

Optimization pathways for the discourse system in college ideological and political courses

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Abstract. Ideological security is an integral part of national security and constitutes the spiritual foundation of the Party's governance. Marxism has always been the dominant ideology in China. Nevertheless, with the trends of economic globalization and the rise of the internet, amid profound global transformations unseen in a century, the international environment has grown increasingly complex. The diversification of social ideologies exerts significant influence on university students' cognition, values, and political beliefs. Doctrines such as individualism, utilitarianism, hedonism, and populism in Western societies may easily lead to devaluation and demoralization of thought and behavior. Universities, as institutions that preserve culture, provide education, and serve society, shoulder the responsibility of safeguarding national culture and ideological security and represent a vital stronghold for promoting the socialist mainstream ideology. Ideological and political theory education in universities is a key measure to safeguard ideological security in China. The construction of ideological and political theory courses is of great practical significance for implementing the nation's ideological policies and ensuring their security. It constitutes an essential component of ideological and political work in higher education and carries the mission of cultivating builders and successors of socialist modernization. Within this process, the core link lies in the discourse system of ideological and political teaching, which directly shapes the effectiveness and sustainability of these courses and related work.

Keywords: ideological security, ideological and political courses in higher education, teaching discourse

1. Introduction

"Ideological work is the effort to establish the heart of the nation and the soul of the people." It is imperative to "resolutely safeguard the security of state power, the security of the system, and the security of ideology." [1] At present, China's work in the ideological sphere has been proactive and has achieved certain results, yet it still faces severe external challenges and threats. "Given the diversification of economic and social components, the differentiation of living conditions, and the diversity of ideological dissemination, people's perspectives on the world have become increasingly varied, and thought has become highly fragmented. This is reflected in the ideological field as a multiplicity of value orientations, which affects the dissemination of the mainstream ideological discourse system." [2] Therefore, it is necessary to continuously and deeply improve the pathways of ideological and political education. Universities are at the forefront of national ideological governance. How to respond to the complex and ever-changing ideological struggles at home and abroad and how to enhance the capacity for ideological governance are pressing priorities in implementing the holistic concept of national security. They also demonstrate the nation's governance capacity and effectiveness in the cultural and ideological domain. "The ideological attribute is the fundamental characteristic of ideological and political courses. Emphasizing this attribute is an inherent requirement in the construction of their discourse system." However, "while information technology enhances interaction and synergy between teachers and students, and shapes new teaching modes and knowledge systems, it has also widened the social gap between teaching subjects and objects," [3] thereby intensifying challenges to the discourse power of ideological and political education. Currently, teaching practice in universities' ideological and political courses is largely centered on textbook content, often neglecting the role of the discourse subjects and objects themselves. Existing research in China primarily focuses on topics such as the mechanisms of ideological opinion dissemination in universities; the leadership, management, initiative, dominance, and discourse power of university ideology; mainstream ideological education in higher education; the ideological competence of university Party committees and counselors; publicity and ideological work; ideological security in universities; construction of

ideological strongholds; responsibility systems for Party committees (or Party groups); and ideological security in minority colleges and universities. These studies have provided ample literature resources for subsequent research. However, there remains a scarcity of research specifically examining ideological and political course discourse systems from the perspective of ideological security. A lack of theoretical studies on the discourse system of university ideological and political theory courses persists, with no systematic theoretical framework or comprehensive elucidation of its characteristics or its relation to national ideological security. Advancing the construction of such a discourse system is a necessary requirement for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education, as well as an important pathway to promoting the development of high-quality education in higher education. To implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's holistic concept of national security, universities must strengthen the construction of the discourse system in ideological and political courses and consolidate the capacity to prevent risks to ideological security.

2. The internal mechanism linking the teaching discourse system of ideological and political courses in higher education with national ideological security

