

The Systemic Optimization of College Ideological and Political Courses from the Perspective of Social Governance

Mengsheng Cai¹, Yufan Yang^{2*}

¹Jiangsu Police Institute, Nanjing 210031, Jiangsu, China

²Beijing Institute of Technology School of Law, Beijing 100024, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Social governance provides innovative directions for the development of higher education. Based on the integration of higher education and social governance, this study demonstrates the role of College Ideological and Political Courses in advancing social governance. Specifically, it elaborates on three dimensions: the mission of ideological and political education in social governance, its significance in this context, and its value orientation in reflecting the principle of comprehensively governing the country by law. Building on this foundation, the study analyzes the existing shortcomings in the construction of College Ideological and Political Courses. A systematic optimization pathway is proposed, encompassing five aspects: consolidating the foundation for integrating ideological and political education into social governance, driving the evolution of development philosophies to align with contemporary needs, innovating teaching models, strengthening the professional development of faculty teams, and promoting multidimensional advancement of ideological and political education.

Keywords: Social governance; College ideological and political courses; Path innovation

Online publication: April 28, 2025

1. Introduction

The construction of College Ideological and Political Courses based on higher education is the critical pillar for innovating social governance systems in the new era. The world is currently undergoing profound historical transformations characterized by “unprecedented changes unseen in a century.” Amid shifting global power dynamics, the reshaping of international governance frameworks, and the collision of diverse ideological trends, the reform of human social governance models has entered a phase of rapid evolution since the late 20th century. From the 1980s to the present, three distinct yet logically interconnected governance paradigms have emerged: participatory governance, social self-governance, and collaborative governance, with the latter increasingly emerging as the dominant model ^[1]. China’s social governance faces complex challenges marked by

intertwined contradictions among diverse interests. Addressing these challenges requires adherence to the principles of evolving with the times, preserving foundational values while innovating, and aligning with the demands of socioeconomic development and public welfare. Within China's educational system, College Ideological and Political Courses play a pivotal role as a frontline platform for cultivating socialist builders and successors ^[2]. In the current landscape of education and social governance, universities, as integral components of the social governance system, directly influence governance outcomes through the quality of their ideological and political education.

2. The role of college ideological and political courses in advancing social governance

2.1. The mission of ideological and political education in social governance

By leveraging its advantages in talent cultivation and innovative resource integration, College Ideological and Political Courses actively participates in constructing social governance systems and activates its governance functions. Collaborative governance, as an open governance model, aligns with the growing openness of social governance systems and processes, which inevitably progress toward collaborative governance ^[3]. This approach aids in resolving social contradictions, enhancing governance capabilities, fostering a stable social environment, and advancing the modernization of social governance systems and capacities.

2.2. The significance of ideological and political education in social governance

The fundamental questions of education, “whom to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate,” lie at the core of societal development. College Ideological and Political Courses shoulder the mission of nurturing core socialist values within social governance. Its scientifically structured content strengthens the legal consciousness of the public, aligning logically with the intrinsic demands of social governance. Additionally, it generates positive spillover effects in cultivating social mobilization during governance processes, rectifying negative ideologies among societal members, and fostering optimistic attitudes and value systems. Through explicit (e.g., policy advocacy) and implicit (e.g., cultural influence) dimensions, it facilitates conflict resolution among social organizations, promoting the sustainable development of social governance.

2.3. Ideological and political education as a reflection of the value orientation of comprehensively governing the country by law

Values serve as the foundational drivers of individuals' decision-making and behavioral choices, while also propelling the evolution of social issues. Through moral education, ideological and political education disseminates ethical principles rooted in societal traditions, guiding the public to cultivate civic virtues, safeguard national and collective interests, and establish correct value cognition and life goals. It emphasizes the responsibilities entrusted by the nation and the era, aligning with the necessity of employing humanistic approaches in governance—educating and inspiring individuals at the spiritual level. By empowering individuals to contribute their strengths to societal development, it encourages active participation in governance ^[4]. This process enables the collective identification of shared value objectives, fostering collaborative strategies for effective social governance.

3. Deficiencies in the construction of college ideological and political courses

3.1. Insufficient integration of social governance content

The new era demands greater emphasis on enhancing the intrinsic quality of College Ideological and Political Courses, strengthening their ideological depth, theoretical rigor, and practical relevance, and achieving

connotative development in curriculum design ^[5]. However, it must be acknowledged that the conceptual evolution of integrating social governance principles into these courses is accelerating. This has created tensions between general social governance paradigms and the pedagogical frameworks of College Ideological and Political Courses, even sparking public skepticism toward their pedagogical effectiveness and the scientific rigor of curriculum development. Such challenges conflict with the profound transformations these courses have undergone in recent years. A lack of social governance content would significantly alter the disciplinary and curricular environment of College Ideological and Political Courses, undermining their adaptability to contemporary societal needs.

