Global Korean Popular Culture | Kyung Hee University GAFC 2019

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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**


**Week 1-2: Global cultural flows**


**Week 1-3: Postcolonialism, modernity, and cosmopolitanism**


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


**Week 1-5: Technology, Mobility and the Internet**


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

**Week 2-1: K-pop [1]**


**Week 2-2: K-pop [2]**

Week 2-3: Film [1]


Week 2-4: Film [2]


Week 2-5: Drama


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

Week 3-1: Television and WebTV


Week 3-2: Animation, manhwa, and Webtoon


Week 3-3: Travel and Tourism


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

Week 3-5: Sports and e-Sports


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

Assessment: Essay (30%) due after course ends