2.1. The basic connotations of the teaching discourse system in ideological and political courses

The teaching discourse system of ideological and political theory courses in higher education refers to “a system of linguistic symbols employed by discourse subjects to conduct ideological and political theory teaching. Guided fundamentally by the imperative to strengthen ideological work on university campuses and grounded in the core task of fostering virtue and cultivating people, it aims primarily to enhance students’ political, affective, and theoretical identification. Within a particular discursive environment, specific discursive content is expressed through specific modes of articulation.” [4] The concepts of “discursive power” (*huayu quan*) and “discursive force/efficacy” (*huayu li*), and their organic interconnection, are key structural elements of this system. “Discursive power” signifies the capacity for guidance, regulation, and control within a given sphere or relationship; it reflects a hierarchy of positions [5]. Discursive power exists within concrete discursive relations in which the discourse subject and the discourse object interact, and where the subject occupies a position enabling it to shape and govern the object. Accordingly, changes in the object’s ideas and behavior mark the extent to which discursive power has been exercised. In the context of teaching discourse for ideological and political theory courses, discourse functions as a crucial vehicle for transmitting knowledge, ideology, and values, and constitutes the fundamental basis and safeguard for building the teaching discourse itself. “The teaching discourse of ideological and political theory courses relies on speech acts as its most immediate medium of transmission and mode of communication, employing appropriate pedagogical methods to internalize teaching content into the value system of the learners so as to realize the aims of ideological and political education.” [6] Discursive power is constituted jointly by discursive rights, discursive authority, and discursive competence. For teachers—the primary discourse subjects in these courses—discursive power manifests as “the ability, through the use of discourse in classroom instruction, to understand, guide, lead, and influence the thoughts and behaviors of learners.” [3] A clear political and ideological orientation is intrinsic to the discursive power of ideological and political theory courses.

“Discursive force/efficacy” can be understood as the effect generated when the discourse subject in ideological and political teaching expresses specific intentions to the audience; it encompasses powers of affective appeal, theoretical explanation, permeation, and guidance [7]. Emphasis is placed on how the subject of discursive power gains the attention and recognition of the object—through emotional resonance, theoretical interpretation, dialogic interaction, and normative leadership.

2.2. The essence of national ideological security

The contemporary world is undergoing profound transformations unseen in a century, with complex and diverse social risks: major natural disasters, sudden outbreaks such as COVID-19, and new forms of cyber-attack intertwine and overlap. As global uncertainties grow, national security governance has become a critical bulwark for building a higher level of peace and advancing Chinese-style modernization in the new era. Ideology is “a superstructure of conceptual forms encompassing politics, law, morality, religion, art, and other spheres; it is a coherent set of closely related views and judgments held by a particular social stratum or group regarding the external world and society. At a minimum, it comprises three categories: beliefs, values, and ideals.” [8] Ideological security is “a vital precondition for consolidating political identification and integrating social thought, thereby providing political legitimacy for state power”; it denotes “a stable condition in which the dominant ideology of a country is unthreatened, retains primacy, and provides overarching guidance to diverse social ideas.” [9] The essence of national ideological security reflects the stability and consolidation of the public’s identification with the national mainstream ideology. In a modern society where multiple currents of thought coexist, the higher the public’s identification with the mainstream ideology, the more secure that ideology will be—and vice versa—because “the more individuals identify with the dominant social ideology of the society they inhabit, the more willing they are to contribute to the nation and society, and the greater their capacity and room for survival within that society.” [10]

Strengthening the prevention and mitigation of risks to national ideological security is not only an essential requirement of China's holistic approach to national security but also a central component of ideological governance. On the one hand, ideological security sits at the front line of national security: if the ideological foundation is shaken, political crises often follow. On the other hand, "various risks rarely occur in isolation; they frequently interweave, forming a complex of risks." [11] Economic and social challenges often spill over into the ideological sphere, giving rise to "risk symbiosis." At present, China's socialist ideological security faces a host of concrete challenges. First, non-traditional security threats have altered the conditions of ideological work for the Party and the state—its objects, scope, and environment—making the safeguarding of ideological security more difficult. "Some Western developed countries may leverage their technological and discursive advantages in the field of intelligent media to artificially construct 'intelligent' public opinion via media framing, agenda setting, and other methods. By embedding certain political aims in the continuous penetration of social media and smart technologies, and by deploying tactics such as 'intelligent media + online troll armies,' they attempt to induce designed shifts in other countries' netizens' thinking, emotions, and values, thereby pursuing a goal of 'digital colonialism.'" [12] Second, the development of online information technologies and digital media has complicated the public-opinion environment. Due to ideological biases, certain Western capitalist countries subjectively distort China's achievements in social development, and even vilify China's institutions and culture. By undermining the credibility of the Chinese government, they seek to sow ideological confusion and foment division. Such inappropriate Western narratives impact China's national ideological security and threaten political security.

