SOSC 1840   Government, Law and Society in China

Time:       3:00 – 4:20 pm                                          Tel:   2358-7823
Tues. and Thur.                              Email:   socai@ust.hk
Venue:     Online                                                   Office Hour:  3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Wed.
Instructor: Yongshun Cai                                                           or by appointment
Office:       3381

TAs:
Warren Lu: warren.lu@connect.ust.hk

Course description
This course introduces to students the basic knowledge about the operation of
the Chinese legal system or legal institutions. It examines how laws are used in the social,
economic, and political activities of the Chinese people. The course focuses not on the
Chinese laws *per se* but on how laws are used in people’s daily lives. Examples or cases
will be used extensively in the course to illustrate the topics included. Major topics
discussed in the course include the interactions between legal institutions and the party-
state (i.e., the party and the government), the behavior of legal workers (e.g., judges,
police officers), citizens’ use of civil lawsuits and administrative litigation, and some
important mechanisms through which citizens or other social actors seek justice in China.

Learning outcomes
After taking this introductory course, students are expected to: (1) know about Chinese
legal institutions and their functions; (2): be familiar with the ways legal disputes are
resolved in China; (3) understand the mechanisms that can be exploited by citizens or
other social actors to seek justice in Chinese society; and (4) be able to analyze basic
legal issues in China.

Course requirements:
Students are expected to attend the lectures and complete the assigned readings.
Students will be assessed in light of the following criteria:

1. Three pop-up quizzes (5 points each)
   a. The quiz covers what has been discussed in the previous lecture.
   b. Make-up quiz is possible but conditional.
      Asking for a leave in advance is needed in order to take the make-up.
      If you need to take a leave, you need to email Jingyang HUANG at
      jingyang.huang@connect.ust.hk in advance.

2. Mid-term exam (42 points, multiple-choice + short essay questions)

3. Final exam (43 points, multiple-choice + short essay questions, noncumulative)
Lecture notes and reading materials are available at the course (https://canvas.ust.hk/courses).

**Lectures**

**Week 1  Introduction: law and society in China**

**Week 2  Introduction to legal institutions in China**

**Week 3  Legal workers in China**

“Judging judges: To help build the rule of law, China is demoting judges,” *The Economists* Sep 26th 2015

**Week 4  Citizens’ use of law in China (I)**


**Week 5  Citizens’ use of law in China (II)**


**Week 6  Suing the government in China**

Week 7  Law enforcement in China

Suggested reading:

Xin He, “Debt-Collection in the Less Developed Regions of China: An Empirical Study from a Basic-Level Court in Shaanxi Province,” The China Quarterly, no. 206,

Seeking Justice in China: Redress Mechanisms

Week 8. Appeals and justice in China
Peerenboom, China’s Long March toward Rule of Law, pp. 302-312.


(Mid-Term Exam; it covers Lecture 1 to Lecture 6, second class of week 8)

Week 9 Petitions and justice in China

Suggested reading:

Week 10 Media and justice in China

Week 11 The People’s Congress

Suggested reading:

Week 12 Lawyers in China

**Week 13 To the Court or to the Street: Social Protests in China**


Suggested reading:

**Final Exam (second class of the last week)**