



Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU) International Summer Semester (ISS) 2019

Discover Korea: Korean Culture & History

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SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as an introductory overview of Korean history, culture and society from ancient times to the present. It will also help students, who do not have prior knowledge, to understand the cultural norms, values and attitudes of contemporary Korean society. The course is divided into three themes: History & Politics, Culture & Society and Contemporary Issues. The 'History & Politics' theme will explore Korean ancient and modern history, with a focus not only Korean history, but also developments in East Asia including China and Japan related to the Korean peninsula. In this context, the Korean political system will also be discussed, including attention to Korean authoritarianism, democratic movements, and citizens' participation. The second theme will focus on the current 'Culture & Society' issues such as cultural norms and values, language, religion and interpersonal relations in Korean society. In the final week, the third theme on contemporary Korean pop culture will include, for example, discussion of current music, TV dramas, and movies in Korea. In this course, we will also discuss Korea's global synergy in the society and politics for the future. The class lectures will be supplemented with films, video clips, slides and other visual materials.

READING MATERIALS

- No prior readings required.
- Other reading materials will be distributed during the course, if they are needed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This course aims primarily to provide a basic understanding of Korean history, culture and society for foreign students and therefore no previous knowledge is required. However, all students are expected to participate actively throughout the course and those who do not attend and participate risk failing to course. This course will be evaluated based on a group project.

1. Group project proposal (30%)
2. Group final presentation (50%)
3. Active participation (20%)
4. The presentation attendance is mandatory for everyone

Details on the group assignment, which is also a joint project, will be discussed in class. These will also depend on the number of students in the class. The group work will be done in groups of three to five students with obligatory mixture of at least two to three different nationalities. The topics for the group work will be agreed in consultation with each group. The topics can vary from historical events, political issues, social phenomena and contemporary developments in Korean society.

The final half hour each day will be devoted to the group discussions based on the day's lecture and during the course each group will have the opportunity to make an individual presentation for five minutes. This will be reflected in the grade for the active participation (20%).

The assignment consists of two parts: a written proposal (30%) and an oral presentation (50%). The written proposal will have to be submitted seven working days after the course started. The proposal should indicate the topic, research question, analytical framework based on an academic literature, and an outline of the final presentation. A feedback session is scheduled in the second week. The final

presentations will be held during the second half of the last week. Each project group will have 20 minutes for their presentation plus 10 minutes for Q&A session.

SKKU regulations require students to attend at least 80% of all classes in order to receive a passing grade. All ISS classes are pass/fail based on the student academic achievement evaluated by grades on a scale of 100 points (grade of 60 or above is Pass). If the student requires more than pass/fail assessment due to the home university's regulations, please contact the instructor during the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

– WEEK I –

Thursday (27 June)

Course Introduction & Hangul

This lecture comprises of two different parts: first, a basic outline of the course in general and, second, the Korean written script, Hangul. In the first part, the students will be informed about the course in general including the assessment criteria and the topics. The second half of class looks into the script of *Hangul*, its history and basic rules. Students will be able to write their name in Korean at the end of class!

Friday (28 June)

Korean ancient & medieval history

Korea has a long and rich history, which traces back to BC 1000s. Archeological evidence suggests the existence of city-states on the peninsula from the eleventh century BC onwards. The lecture will give outlines of the historical events from then. Different kingdoms and dynasties will be covered such as three kingdoms (Silla, Goguryeo and Baekje) as well as the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties and their history. Furthermore, the lecture discusses the involvement with neighboring countries, especially China and Japan, and their international relations.

– WEEK II –

Monday (1 July)

Korean modern history

Imperialism was strongly practiced in the late 19th century and early 20th century around the globe. Colonial powers such as European states, the United States and the Empire of Japan were aggressively stretching their influence to other countries. At the same time in the Joseon dynasty, the royal in-law families gained control of the government, leading to mass corruption and weakening of the state, and severe poverty and peasant rebellions throughout the country. Furthermore, the Joseon government adopted a strict isolationist policy, earning it the nickname "the hermit kingdom", while the closest neighboring country, Japan, had decided to open their doors to western countries and adopted western ideas, technologies and also armaments. The lecture closely looks into this mid-19th to early 20th century history and international relations in East Asia and the Joseon dynasty, the Korean empire and the colonial period.