2.3. The significance of safeguarding national ideological security

1. Guiding university students to correctly understand cultural and ideological plurality and to gradually establish a Marxist conviction. Diverse currents of thought rest on corresponding economic foundations, political contexts, and cultural soils; their dissemination shapes behavioral patterns in both positive and negative ways. Universities are crucial sites where students' value systems take shape. The university years are especially susceptible to the disturbances of diverse ideational influences; amplified by online media, the negative effects of such plurality can lead to erroneous values. Meanwhile, students tend to pay close attention to—and exhibit heightened sensitivity toward—dramatic changes in the international landscape and major issues at home and abroad. It is therefore essential to guide them in discerning truth from falsehood and making sound value judgments. Building a robust teaching discourse system for ideological and political theory courses helps lead and regulate the formation of correct values, foster the "Fourfold Confidence" (confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics), and cultivate political consciousness, literacy, participation, and responsibility among students—thereby sustaining Marxism's leading position in China's ideological field and providing a favorable climate of public opinion for safeguarding ideological security.

2. Strengthening students' sense of national identity. The content of ideological and political theory courses and the construction of their discourse system can guide students to "develop a profound understanding that socialism with Chinese characteristics is the product of arduous efforts led by our Party; it is the choice of history and the people, and the only correct path to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." [13] By enhancing the attractiveness and persuasiveness of the mainstream ideology and raising its soft-power influence, this endeavor helps deepen students' identification with the socialist state with Chinese characteristics and inspires national pride and patriotic commitment.

3. Consolidating and exercising discursive power to ensure the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Discursive power is reflected not only in the output and input of content, but also in the realization and safeguarding of intended meaning. The discursive power of ideological and political theory teaching enables the scientific theoretical system of Marxism to be transformed into the core content of ideological and political education. Through the expression and dissemination carried out by the discourse subjects (teachers), the Party's practical experience is communicated as the ideological and moral norms advocated by the mainstream ideology. In this way, moral education assumes a leading role in students' all-round development and ensures the correct orientation of education, narrowing the space in which harmful ideas can exert influence. This is an immediate necessity for discourse subjects to embody their leading status and role, and it provides a safeguard for both ideological security and the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

3. Dilemmas in the construction of the teaching discourse system of ideological and political courses in higher education

The pluralistic discourse ecology of the network information era poses real challenges to the construction of the teaching discourse system for ideological and political courses in universities. In the process of strengthening discursive dominance and authority, insufficient attention has been paid to enhancing discursive force. As a result, problems have emerged, such as the weakening of discourse subjects, challenges to discursive rights, the dissolution of discursive penetration, and the failure of discursive explanatory power.

3.1. Weakening of discourse subjects: declining persuasive power of teaching subjects

Discursive dominance manifests as the leading role and superior status of ideological content and its formal resources. It embodies influence through ideological dominance, classroom appeal, and the impact of teaching subjects. At present, the main body of ideological and political course faculty—being relatively young—are better able to understand the psychological and developmental characteristics of contemporary university students, and can play a peer-like, caring role inside and outside the classroom. Nevertheless, they often lack effective integration in knowledge transmission, value guidance, and ability cultivation. “Emotional resonance, affective fluctuation, and experiential engagement constitute the primordial conditions of the persuasive power of discourse in ideological and political teaching.” [7] However, some teachers lack both the opportunities and skills to communicate effectively with students; others do not possess sufficient theoretical grounding to interpret Marxist scientific theory in depth. This often results in teaching content that feels abstract, disconnected from reality, or obscure. In other cases, teachers prioritize constructing theoretical systems, treating theory as the sole focus, while neglecting the scholarly analysis of social problems. In addition, insufficient integration of personal reflection and social experience into teaching exacerbates the gap between textbook discourse and discourse that connects with modern life. Consequently, students may show indifference, lack of focus, and fail to cultivate enthusiasm or critical thinking. When teaching discourse lacks affinity and persuasive power, the ideological dominance of discourse cannot be effectively exerted.

