



Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU) International Summer Semester (ISS) 2024

# K-Pop, Hallyu & Korean Society

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## SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

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This course provides an overview and *critical* analysis of the Korean Wave (known as *hallyu*), the spread of the global popularity of South Korean pop cultural products, such as K-pop, TV dramas, movies, literature, culinary customs, and more. *Hallyu* is not just a Korean but a global phenomenon, so we need to study this meteoric ascent of Korean popular culture from a global perspective.

The relationship between *hallyu* and globalization is complex and multifaceted, and we take a multidisciplinary approach so that our discussions should be based on diverse dimensions – cultural, historical, sociopolitical, economic, aesthetic, semiotic, technological, and philosophical. In studying Korean pop culture, we delve into **global problems of representation, capitalism, and nationalism**. In tandem with our theoretical discussion, we closely look at various cultural instantiations in cinema, TV dramas, music, and literature. We study the essence of cultural globalization in terms of *hallyu*, reflecting upon answers to the following key questions:

- Why is Korean pop culture relevant? What does it mean to study *hallyu* from afar?
- How did *hallyu* emerge? What is the interrelationship between globalization and *hallyu*?
- What are the conditions of possibility for the globalization of Korean pop culture?
- What makes the aesthetics and narratives of K-pop, K-dramas, and K-cinema peculiar?
- What are the significant criticisms of K-pop?
- What are the implications and prospects for *hallyu* for a ‘new global society’?

*Hallyu* is ‘cool’ Korean art and culture, and we will have lots of fun in class! No previous knowledge of Korea is required, so anyone interested in Korea and *hallyu* is welcome to join our class.

## READING MATERIALS

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There is no required textbook in this short course. But, there are some readings (articles or book chapters) students should read before class – see below in the daily course schedule. All the required readings will be made available in pdf files before the start of the ISS. Here are some recommended books if you’re interested in *hallyu*, Korean society, and cultural globalization:

- Seth, Michael. 2020. *Korea: A Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Hong, Eunyoung. 2014. *The Birth of Korean Cool*. Picador.
- Jin, Dal Yong et al. 2023. *Transnational Hallyu: The Globalization of Korean Digital and Popular Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kim, Suk-young (ed.). 2023. *The Cambridge Companion to K-Pop*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Sangjoon, and Abé Mark Nornes (eds.). 2015. *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*. University of Michigan Press.
- Oh, Youjeong. 2018. *Pop City: Korean Popular Culture and Selling of Place*. Cornell University Press.
- Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. 2019. *Globalization and Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hwang, Kyung-moon. 2022. *A History of Korea*. Bloomsbury.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

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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). The final grade is based on the following requirements:

### **1) Attendance and Participation (20%)**

Classes are based on both lectures and discussions. Therefore, regularly participating in class meetings during this short summer semester is vital. Students are highly encouraged to ask and answer questions and to make any comments on issues covered in class. Attendance will be taken for each class. Students may earn credit for their attendance at each class, while repeated and unexcused absences will cause a deduction in the student's total grade. I will post a pdf file of all the ppt lecture slides at the end of week on i-Campus, SKKU's online course page.

SKKU regulations require students to attend at least 80% of all classes.

### **2) Three Brief Reflection Papers (10% for each paper and a total of 30%)**

Students are expected to write three reflection pieces on the three areas in *hallyu*: K-pop, K-dramas, and K-movie. A reflection paper is a brief one-page written assignment in which students present their floating ideas and reflections upon features of *hallyu*. You can either email me your paper or post it on i-Campus.

The first reflection paper on K-pop by Monday noon on July 8

The second reflection paper on K-dramas by Monday noon on July 15

The third reflection paper on Korean-movie by Monday noon on July 22

### **3) A Group Project and Presentation during Week 4 (30%)**

Working in a group of three students, each student will participate in a group project relating to the four areas of *Hallyu*: K-pop, K-dramas, and K-movie. Each group chooses one of the three areas and presents a team project for about 15-20 minutes, with each member equally speaking, followed by a short discussion. All groups are encouraged to discuss the topic they are considering addressing with the instructor before beginning work. As a collaborative endeavor, the group's joint effort will be evaluated. Each participating student (as determined by the students named as contributors on the final submission) will receive the grade assigned to that group for all graded elements. The detailed guide for the group project will be discussed in class.

