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:** 5% class participation, 45% short response essays (3 essays, 15% each), 50% final essay.

Each student is expected to write (independently) three response articles based on any topics covered in class, the article should not exceed 800 words. The response article should very briefly summarize the topic of interest, and discuss it critically. Comprehensiveness is not the priority of a response article, new questions, ideas, insights, and critics will be most highly valued. The first response article is due one week after Lecture 5, the second is due one week after Lecture 9, and the third is due before Lecture 18. Late submissions will be penalized by 1 point per day.

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 evolvement 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 encouraged to consult the TA or the instructor before choosing their final essay topics. The final essay is due by 5pm CST on Wednesday 3.6. No late submission will be accepted.

**TAs:** Haoran Gao (haorangao@uchicago.edu); Felicity Zhang (felicityzhang@uchicago.edu)
**Emails:** You can reach me at shaoda@uchicago.edu. Please write the email with a subject in the format of “[Chinese Economy] 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 5:00-6:30pm (Keller 2055); please sign up here: https://calendar.app.google/87dFgdZULf6JZM3j7

**TA Office Hour:**
- Haoran Gao: Friday 8:30-10am, Keller 2082
- Felicity Zhang: Wed 4-5:30pm, Keller 2008

**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**

**Lecture 9: Policy Making and Policy Experimentation**


Part 4. Post-Reform Topics:

Lecture 10: China’s Fiscal System

Lecture 11: Land Finance and Local Debt

Lecture 12: Urban Development and Migration
• Guest lecture (Ming Lu, Professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University)

Lecture 13: China’s State Sector

Lecture 14: **Over-Investment and Trade Imbalances**
- Guest lecture (Michael Pettis, Professor at Peking University)

Lecture 15: **Industrial Policies in China**
- Guest lecture (Damien Ma, Managing Director of Think Tank, Paulson Institute; Co-Founder, MacroPolo)

Lecture 16: **Rule of Law and the Chinese Economy**

Lecture 17: **China’s Environmental Issues**


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


