

**Tackling a global scourge: Some lessons from Taiwan  
(field research course)  
ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ  
SUMMER 2022**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Class schedule:** May 2-20, 2022  
University of Ottawa online via zoom  
with colleagues from National Chengchi University, Taipei

**Professor's office:** Office DMS 5028 (January to March)  
See my mail address (April-May)

**Email:** [alaliber@uottawa.ca](mailto:alaliber@uottawa.ca)

Any questions sent by email should receive a response within two business days or during the following class if taken place within the 48 hours following receipt of the email. Note that the professor reserves the right not to answer an email if the level of language used is inadequate.

**On Virtual Campus:** zoom

**OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This course is an introduction to the political, economic, and social history of contemporary Taiwan, with a focus on its exceptional response to the global health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The central question is how Taiwan has tackled this challenge and how it has affected some of its most vulnerable population, in particular its elderly and the migrant workers who care for them. This class will include visits online to different relevant ministries, agencies, and institutions as well as NGOs and associations of civil society.

**COURSE GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

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This course considers fully the extraordinary circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, the goal of the course was to look at Taiwan as a case study of a society faced with the problem of a rapidly ageing population, and how a combination of governments' social and welfare policies has created a major pull factor for a mass migration movement whose dynamics reveal major problems in relation to gender inequality, labor abuse, discrimination, but also, more positively, mobilization by civil society to address these issues. The capacity of Taiwan to successfully address the current pandemic despite the vulnerabilities spelled out above appears then all the more remarkable and urgently deserving of study. The course aspires to inspire future such investigation on the ground. It will consist

of three weeks of onsite meetings with colleagues in Taiwan, along with excursions on public sites and the writing of short essays to share results. The goal of the course remains to develop skills for pursuing research in a variety of fields in social sciences. At the end of the term, students should be able to assess critically information about the responses to sanitary crises from the perspective of the political economy of welfare regimes.

### **SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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At the end of this course, students will be able to understand politics of care and will have a better grasp of the comparative perspective to study the institutions, processes of political change, political economy, and issues of identity in other societies. Another specific objective of the course is to ensure a balanced view on a country that ends up all too often misrepresented or simply overlooked, despite its importance in world affairs, as the current health crisis so eloquently demonstrate. An important feature of the course is to offer not only cutting-edge scholarship about the study of Taiwanese politics, but also to meet online some of the people who produce that scholarship, and investigate online the institutions and actors who are the subject of the scholarship, to present the diversity of Taiwanese voices. Finally, the students will learn about the methods required for the study of Taiwan and other societies outside Canada. At the end of the course, you should be able to debate issues of Taiwanese politics and its relevance to global health safety and disease control.

### **TEACHING METHOD**

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Part of our meetings will be remote lectures given online by professor Laliberté and on occasions by his colleagues in the National Chengchi University in Taiwan. Because of the considerable difference in time zones, please note that the lectures by Taiwanese colleagues will be delivered during the evenings. This is a small price to pay for the opportunity to have a person-to-person contact. While the original class had planned excursions to sites relevant to the lectures, and interactions with actors relevant to the subject seen in the class, the substitution to these activities will consist in research online to sites related to the lectures' themes. The students will work in small teams to research into archives of government agencies, NGOs, and media that will serve to establish the foundation of a written essay that will seek to answer analytical questions to be determined in the first meeting. The activities of research will be flexible, during the daytime, but the lectures will happen in the evening. Professor Laliberté will be present to all activities, including teaching by colleagues in Taiwan.

### **ASSESSMENT METHOD**

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The presence in all classes and activities is mandatory.

To encourage active participation and enhance the value of the course during the first two weeks, students will write short reports that summarize their findings on a daily basis. In the third week, there will be meetings with civil society actors and meetings where students will each present their findings.

Each students will write a short essay upon their return that summarizes their findings. The essay will be the equivalent of a term paper, with no more than 5000 words, footnotes not included.

The grading will be as follows:

Presence in online course:	10 % of final grade
Short report from online research (8 x 5%):	40 %
Oral presentation:	10 %
Final essay:	40 %

NB: the lectures will be in English but some of the lecturers are francophones: students should feel free to interact with them in French. Students can also choose to write their final essay in French. Knowledge of Mandarin is not required for this class but it would constitute an asset while looking at many of the websites of the Taiwanese government and NGOs.