### **4) Final In-class Exam (20%) on Wednesday, July 24**

The exam constitutes two parts. The first part is a set of "identification" questions that ask about essential concepts, theories, events, and proper names; students should identify what they are in one or two sentences. The second part is a set of short essay questions that ask to explain some Korean pop cultural phenomena, significant features of *hallyu*, and competing theories; students' answers should be within five sentences. A list of exam questions will be given a few days before the exam, so as long as you prepare for the test, you will have no problem answering them. The purpose of the final exam is to ensure students review what they have learned in this course. 30 minutes are enough to complete the test.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### WEEK 1. KOREA AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

Monday (July 1) *What Is "Korea"?*

Tuesday (July 2) *A Brief History of Korea: A Bird's-eye View*

- Kyung-moon Hwang (2022) "Epilogue: Historical Reckoning in the Two Koreas." In *A History of Korea*.

Wednesday (July 3) *Hallyu and East Asian Popular Culture*

- Tim Adams (2022) "K-Everything: The Rise and Rise of Korean Culture." *The Guardian*, September 4.
- Beng Huat Chua (2004). "Conceptualizing an East Asian Popular Culture." *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies* 5(2): 200-221.
- Younghan Cho (2017) "Historicizing East Asian Pop Culture." In *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*.

Thursday (July 4) *The Essence of Globalization and the Meaning of "Culture"*

- Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1996) "Globalization and Culture: Three Paradigms." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31(23): 1389-1393.

### WEEK 2. ANALYSIS OF K-EVERYTHING

Monday (July 8) *Conceptualizing Hallyu: K-pop, K-dramas, K-movie, and K-everything*

- Suk-Young Kim (2018) "Historicizing K-Pop." In *K-pop Live*.
- Lisa Leung (2021) "Mediating Asian Modernities: Lessons of Korean Dramas." In *Soft Power of the Korean Wave*.
- Charles Amstrong (2021) "Parasite and the Global Arrival of Korean Cinema: Notes from the Underground." In *Soft Power of the Korean Wave*.
- The first paper on K-pop by Monday noon

Tuesday (July 9) *From Poverty to Miracle, from Dictatorship to Democracy*

- Meredith Woo (2021) "The Developmental State." In *The Oxford Handbook of South Korean Politics*.
- Sunhyuk Kim. 2002. "Civil Society and Democratization." In *Korean Society: Civil Society, Democracy, and the State*.

Wednesday (July 10) *Miracle Again? The Developmental State Redux for Korean Culture*

- Jung Bong Choi (2015) "Hallyu versus Hallyu-hwa." In *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*.

Thursday (July 11) *Entertainment Agencies: The Star-making K-pop Machine*

- Euny Hong (2023) "I May Have Started a Rumor About K-Pop, and It May Be Ruining My Life." *The New York Times*, January 3.
- Read: Shin, Chang-geun. 2023. [K-Pop Companies: The Evolution of Korean Entertainment Industry Giants \(kollection.com\)](https://www.kollection.com/entry/k-pop-companies-the-evolution-of-korean-entertainment-industry-giants)

### WEEK 3. CRITIQUE AND PROSPECT

Monday (July 15) *"The Culture Industry," "The Society of Spectacle," and the Commodification of Hallyu*

- The second paper on K-dramas by Monday noon

Tuesday (July 16) *Neoliberal Postmodernism, Manufacturing Idols, Korean Youth's Daily Lives*

- Suk-Young Kim (2020) "Disastrously Creative: K-pop, Virtual Nation, and the Rebirth of Culture Technology." *TDR: The Dram Review* 64(1): 22-35.
- John Seabrook (2012) "Factory Girls." *The New Yorker*, October 1.
- Documentary film: *9 Muses of Star Empire* (2012).

Wednesday (July 17) *Aesthetics of Korean Culture: Its Particularism and Universalism*

- Crystal Anderson (2020) "Listen to the Music: African American Popular Music and K-pop." In *Soul in Seoul*.

Thursday (July 18) *Hallyu as Global Mélange for a Transformative Agency?*

- Hyunjun Shin (2017) "K-pop, the Sound of Subaltern Cosmopolitanism?" In *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*.
- Iwabuchi (2019) "Trans-East Asia as Method." In *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*.

### WEEK 4. CASE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Monday (July 22) *Case Study of K-pop*

- Group presentations on K-pop
- The third paper on K-movie by Monday noon

Tuesday (July 23) *Case Study of K-dramas and K-movie*

- Group presentations on K-dramas and K-movie

Wednesday (July 24) *Tentative Conclusion: 'Future Past' of Korean Pop Culture for a Global Society*

- Miyoshi, Masao. 1993. "A Borderless World?" *Critical Inquiry* 19: 726-751.
- The final in-class exam (30 minutes)