3.2. Dissolution of discursive penetration: deviations in the role of teaching objects

Students, as the objects of ideological and political teaching discourse, are no longer passive recipients of content. They can play an active role, exercising their own discursive rights—the ability and freedom to independently articulate viewpoints, positions, and demands. Influenced by economic and social development, students today possess equal access to discursive platforms in the digital era. Yet, given the characteristics of youth and the pluralism of social ideologies, they are prone to confusion in value choices, incapable of in-depth reflection, and susceptible to behavioral deviance, crises of value identification, and diminished sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, the insufficient integration of humanistic education with ideological and political teaching separates moral cultivation from cultural formation, weakening students’ cultural confidence. These dynamics may lead to adverse consequences: the absence of mainstream ideological identification, skepticism about the contemporary value of Marxism, loss of confidence in the socialist system when confronted with normal developmental challenges in society and people’s livelihood, and a tendency toward individualism that prioritizes self-interest over collective responsibility. Such trends erode the dominance of ideological and political teaching discourse.

3.3. Failure of discursive explanatory power: lag in the expression of teaching content

“It is not enough for thought to strive toward reality; reality itself must strive toward thought.” [14] The explanatory power of discourse lies in unifying theory and reality—using scholarly logic to analyze real life so that “theoretical logic” aligns with “practical logic.” Habermas’s theory of communicative action posits that language must be truthful, rational, sincere, and legitimate to be understood and to enable consensus, thereby making communication effective. At present, ideological and political teaching emphasizes the normative rigor of textbooks but neglects the accessibility of discourse expression. Some classrooms rely too heavily on abstract, macro-level exposition or the rote delivery of discrete knowledge points. Such practices weaken the explanatory and persuasive power of discourse. By contrast, online language is vivid, engaging, easy to understand, and light in tone. It highlights the agency of students, and its interactive advantage makes it more easily accepted by them, helping to bridge the gap between teachers and students and to enhance classroom atmosphere. However, online language has not yet been systematically incorporated into the discourse resources of ideological and political teaching. Instead, the classroom continues to rely on imposed authority and standardized values to achieve uniformity of thought among students. Additionally, insufficient attention to the actual needs of students diminishes their sense of gain, further reducing the effectiveness of discourse. A lack of rules for interactive dialogue, absence of feedback channels, and poor compatibility with students’ cognitive patterns and psychological tendencies all result in mismatches in discourse content, outdated methods of dissemination, and obstacles to genuine discursive interaction between teachers and students.

3.4. Challenges to discursive rights: complexity of the teaching discourse environment

First, the rise of self-media has reshaped the public-opinion space and achieved discursive egalitarianism at the individual level. This change in the dynamics of “discursive dominance” alters both the actual environment and normative orientation of ideological and political teaching in universities. The rapid spread of information and public opinion can dilute teaching principles and disrupt the integrity and systemic logic of Marxism. Second, some ideological and political course teachers’ convictions may gradually shift with changes in the social environment, especially under the influence of the so-called “outdated

theory” narrative. This perspective attributes the problems encountered during reform and opening-up to the dogmatism and obsolescence of Marxist guidance. Though logically flawed and riddled with discursive traps and paradoxes, such narratives can negatively influence some teachers, undermining their political orientation and commitment. They may adopt narrow views of Marxism’s contemporary relevance, lack a holistic grasp of the scientific content and logic of the socialist theoretical system, and fail to correctly analyze, critique, and guide responses to social issues—thereby weakening the value-guiding function of teaching discourse. Third, the integration of ideological elements into professional courses remains insufficient. Knowledge transmission, skills training, and ideological-value education are not yet deeply fused, and further efforts are needed to achieve comprehensive integration.

4. Pathways for building the discursive arena and cultivating the subjects of ideological and political course teaching in higher education

