Korean Society

Summer 2019

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Office Hours: by appointment
Class Room: TBA

Course Description

This introductory course is designed to provide an overview of broad issues related to Korean history, society, and culture, with an emphasis on the changes and continuities in Korea. Firstly, this course will begin with an overview of the cultural traits and historical background of Korea. Second, we will explore themes relevant to understanding Korea, such as Confucianism, modernization and industrialization, transition to democracy, US-Korea relations, North Korean regime, and popular culture in contemporary Korea. Third, we will deal with some social problems of current Korean society. Specifically, the focus will be on some noticeable social changes and problems after 1997 Asian Financial Crisis in Korean Society. Some differences and similarities between Korea and other countries, with respect to social problems and changes, will be discussed.

Course Goals

2. Ability to critically evaluate some current social issues in Korean society.
3. Ability to write and present your viewpoints clearly and concisely to make persuasive arguments.
4. Finding Korea-related topics for further study
Course Structure

Classes will include combinations of lectures and discussions. Since this course includes discussion sessions, you should be prepared to present your opinions on topics discussed in the class to facilitate discussion. In other words, you are expected to do the required reading before the class. One or two hour lecture and one hour discussion will be combined in each class. In addition, each student (or a group of students) is required to give a 20 minute class presentation and then lead to a 10 minute class discussion on topics that you choose (this can be re-scheduled according to the class enrollment size). The class presentation will be on the last day of this course.

Grading Policy (This policy is more likely to change. A detailed grading policy will be announced on the first day of the class)

There will be mid-term exam (40%) and one short essay (5-6 double-spaced pages, 12pt) for class presentation (40%). Grade will be based on the mid-term exam, paper and presentation. Class attendance and participation will take 20% of total grade.
(The current grading policy can be changed)
A more detailed grading policy will be noticed in the class.

Required texts


Reading Package will be provided.
Class Schedule

Topic 1: A brief Korean history (from Choson Dynasty to 1990s)

Class 1: Introduction & sharing interest and knowledge on Korea

Class Overview

- Cumings, Preface

Class 2: Rise and Fall of Choson dynasty

- Cumings, Preface and chapter 1

Class 3: Japanese Colonialism

- Cumings, Chapter 3

Class 4: Korean War

- Cumings, Chapter 5
Class 5: Development & Industrialization 1

- Cumings, Chapter 6
- Some articles related to the ‘developmental state’ will be assigned

Class 6: Development & Industrialization 2


Class 7: Transition to Democracy

- Cumings, Chapter 7

Class 8: North Korea

- Cumings, Chapter 8
- Excerpt from The Impossible State, written by Victor Cha (Random House, 2012)

Class 9: North Korea & US-Korea Relations

- Cumings, Chapter 9
- Some articles related to the Six Party Talk and US-Korea alliance

**Topic 2: Current social changes and problems**

Class 10: Growing Gap in Korea


Class 11: Family, Gender, and Marriage


• Some articles covering population change issue will also be assigned.

Class 12: Current Social Issues in Korea 1

• Excerpt from *Korea: The Impossible Country*, written Daniel Tudor (Tuttle Publishing, 2012)

Class 13: Current Social Issues in Korea 2

• Excerpt from *Korea: The Impossible Country*, written Daniel Tudor (Tuttle Publishing, 2012)

**Topic 3: Global Korea**

Class 14: Korean Wave 1


Class 15:


Class 16: Wrap-up discussion and students’ class presentation

**Special Accommodations**

- Students with disabilities who are seeking to consideration for services should contact Support Center for Students with Disabilities.
- Personal help will be provided if needed.