3.2. Inadequate mechanisms for supporting social governance system development

Current issues include an overemphasis on theory at the expense of practice, coupled with a lack of collaborative mechanisms. The service-learning mechanisms within College Ideological and Political Courses remain underdeveloped, characterized by the absence of specific implementation standards, organizational support, and financial guarantees, all of which hinder the execution of service-learning initiatives. Service-learning inherently involves tripartite interactions among students, faculty, and communities. However, in China, such activities are predominantly confined to classroom settings, lacking community-based practical engagement, which restricts the healthy socialization of individuals. Furthermore, the knowledge translation mechanisms for course outcomes require enrichment and refinement. A long-standing focus on academic research over practical application has resulted in a disconnect between academia, industry, and societal needs. Consequently, the conversion rate of course outcomes into actionable social governance solutions remains low, and their efficacy in serving governance objectives is sub-optimal.

4. Enhancement strategies for college ideological and political courses from the perspective of social governance

In the new era, social governance will achieve novel development through the intervention of College Ideological and Political Courses. The strategies for College Ideological and Political Courses to function in social governance can be comprehensively advanced from the following five dimensions. See **Figure 1** for details.

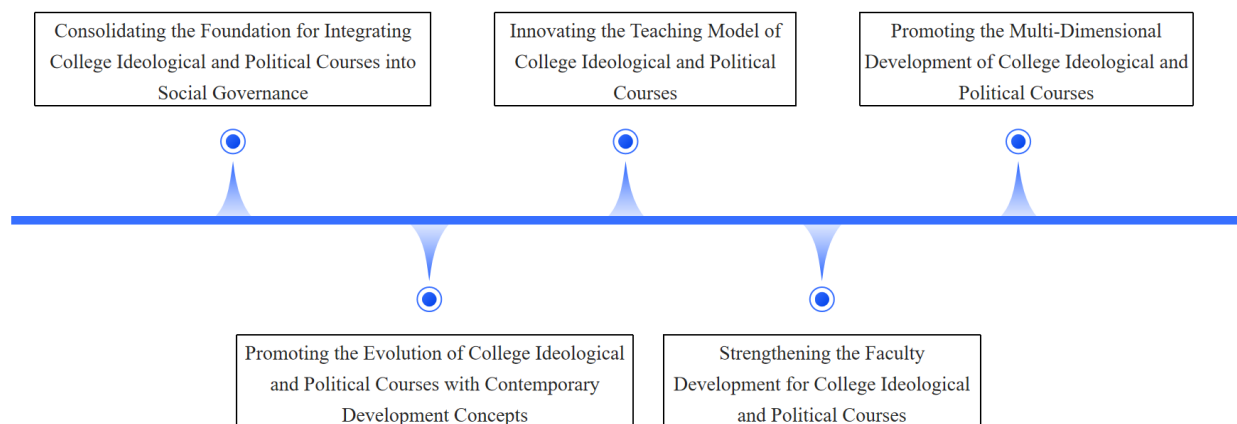


Figure 1. Enhancement strategies for College Ideological and Political Courses from the perspective of social governance

4.1. Consolidating the foundation for integrating college ideological and political courses into social governance

Contemporary grassroots social governance in China must uphold the core value of “serving the people.” The stability of grassroots society constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for national political stability^[6]. Integrating quality education into the top-level design of institutional development and implementing it comprehensively from the top down is essential. By strengthening the Party building leadership, the political orientation of College Ideological and Political Courses in social governance can be ensured, guiding both faculty and students to profoundly recognize the significance of social governance for national development and public well-being. Additionally, increased institutional support for College Ideological and Political Courses will facilitate the transformation of pedagogical and research outcomes through social governance practices.

4.2. Promoting the evolution of college ideological and political courses with contemporary development concepts

Social governance must align with socioeconomic progress and the evolving needs of the populace. This necessitates adherence to principles of timeliness, integrity, and innovation, while refining the deep collaborative mechanisms between government, academia, and industry. Advancing social governance through grassroots governance represents a fundamental pathway to improve “the co-construction, co-governance, and co-sharing” social governance system and enhance governance efficacy^[7]. Leveraging innovative practices in social governance can accelerate the application of teaching and research achievements from College Ideological and Political Courses. This requires the strategic utilization of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital governance to empower holistic innovation in these courses. Through these measures, their pedagogical philosophies, curricular content, and instructional methodologies will become more socially relevant and aligned with contemporary developmental trends.