4.1. Cultivating value identification among discourse objects

Safeguarding national ideological security fundamentally requires the continuous strengthening of people’s identification with the image of the socialist state with Chinese characteristics. “The degree of identification by discourse objects depends on whether the content and expression of discourse align with their cognitive patterns, modes of thinking, and habits of reception.” [15] Any ideological construction divorced from its native cultural soil will lose its “roots,” becoming a tree without foundation or water without a source. “Culture is the basis and precondition of ideology; ideology is the fusion of various forms of culture, the core and soul within cultural phenomena. It guides the direction of cultural development and provides effective pathways for cultural innovation and integration.” [16] As a form of spiritual strength, culture shapes people’s ways of thinking, lifestyles, worldviews, outlooks on life, and value orientations. It is therefore essential to “make clear that traditional Chinese culture is the outstanding strength of the Chinese nation and constitutes our most profound reservoir of cultural soft power; to make clear that socialism with Chinese characteristics is rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, reflects the aspirations of the Chinese people, and meets the requirements of China’s development and the progress of the times, with deep historical roots and a broad practical foundation.” [17] In the relational structure of ideological and political course discourse, discourse objects (students) cannot be absent. Only when the discourse objects of these courses understand and recognize the discourse can discourse subjects (teachers) exert influence and exercise discursive leadership. By continuously integrating the unique connotations of China’s fine traditional culture—embodying ideals and beliefs, patriotic sentiments, and moral cultivation through historical anecdotes, proverbs, and maxims—into ideological and political theory courses, universities can form a culture-driven discourse system. This will enhance the explanatory, attractive, and cohesive force of discourse, highlight the contemporary value of traditional culture, and infuse traditional discourse with new meaning. Such efforts can mitigate negative tendencies among students, such as wavering ideals and beliefs, spiritual emptiness, distorted values, the avoidance of lofty aspirations, and moral decline. Ultimately, this process fosters cultural self-consciousness, deepens understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of China’s institutional strengths, strengthens the shared ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and enhances the appeal, affinity, and persuasiveness of the mainstream ideology.

4.2. Enhancing the competence of discourse subjects

The subjects of ideological and political teaching discourse are the concrete implementers of the national will. Their discursive power—manifest in influence, appeal, and leadership within the teaching process—is formed through systematic instruction. The cultivation of teachers’ qualities—ideals and beliefs, moral character, and solid scholarship—is the key to expanding the scope and effectiveness of discursive power. General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized: “No matter how times change or science advances, Marxism continues to demonstrate the great power of scientific thought and still occupies the commanding heights of truth and morality.” [18] He further noted: “Reading Marxist classics and grasping Marxist principles should become both a way of life and a spiritual pursuit.” [19] Similarly, the attitude change model in persuasion theory suggests that the credibility of communication depends on two factors, one of which is the quality and character of the communicator, which influence the audience’s trust. Teachers of ideological and political courses must therefore devote sustained effort to studying the works of Marxist classics, the fundamental texts of the sinicization of Marxism, and its most recent achievements. By consolidating their theoretical foundations, teachers can ensure their discourse is well-grounded and forceful. They must “learn to view issues from a political perspective, consciously arm their minds with Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and maintain political clarity when faced with matters of principle.” [20] In terms of ideological and political literacy, teachers should enhance their capacity through collective lesson preparation, academic exchanges and training, and practical activities. By considering Marxism’s theoretical value and practical application from both historical and contemporary perspectives, they can elucidate its scientific nature, developmental dynamism, and people-centered orientation, thereby deepening students’ understanding of ideological and political courses and addressing the weakening of explanatory power.

Strengthening teachers' professional ethics is equally crucial: by promoting role models and cultivating a climate that honors teachers and values education, schools can nurture an atmosphere of moral integrity. In practice, teachers should embody the values they advocate in the classroom through concrete action. Moreover, through academic research, teachers can fully demonstrate the scientific and truthful value of Marxist theory, thereby reinforcing the explanatory power of teaching discourse, and continuously strengthening their discursive self-awareness and confidence.

4.3. Aligning teaching discourse content and methods with the development of the times

Discursive power is reflected in the realism, scientific validity, and value orientation of discourse interpretation. The purpose of ideological and political course teaching is to cultivate and enhance university students' ideological and political literacy. The discourse system of these courses must achieve both the principled "what to say" and the skillful "how to say it." Therefore, in the teaching process, on the one hand, it is necessary to regularly update the teaching content, ensuring that it remains scientific and advanced—retaining historical resonance while reflecting the transformations of the present era. On the other hand, emphasis should be placed on heuristic education. A combination of theoretical instruction and heuristic approaches can transform rigorous theoretical language into clear and accessible teaching language, while adopting methods that encourage students' active participation. Teaching can integrate "propagative discourse that pays attention to social livelihood, governance, and trending issues," [21] employ case-based teaching, and organize student discussions in which teachers guide and regulate dialogue through analysis and commentary. The goal is to help students correctly understand that collective incidents and social injustices are not paradoxes undermining the superiority of socialism, but rather universal social problems faced by all nations in the historical process of development. In this way, the appeal of teaching subjects and content is enhanced, guiding students to reflect on real life and enabling them to address personal questions of livelihood and social conduct. Furthermore, students can be introduced to authoritative academic papers or lectures on ideological and political education. Through in-depth scholarly analysis, students gain insight into the academic frontier and contemporary issues, thereby satisfying their developmental needs and expectations. This process allows them to form a correct understanding of world developments and genuinely comprehend "why China chose the socialist path and why the Chinese people chose the Communist Party of China." [22] It nurtures and strengthens their understanding and identification with ideological and political theory, reinforces the attractiveness and discursive power of ideological and political teaching, enhances students' ability to articulate political theory, and promotes the integration and symbiosis of discourse subjects (teachers) and objects (students). This deepens the effectiveness of teaching discourse. In addition, technological empowerment should be fully leveraged: online and social media platforms can be utilized to provide positive guidance, amplify the spread of positive energy among students, and increase influence. Disciplinary collaboration should also be reinforced, promoting the deep integration of ideological elements into other courses. By aligning the educational goals, approaches, and influence of professional instruction with ideological cultivation, the inherent scientific spirit, value pursuit, and sense of responsibility within each course can be highlighted. This cooperative construction ensures that value-oriented education complements professional education, making the "meta-discourse system" of ideological and political teaching more explicit.