Tuesday (2 July)

Republic of Korea since 1948

After 35 years of colonization, Korea was finally liberated after WWII. The lecture covers the liberation, the American occupation period, the creation of the two Korean states and the Korean War. Beyond this period, the class discusses mainly South Korea from 1950s onwards. The Presidents and their presidential periods will be covered from the beginning of the Republic of Korea until today. In particular, the lecture looks into the democratization process in South Korea since the 1980.

Wednesday (3 July)

Contemporary Political System in South Korea

In South Korea, the president plays a key role in both the economy and politics. The president is the head of state, the head of government, and the chief of the armed forces. The president has the power to execute laws and policies, and can dissolve the national assembly. Due to this centralization of power, he/she has to resolve many administrative issues. This raises questions as to whether one can consider South Korea as a healthy political system characterized by consistency, mutual cooperation, and cooperation among the various national and state bodies? The lecture takes a closer look at the different branches of the political system (executive, legislature and judiciary) of South Korea.

Thursday (4 July)

Economic development of South Korea

Currently, South Korea is a member of the OECD, has a GDP/person of nearly US\$28,500 in 2017 and was the world's 6th highest export country in 2015. However, in the 1950s South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world and the people had to suffer food shortage. What can explain this rapid development from the 1950s to 2017? How was possible it for a small country like South Korea to achieve this remarkable result? This session looks into the economic development process, clarifies the reasons and searches for the evidence to answer since the Korean War.

– WEEK III –

Monday (8 July)

Culture: Code & Communication 1

Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the social members of one group or category of people from the other. Every person carries with him or herself such common patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that were learned throughout their lifetime. The programming starts in an early age within the family, it continues within the neighborhood, at school in youth groups, at the workplace, and in the living community. Then how can we distinguish one culture from another culture? Based on what evidences can we claim that one specific group is different from the other? In order to answer these questions, the lecture introduces the theory of Geert Hofstede.

Tuesday (9 July)

Culture: Code & Communication 2

The session continues to address questions related to culture and communication. How one can identify the national culture? Based on what elements, can we distinguish different national cultures? One of the most important elements would be 'values'. The comparative research on culture starts with the measurement of values. How can we define values? What could be Korean values? In order to address those questions, this lecture will discuss the cultural dimension of Geert Hofstede's work.

Wednesday (10 July)

Culture: Code & Communication 3

The lecture continues with the discussion started in the previous lectures. During the Culture: Code and Communication classes, students will be actively involved in discussion with other students in order to exchange and learn from each other's experiences and ideas from the other students from other countries.

Thursday (11 July)

Feedback session

This class is devoted to the feedback and Q&A session for the group assignment. The project groups will prepare their final presentation while the instructor will provide the feedback based on the written proposal of each project group. Each group should bring 1-2 laptops for this class.

– WEEK IV–

Monday (15 July)

Religions in South Korea

Surprisingly, a strong religious impulse remains in contemporary South Korean society despite rapid industrialization and urbanization. The ‘religious population’ has increased steadily in the last four decades in South Korea. Why is this so? The lecture also discusses different religions in South Korea including traditional shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity and the more recent arrival of Islam.

Tuesday (16 July)

Final assessment

The final group presentation is scheduled.

Wednesday (17 July)

Final assessment

The final group presentation is scheduled.

Thursday (18 July)

Final assessment

The final group presentation is scheduled.

Friday (19 July)

Contemporary Korean Culture: Korean Wave

The end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s, there was discussion of a Korean Wave in Chinese-language areas, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and even in Mainland China. The very concept of *Hallyu* means the wind hailing from Korean peninsula, spread rapidly in East Asia, signaling the coming of South Korean popular culture. At the beginning, the Korean Wave seemed to be all about South Korean soap operas, which was followed by the sudden rise of Hallyu and K-POP in the early 21st century. The lecture looks into the development of the Korean Wave and the status quo today.

- The course schedule and the lecture sequence and contents can be modified based on the number of students and guest and joint lectures.