath, “The Age of the Market and the Regime of Debt: The Role of Credit in the Transformation of Pastoral Mongolia,” in *Mongolia Remade: Post-socialist National Culture, Political Economy, and Cosmopolitics*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018: Chapter 6.

Morris Rossabi, “Pressure for a Market Economy, 1990-1997” and “Political and Economic Dislocations, 1997-2004” in *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists*, University of California Press, 2005: 43-79; 80-113.

Sara L. Jackson, “Imagining the mineral nation: contested nation-building in Mongolia,” *Nationalities Papers* (2014).

### *Sino-Mongolian Relations*

Christian Sorace and Zhu Ruiyi, “The Short-Lived Eternity of Friendship,” in *Proletarian China: A*

*Century of Chinese Labour*, edited by Ivan Franceschini and Christian Sorace, Verso  
(2022): 251-264.

Jeffrey Reeves, "Mongolia's Environmental Security: Chinese Unconscious Power and  
Ulaanbaatar's State Weakness," *Asian Survey* Vol. 51, Number 3 (2011): 453-471.

James A. Millward, "China's Reincarnation Monopoly Has a Mongolia Problem," *Foreign Policy*,  
April 23, 2023: [https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/23/china-mongolia-tibetan-buddhism-reincarnation-dalai-lama/?tpcc=recirc\\_latest062921](https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/23/china-mongolia-tibetan-buddhism-reincarnation-dalai-lama/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921)

Mikkel Bunkenborg, Moreten Nielsen, Morten Axel Pedersen, *Collaborative Damage: An  
Experimental Ethnography of Chinese Globalization*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 35-  
131.

Ariell Ahearn and Troy Stern, "Ruins in the Making: socio-spatial struggle over extraction and  
export in the Sino-Mongolian Borderlands," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* (2022).

The People's Map of Global China: Mongolia <https://thepeoplesmap.net/country/mongolia/>