**COURSE OUTLINE** (*please note that this can be subject to change*)

The students must arrive in class well prepared before our daily evening meeting: this means that they will have read the recommended texts and will have gotten familiar with the websites listed below. The meetings will last three hours: there will be lectures followed by Q and A. Students will have to submit a short report from their visits to the website and their readings. These reports will be their attempts to answer the questions listed below.

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Week 1

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May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Monday -- **TAIWAN IN WORLD AFFAIRS**

This meeting outlines the content of the course and our methodology for the next three weeks.

**Recommended reading:**

Gary D. Rawnsley, 2020, "Introduction: Taiwan, Public Diplomacy, and the World Health Assembly" *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 3 no. 1 (February): 5-9.

**9-12 AM**

Introduction of the course, the institution, the faculty, the settings, with Professor **André LALIBERTE** and NCCU Professor **TBC**

**2-5 PM Excursion 1**

Briefing session at the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei to introduce the relations between Canada and Taiwan on all levels: economic, cultural, and diplomatic

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Tuesday -- **MODERN TAIWANESE HISTORY**

Why Taiwan is not part of the WHO but manages to control COVID-19?

**Recommended reading:**

James Meernik, Philip Paolino, 2016. "Introduction," In Philip Paolino, ed., *Democratization in Taiwan: Challenges in Transformation*, pp. 1-10. London: Routledge.

### **9-12 AM**

An overview of Taiwan's geopolitical context and the recent history of events at the origins of its exclusion from the international community, with Dr. **J-Michael Cole**

### **2-5 PM Excursion 2**

Guided visit to the National Palace Museum, where are displayed treasures from China. This will shed light on the curious fact that Taiwan is called officially the Republic of China.

## May 4<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday -- **POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS**

How to screen the population for disease control without jeopardizing basic individual liberties?

### **Recommended reading:**

Dafydd Fell, "A multitude of political miracles and future challenges." In *Government and Politics in Taiwan*, pp. 283-293. London: Routledge.

### **9-12 AM**

An introduction to the political system of Taiwan that presents its constitution, its government and main agencies, its political parties, and its main politicians, with Professor **André LALIBERTE**

### **2-5 PM Excursion 3**

Guided visit to the Chiang Kai-shek/Democracy Memorial Hall, which embodies the contradictions of this young democracy, which is struggling to reconcile with a recent and bloody past.

## May 5<sup>th</sup>, Thursday -- **THE ECONOMY**

How resilient is the current knowledge-based economy in the context of global trade disputes ?

### **Recommended reading:**

Peter C.Y. Chow, 2018, "The State of Studying the Taiwanese Economy: Retrospect and Prospect". *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 1 no. 1 (August): 331-352.

### **9-12 AM**

The costs of Taiwan's economic miracle, with Professor **Jack WU**

### **2-5 PM Excursion 4**

Visit to the Taipei 101 and the New Taipei Business District, which highlights Taiwan's success as a New Industrial Country in the 1970s and an economic powerhouse ever since.

## May 6<sup>th</sup>, Friday -- **THE WELFARE STATE AND HEALTH CARE**

How long can the current welfare regime protect its ageing population from external shock?

**Recommended reading:**

Wang Ye-suk, 2017, "Historical Development of NHI in Taiwan: De-familialization Path of Welfare Politics." In *Familial Foundations of the Welfare State*, pp. 107-137. Singapore: Springer.

**9-12 AM**

Taiwan's welfare regime and democratization, with Professor **KU Yeun-wen**

**2-5 PM Excursion 5**

Participant observation at the Taipei Central Station, where congregate many Indonesian caregivers on their day of rest, on what is their day of prayer, to socialize with friends and relatives. Observe the interaction with the locals.

May 12th (Saturday)

**Excursion 6**

Participant observation at the Hsin-tien-Gong temple: this will be a foray into the dominant form of religion and spirituality of Taiwanese, which would help to illustrate and understand the enormous cultural gap between Taiwanese elderly and the migrant caregivers looking after their welfare.

May 13th (Sunday)

**Excursion 7**

Participant observation in Little Manilla, where Filipina caregivers congregate on Sundays for mass: ow many men do you see? How many come with the people they care for? We may finish eating there and even attend a cultural event in the evening.