4.4. Optimizing the teaching discourse environment

First, the development of relevant teaching research should be advanced to harness the strengths of teaching teams, thereby achieving deeper integration of teaching and scholarship. This not only supports pedagogical reform and innovation but also demonstrates both the contemporary relevance and theoretical depth of instruction. At the same time, during ideological and political teaching, it is essential to establish a communication system linking content with student needs. By conducting phased surveys of students, teachers can unify intellectual rigor, theoretical depth, and emotional warmth. When rational narrative combines with emotional storytelling, discursive interaction and reasoned dialogue between teachers and students emerge, fostering consensus and bridging the discourse gap. Second, "only in practical labor can individuals realize their freedom and self-awareness; those who remain outside practice are alienated by knowledge. Education must therefore emphasize reflection on the experiential process of knowledge and its significance, actively constructing value systems." [23] To this end, the scope of using red resources as an extension of classroom teaching should be expanded. By engaging students in practice at revolutionary education bases and patriotic education centers, instruction can combine ideological dialogue with experiential learning, fostering reflective critique. "Only by remembering history can we open up the future; only by being good at inheriting can we be good at innovating." [24] Students should also be encouraged to participate in public lectures and presentations on Party history, the Chinese spirit, and China's institutional advantages. These activities not only help students recognize the fallacies of historical nihilism but also enrich the vitality of classroom discourse, enhance students' sense of achievement, and provide them with methods and experience in engaging with ideological and political affairs. Third, since contemporary university students are not entirely unfamiliar with China's fine traditional culture, course design should incorporate more of this heritage and interpret it thoroughly in relation to the thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Through detailed explanation and creative

transformation, this approach not only promotes the flourishing of traditional culture but also imbues ideological and political discourse with deeper substance and appeal, inspiring political participation and positive attitudes. Finally, the construction of campus culture should be strengthened to foster a comprehensive educational community that integrates multiple departments and dimensions of ideological and political work. This will elevate the overall structure of ideological and political courses, allowing students to experience the nurturing of humanistic spirit and to appreciate the truth of Marxism.

5. Conclusion

Ideological and political courses in universities are key to fulfilling the fundamental mission of fostering virtue and cultivating talent. The optimization and innovation of their teaching discourse system directly determine the effectiveness of shaping values and nurturing character. This study, grounded in the internal mechanism between the teaching discourse system of ideological and political courses and national ideological security, systematically examined the current dilemmas confronting the construction of such a system in higher education. These challenges include the weakening persuasive power of teaching subjects, deviations in the role of teaching objects, lagging expression of teaching content, and the complexity of the discourse environment. From multiple dimensions—such as cultivating value identification among discourse objects, enhancing the competence of discourse subjects, aligning discourse content and methods with the development of the times, and optimizing the teaching discourse environment—this paper proposed systematic pathways for improvement. Of course, optimizing the discourse system of ideological and political teaching is a dynamic and unending process of exploration. The pathways suggested here still require continuous testing, revision, and refinement in practice. Future research may focus more specifically on differences in discourse preferences among students of various majors and grade levels, explore the application of technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data in discourse analysis and precision teaching, and investigate, from a perspective of international comparison, how to construct an ideological and political discourse system that more fully embodies Chinese characteristics, style, and ethos.

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