4.3. Innovating the teaching model of college ideological and political courses

College Ideological and Political Courses should conduct in-depth research on the developmental models of ideological and political education in world-class universities. By adopting a proactive learning attitude, these courses must innovate teaching methodologies and refine service-learning mechanisms. Through such measures, they will spearhead the systematic upgrading of ideological and political education across the university curriculum. Upholding positive public opinion guidance, institutions should organize impact activities and create a multi-tiered, all-encompassing educational environment for ideological and political cultivation. Guided by the innovative development of these courses, the construction of ideological and political education in higher education will advance steadily toward systematization, standardization, and scientific rigor. Ultimately, this will foster a synergistic alignment between social governance and College Ideological and Political Courses, achieving collaborative education and mutual reinforcement.

4.4. Strengthening the faculty development for college ideological and political courses

“Teachers are the foundation and source of educational advancement.” The effective implementation of College Ideological and Political Courses in social governance practices hinges on cultivating a faculty team distinguished by excellent political acumen, outstanding professional competence, and superior educational capabilities. Educators should maintain psychological well-being and a positive attitude while enriching their life experiences. Continuous improvement in teachers’ knowledge of social governance and proactive accumulation of emotional resonance will enhance their ability to inspire and mentor students. Concurrently, the requirements of

social governance must be integrated into concrete actions for faculty development, ensuring the comprehensive integration of College Ideological and Political Courses into all phases of social governance practices.

4.5. Promoting the multi-dimensional development of college ideological and political courses

Leveraging the unique advantage of College Ideological and Political Courses in fostering values and educating individuals through socialist core values will robustly support the achievement of social governance objectives in the new era. It is imperative to actively assimilate advanced international pedagogical achievements and scientific educational methods, adapting global best practices to China's context ^[8]. The development of these courses will embody a synthesis of theory and practice, tradition and innovation, online and offline interactions, and the coexistence of individuality and universality. Through continuous theoretical innovation and practical exploration, College Ideological and Political Courses will better serve the realization of the "Sanquan Education" goal while maximizing their role in advancing social governance. This will propel the realization of outstanding social governance outcomes, ensuring that the courses contribute dynamically to the cultivation of socially responsible citizens and the modernization of governance systems.

Through these measures, College Ideological and Political Courses can evolve into a dynamic force that bridges theoretical education with practical governance, fostering a harmonious and resilient society in alignment with national strategic goals.

5. Conclusion

The modernization of social governance constitutes a systematic project that necessitates both institutional design and in-depth practical exploration. Given the pivotal role of College Ideological and Political Courses in advancing social governance, it is imperative to affirm their positive contributions while critically reflecting on existing deficiencies and challenges in their current application to governance practices. The optimization of College Ideological and Political Courses must be strategically tailored to evolving domestic and international contexts, ensuring their enhanced alignment with the modernization of China's social governance. Looking ahead, three priorities emerge: First, deepening the integration of College Ideological and Political Courses with social governance to strengthen their capacity to serve governance objectives. Second, elevating the governance-oriented and scientific rigor of these courses to amplify their multifaceted functions in social governance. Third, driving transformative innovations in governance methodologies and holistically improving governance efficacy, thereby leveraging the intellectual and ideological strengths of higher education to contribute to the realization of "Chinese-style governance."

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the teachers who helped in the research process, as well as the students and other personnel who actively cooperated with us.

Funding

This research was supported by the "Qinglan Project" (Project No. [2022] No. 29) for Jiangsu Province.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Zhang K, 2008, On Participatory Governance, Social Autonomy, and Collaborative Governance. *Administrative Tribune*, 2008(6): 1–6.
- [2] Ye F, 2023, Theoretical Implications and Practical Directions of the Construction of the “Great Ideological and Political Course” from the Perspective of Curriculum Theory. *Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 2023(10): 97–103.
- [3] Zhang K, 2012, Collaborative Governance as the Ultimate Goal of Social Governance Reform. *Social Science Research*, 2012(3): 35–42.
- [4] Cao Y, 2018, Research on the Functions of Ideological and Political Education: A Perspective Based on Sudden Natural Disasters, *Social Sciences Academic Press*, Beijing, 33–45.
- [5] She S, 2024, A Comprehensive Understanding of the Profound Changes in College Ideological and Political Courses over the Past Five Years and Their Significant Implications. *Studies in Ideological Education*, 2024(5): 3–4.
- [6] Zhang L, Wu N, 2024, Integration and Intervention: The Grassroots Governance Logic of “Resolving Conflicts without Escalation.” *Journal of Tianjin Administration Institute*, 2024(11): 1–11.
- [7] Qiao Z, 2024, Research on Upholding and Strengthening the Party’s Comprehensive Leadership in Grassroots Governance. *Academics*, 2024(10): 38–45.
- [8] Xie S, 2021, The Impact of Educational Modernization on the Teaching Reform of College Ideological and Political Courses. *Modern Education Management*, 2021(1): 45–52.

Publisher’s note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.