

“Speaking of China” Lecture

China’s Ruling Class: Elite Persistence and the Ironies of Social Change



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David Goodman is Professor of China Studies at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, where he is also Vice President for Academic Affairs. A graduate of the University of Manchester, Peking University, and the London School of Oriental and African Studies, his research concentrates on social and political change in China, especially at the local level. Recent publications include *Class in Contemporary China* (Polity Press, 2014); the *Handbook of the Politics of the PRC* (Edward Elgar, 2015); and (with Shigeto Sonoda) *China Impact: Threat Perception in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Tokyo University Press, 2018).

Abstract:

The introduction of first ‘opening up and reform’ and then a socialist market economy since 1978 is often assumed to have led or be leading towards a class structure dominated by wealth. An examination of the social backgrounds of the political and economic elites suggests that while a community of interest may have developed between the two, the PRC remains far from a system dominated by capitalists. It is the existence and operation of the party-state that remains the defining feature of China’s political economy and its dominant class. At the same time, somewhat ironically, the ruling class of 2020 would seem to be determined through the intersections of politics, wealth, and social capital with roots not only in the PRC’s political system; the economic restructurings of the late 1980s, the mid-1990s, the late 1990s and the early 2000s; but also from the earlier pre-1949 political economy.

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Details:

Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020
8:00pm - 9:30pm (EST)
on Zoom

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