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**Week 2**

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May 9<sup>th</sup>, Monday -- **MIGRATION AND IDENTITY**

How is society coping with the cultural changes brought by increasing labor migration?

**Recommended reading:**

Nakahara Yumiko, 2017, "Foreign Laborers: Status and Problems." *International Labor Mobility to and from Taiwan*, pp. 69-99. Singapore: Springer.

**9-12 AM**

The politics of identity and migration, with Professor **Frank WANG Tseng-yung**

**2-5 PM Excursion 8**

Visit to the Garden of Hope, Hsindian, New Taipei City (a resource center sub-contracted by the Labor Department to help migrant workers in distress, victims of domestic violence and human trafficking)

May 10<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday -- **LABOR RIGHTS**

How to promote the safety and security of workers in the frontlines of health crises?

**Recommended readings:**

Ye 2019. "The Evolution of Human Rights in Taiwan and Challenges from China." *Asia Policy* 14 no. 4 (October): 26-34.

**9 PM -12 AM**

Taiwan's labor regulations and the rights of caregivers, with Professor **Vivianne WENG**

**2-5 PM Excursion 9**

Visit to the Human Rights Museum in Jinmei, the site of a prison during Martial Law and the 'White terror' period, when trade unions were repressed in the context of the Cold War.

May 11<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday -- **GLOBAL CARE CHAIN AND THE WORK OF CARE**

How to meet the demand for live-in caregivers in the context of a global pandemic?

**Recommended readings:**

Lan Pei-chia, 2019, "From Reproductive Assimilation to Neoliberal Multiculturalism: Framing and Regulating Immigrant Mothers and Children in Taiwan." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 40 no. 3 (April): 318-333.

**9 PM -12 AM**

The concept of global care chain and its domestic impact, with Professor **LEE Shao-fen**

**2-5 PM Excursion 10**

Visit to the NGO *Save The People*, Taoyuan (an independent NGO that help workers in distress from abusive employers in the sector of social welfare, industry, and fishing)

May 12<sup>th</sup>, Thursday -- **THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

How do NGOs support vulnerable workers in times of emergency?

**Recommended readings:**

Yun Fan, 2019, "New opportunities and new challenges: Social movements after 2000." In *Social Movements in Taiwan's Democratic Transition : Linking Activists to the Changing Political Environment*, pp. 115-127. London: Routledge.

**9 PM -12 AM**

Taiwan's live-in caregivers and gender imbalances, with assistant Professor **Janis CHIEN Yi-Chun**

**2-5 PM Excursion 11**

Visit to the Legislative Yuan, meeting with legislators.

May 13<sup>st</sup>, Friday -- **VALUES AND FILIAL PIETY**

How traditional values reinforce or hinder the implementation of public policies?

**Recommended readings:**

Lin Ju-ping and Yi Chun-chin, 2019, "Dilemmas of an Aging Society: Family and State Responsibilities for Intergenerational Care in Taiwan." *Journal of Family Issues* 40 no. 14 (October): 1912-1936.

**9 PM -12 AM**

The role of religious institutions' charities, with **Dr. Ray WANG**.

**2-5 PM Excursion 12**

Meeting with volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation, one of the main health care institutions in Taiwan, but also its largest philanthropy, and as such, a major source of non-state support for long-term care.

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**Week 3**

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May 16<sup>th</sup>, Monday

**9 PM -12 AM**

presentations from students 1 to 3

**2-5 PM**

Meeting with TIWA volunteers

May 17<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday

**9 PM -12 AM**

presentations from students 4 to 6

**2-5 PM**

Meeting with Awakening Foundation volunteers

May 18<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday

**9 PM -12 AM**

presentations from students 7 to 9

**2-5 PM**

**TBD**

May 19<sup>st</sup>, Thursday

**9 PM -12 AM**

presentations from students 10 to 12

**2-5 PM**

Visit to a Mucha teahouse

May 20<sup>th</sup>, Friday

**9 PM -12 AM**

presentations from students 13 to 15

**2-5 PM**

Meeting with NCCU students

Final assignment

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June 20<sup>th</sup>

Submission of final essay