

Global Korean Popular Culture | Kyung Hee University GAFC 2019

Instructor: Dr Sarah Keith | **E-mail:** sarah.keith@mq.edu.au

Course Summary

Over the last fifteen years, *Hallyu* — the Korean wave — has spread across Asia and, increasingly, the rest of the world. From *Winter Sonata* to BTS, Korean cultural contents have become increasingly visible in global mediascapes. Significant academic attention has been devoted to explaining and theorising the reasons for this global interest in Korean popular culture, as well as its future. How did Korean popular culture become a global phenomenon? What exactly do non-Korean fans find attractive about Korean popular culture? For how long will *Hallyu* continue, and what are its opportunities and threats?

This course explores the development and socio-cultural aspects of Korean popular culture both domestically and globally, and aims to develop students' understanding of transnational and transcultural aspects of Korean popular culture. We will explore various pop culture and content industries, ranging from K-pop, film, television, and webtoons, to Korean food, fashion and beauty. This course will investigate the economic and strategic factors underlying the growth of Korea's cultural contents industries, and their spread beyond Korea. Additionally, we will apply key theoretical concepts in media and cultural studies to analyse and critique the production, consumption and meanings of Korean popular culture. Key themes and topics include: modernity, globalisation, postcolonialism, hybridity, nation branding and soft power, and the internet and social media.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain key paradigms and concepts relating to the globalization of Korean popular culture
2. Analyse Korean popular culture and its texts using relevant theoretical approaches and tools
3. Understand the social, economic, and historical development of Korean popular culture and its globalization
4. Describe topics and themes in contemporary *Hallyu* scholarship

Course schedule

A complete schedule of topics, including relevant reading, is provided below. Week 1 considers global Korean popular culture through several perspectives and analytical frameworks, introducing students to key concepts, terms, and theories in cultural studies and media studies. Weeks 2 and 3 examine texts and topics within global Korean popular studies in more depth, focusing on key texts and case studies.

Class activities will consist of lecture, group or class discussions and activities, and assessments (see below). Suggested further reading and questions related to readings/lectures will be provided in class.

Required reading and attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes, bringing course notes and required materials as discussed in class, and fully prepared for discussion. Please inform your instructor if you cannot attend class for any reason.

Course assessments and due dates

60% In-class Quizzes (last day of Week 1, 2, and 3)

Students will complete short-answer quizzes (each weighted at 20%) on the last day of class in Weeks 1, 2, and 3. Each quiz will cover material covered in that week (e.g. the quiz in Week 1 will cover material from Week 1). Further details on this assessment will be discussed in class.

30% Essay (end of course)

Students will be provided with a list of open-ended essay questions, supplied in Week 2. As a guide, the essay will require students to analyse a Korean popular media text or phenomenon, using relevant theories and concepts discussed in this course, and employing relevant texts (supplied where necessary). This assignment should demonstrate a functional knowledge of the selected theory/concept in practice. Further details on this assessment will be discussed in class.

10% Participation (throughout course)

Students are required to participate in class discussions. This bringing notes/questions to class, as well as responding to tasks and questions. Further details on this assessment will be discussed in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1-1: Defining Global Korean Popular Culture

Reading: Huat, Chua Beng (2012). 'Chapter 1. East Asian Pop Culture: Mapping the Contours'. In *Structure, Audience and Soft Power in East Asian Pop Culture*, Chua Beng Huat. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 9–30.

Week 1-2: Global cultural flows

Reading: Ryoo, Woongjae (2009). 'Globalization, or the logic of cultural hybridization: the case of the Korean wave.' *Asian Journal of Communication*, 19:2, pp. 137–151.

Week 1-3: Postcolonialism, modernity, and cosmopolitanism

Reading: Choi, Jungbong (2015). Hallyu versus Hallyu-hwa: Cultural Phenomenon versus Institutional Campaign. In *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, Sangjoon Lee and Abé Markus Nornes (eds.), University of Michigan Press, pp. 31–52.

Week 1-4: Politics, nation branding and soft power

Reading: Walsh, John (2014). 'Hallyu as a Government Construct: The Korean Wave in the Context of Economic and Social Development.' In Yasue Kuwahara (ed.) *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 13–31.

Week 1-5: Technology, Mobility and the Internet

Reading: Jin, Dal Yong (2015). New Perspectives on the Creative Industries in the Hallyu 2.0 Era: Global-Local Dialectics in Intellectual Properties. In *Hallyu 2.0 : The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, Sangjoon Lee and Abé Markus Nornes (eds.), University of Michigan Press, pp. 53–70.

Assessment: In-class Quiz #1 (20%)

Week 2-1: K-pop [1]

Reading: Lie, John (2014). 'One: How Did We Get Here?'" In *K-Pop : Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea*, University of California Press, pp. 14–85.

Week 2-2: K-pop [2]

Reading: Kim, Suk-Young (2018). 'Hologram Stars Greet Live Audiences.' In *K-pop Live: Fans, Idols, and Multimedia Performance*, University of Stanford Press, pp. 129–160.

Week 2-3: Film [1]

Reading: Lee, Nikki J. Y. (2011). 'Localized Globalization and a Monster National: "The Host" and the South Korean Film Industry.' *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 45-61

Week 2-4: Film [2]

Reading: Joanna Elfving-Hwang (2015). 'Disaster Narratives in the South Korean Cultural Imaginary.' *Korea Journal*, 55(3), pp. 8–29.

Week 2-5: Drama

Reading: Youjeong Oh (2015). "The Interactive Nature of Korean TV Dramas: Flexible Texts, Discursive Consumption, and Social Media." In Sangjoon Lee, and Abé Markus Nornes (eds) *Hallyu 2.0 : The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, University of Michigan Press, pp. 133–153.

Assessment: In-class Quiz #2 (20%)

Week 3-1: Television and WebTV

Reading: Younghan Cho, Hongrui Zhu (2017). Interpreting the Television Format Phenomenon Between South Korea and China Through Inter-Asian Frameworks. *International Journal of Communication* 11, 2332–2349.

Week 3-2: Animation, manhwa, and Webtoon

Reading: Ae-Ri Yoon (2009). 'In between the Values of the Global and the National: The Korean Animation Industry.' In Berry, Chris, et al (eds.) *Cultural Studies and Cultural Industries in Northeast Asia : What a Difference a Region Makes*, Hong Kong University Press, HKU, pp. 103–115.

Week 3-3: Travel and Tourism

Reading: Kim, Sangkyun and Nam, Chanwoo (2016). 'Hallyu Revisited: Challenges and Opportunities for the South Korean Tourism', *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 21:5, pp. 524–540.

Week 3-4: Food, Fashion, Beauty, and Aesthetics

Reading: Song, Jee Eun Regina (2014). 'The Soybean Paste Girl: The Cultural and Gender Politics of Coffee Consumption in Contemporary South Korea'. *The Journal of Korean Studies* 19(2), pp. 429–448.

Week 3-5: Sports and e-Sports

Reading: Jin, Dal Yong and Chee, Florence (2008). 'Age of New Media Empires: A Critical Interpretation of the Korean Online Game Industry'. *Games and Culture*, v3, pp. 38–58.

Assessment: In-class Quiz #3 (20%)

Assessment: Essay (30%) due after course ends