

# NEWS

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## Teaching Political Science in China

by Kent Morrison, University of Utah and  
Robert Thompson, University of South Carolina

As recipients of Fulbright-Hayes lectureships, we taught political science courses at two Chinese universities during the academic year 1983-84. Professor Thompson, at the International Politics Department of Beijing University, the major liberal arts university in North China, and Professor Morrison with the History Department of Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, the comparable institution of the south. We were the first western political scientists in residence and teaching on a regular basis in mainland Chinese universities in over thirty years, and taught the first political science courses included in Chinese curricula since the late 1940's. In addition to lecturing in each other's departments, Professor Thompson spent a week at Fudan University in Shanghai and Professor Morrison lectured at Nanjing University. These are our perceptions regarding the current state of political science in the People's Republic of China.

Political science in China, as compared to America, is a woefully underdeveloped field. Each semester, Beijing University's Department of International Politics offers about twenty courses, the vast majority dealing with Marxism-Leninism, the history of the Chinese Communist Party, and national liberation movements. Professor Thompson's two courses in American government foreign policy were a great novelty to students and faculty alike; the department has no plans to offer them again, at least in the next five years. And since nothing in Zhongshan University remotely resembles a political science department, Professor Morrison was assigned to teach in the Department of History. During his eleven month tenure, Morrison taught a year-long survey of political science, a course in Chinese-American relations, and an undergraduate course and graduate seminar on American Foreign policy. He also was a member of the

"Political Science Preparatory Group," responsible for organizing the first political science department per se in China. But such a department has not yet materialized because, perhaps, as one of Morrison's graduate students said to him, "To be a political scientist in China is, I think, very dangerous."

On the surface, at least, both Beijing and Zhongshan universities were committed to the development of political science programs. Professor Thompson found his students eager to learn, bright, and hard-working; his International Politics Department laid out a five-year plan for curricular development, a scheme including courses in comparative government (Western Europe) and public administration. Morrison's History Department offered courses entitled "International Relations," "Soviet Foreign Policy," and "Contemporary American Social Problems," although these courses tended to be historical and didactic treatments of their topics, done from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint. Graduate students in Morrison's department were writing M.A. theses on "General Hurley's Role in Chinese-American Relations," "Germany's Policy toward the United States, 1939-40," and other such topics, although students' ability to pursue research was hampered by library facilities lacking even the barest minimum of western scholarly works, and the International Politics Department at Beijing University even refused undergraduates access to the periodical room of its own library. Over and over, however, Professors Thompson and Morrison saw even this commitment undermined by attitudes and practices of the Chinese themselves. This point is amply illustrated by the following vignettes

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Professor Thompson explored research being conducted in his Beijing University department. One Chinese professor, recently returned from Johns Hopkins, stated that he was  
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## Murphy's Law Applied to Computer Assisted Instruction

By Donald F. Kerle  
Pittsburgh State U.

In political science as well as other areas of the academic world, computer-assisted instruction is being proclaimed as an innovative teaching tool which teachers should be bringing into the classroom. Workshops on the subject are offered and short courses taught to those unfortunate enough to have missed the computer revolution in their own educational process. The proponents of C.A.I. (for some reason the computer field is devoted to acronyms) or Computer Assisted Instruction are like snake oil salesmen. They always dwell on the positive aspects but fail to warn the consumer of the negative ones.

Many of the great truths of the world have found applicability in more than one area. An illustration of this is a series of statements given the world by Murphy. (No further identification for this individual is ever given — no sex, no age, or marital status, etc.) A number of these are especially useful when it comes to trying to understand the negative aspects of C.A.I.

Murphy's Law - If anything can go wrong, it will.<sup>1</sup>

Corollary 1 - Nothing is as easy as it looks.

Corollary 2 - Everything takes longer than you think.

Corollary 3 - If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will cause the most damage will be the one to go wrong.

Corollary 5 - Left to themselves, things tend to go from bad to worse.

Corollary 6 - Whenever you set out to do something, something else must be done first.

Corollary 7 - Every solution breeds new problems.

The Murphy philosophy — smile — tomorrow will be worse.

Quantization revision of Murphy's Law — everything goes wrong all at once.

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