The course will familiarize students with issues related to the contemporary Chinese economy: its history, the success of its reforms in the past four decades and the reasons for it, China’s specific institutions in the world economy and problems it is facing in the 21st century.

The course will consist of four parts: (1) pre-1949: we will discuss the “Great Divergence” between China and the West, China’s “Century of Humiliation” since the Opium War, and the rise of communist ideas in China; (2) central planning: we will discuss the logic and consequences of China’s national strategy prioritizing the heavy industries, and political movements deviating from socialist development; (3) economic reform and opening up: we will discuss China’s economic reform since 1978, focusing on the political and economic logics behind the reform process; (4) post-reform topics: we will discuss different domains of the contemporary Chinese economy, including topics related to rural development, fiscal system, land finance, state sector, environment, rule of law, industrial policy, digital economy, etc.

**Grading**: 10% class participation, 40% final take home exam, 50% final essay. The take home exam will have three essay questions based on the lectures and reading materials. For the final essay, students are allowed to work in groups up to two, and the limit is 15 pages (1.5 spaced). The essay can be about any topic related to the Chinese economy. For example, it can be an in-depth review article on some important economic policy in China, such as introducing the background and evolution of China’s carbon emissions trading market; or it can also be a formal research proposal, with a well-defined research question, a literature review, discussions of the institutional background, and a rigorous research design. Students are welcome to consult the TA or the instructor before choosing the essay topics.

**TA**: Haoran Gao (haorangao@uchicago.edu)

**Emails**: You can reach me at shaoda@uchicago.edu. Please write the email with a subject in the format of “[PPHA 35585] X” (substituting “X” with a brief title of your questions or issues). In the email your full name should be included. Please feel free to write me on administrative issues that are not covered in the syllabus, or about your concerns related to the course. Specific questions on the course material are supposed to be answered in lectures or office hours.

**Instructor Office Hour**: Friday 5-6:30pm (Zoom link in Canvas)
**TA Office Hour**: Thursday 9-10 am (Zoom link in Canvas)

**Tentative Course Topics**
Lecture 1: **Introduction and Logistics**

**Part 1. Pre-PRC Era:**

Lecture 2: **The Great Divergence**

Lecture 3: **Century of Humiliation and Rise of Communism**

**Part 2. Central Planning Era:**

Lecture 4: **Central Planning**

Lecture 5: **Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution**

**Part 3. Reform and Opening Up:**

Lecture 6: **Overview of the Reform Process**

Lecture 7: How Reform Worked in China

Lecture 8: Growth and Structural Change

Part 4. Post-Reform Topics:

Lecture 9: Agricultural Development and Rural Governance

Lecture 10: China’s Fiscal System
Lecture 11: **Land Finance and Local Debt**


Lecture 12: **China’s State Sector**


Lecture 13: **China’s Environmental Issues**


Lecture 14: **Rule of Law and the Chinese Economy**


Lecture 15: **China’s Industrial Policies**

• Guest lecture (TBD)

Lecture 16: **China’s Financial System**

• Guest lecture (TBD)

Lecture 17: **Policy Making and Policy Experimentation**


Lecture 18: **Connecting China and the World**


