**Modern Korean History and Society**

Fall Semester, 2021 (September – December)

Instructor: Benjamin A. Engel

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm (or by appointment)

Office: Bldg. 140-2, Room 305

Lecture Time: Mondays, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Location: Bldg. 140-2, Room 202

Registration Quota: 30 students (students wishing to secure an override should contact the instructor via email)

**Description**:

This course offers an introduction to the modern history of Korea, with a specific concentration on South Korea, and begins with the colonial era and covers through the current post-democratization era. We focus mainly on the political and economic development of South Korea, as well as South Korea’s relationship with international society, while also taking care to investigate people’s lived experiences in Korea during this time through social history. In this regard, this course focuses on three big questions. First, what factors led to the dynamic changes witnessed in Korea during the twentieth century? What did impacts did these dynamic changes have on the people of Korea? And how and why do historical issues which came about during the twentieth century still impact Korean society today?

Keywords: South Korea, colonization, development, democratization, social history, diplomatic history, Japan, the United States

**Readings**:

Assigned readings are listed in the course schedule below. Readings from books will be posted on ETL. Journal articles can be found online through the SNU Library website.

**Assignments**:

Primary document presentation: Each student will give a presentation on a topic related to the week’s readings. The presentation will introduce primary documents related to the student’s chosen topic. In addition to summarizing the contents of the primary documents, students are expected to explain their significance in terms of how they may challenge or support arguments in the readings or commonly held notions about Korean history. Presentations will be done individually and should be between 5-10 minutes long. Although the presentations must be in English, the chosen primary documents can be in any language.

Critical review essays: Each student will submit two critical review essays throughout the semester. These essays should review one of the mandatory readings for a given week and analyze it, not simply summarize. That is, students should put forth their own argument about the strengths and weaknesses of each work. These essays should be between 1-2 pages, Times New Roman, 12pt, single-spaced, normal margins. The reading that is being analyzed should be written at the top of the first page, along with the student’s name, student number, and the date. Students may choose the weeks in which they will submit the essays. Essays should be turned in at the beginning of class (hardcopy) of the week the essay reviews. Students should also be prepared to discuss their essays during class as part of the class discussion. This is not a formal presentation—no PPT or copies of the essays will be shared with the class.

Final exam: The final exam will be a take-home essay assignment.

Class participation: Students should complete the readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. And students should make an effort to participate in discussions about the readings. To do so, students are expected to be in class every week. Excused absences cleared with the instructor (preferably beforehand) will not count against participation grades, but unexcused absences will.

**Grading**:

Primary source presentation: 20

Critical review essays (2X15): 30

Final exam: 30

Participation: 20

**Notice on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Blatant, intentional plagiarism may result in an assignment being scored as “0.” If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please ask the instructor.

**Notices regarding Covid-19 Pandemic**:

Zoom and In-person Class Policy: Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this class will be held on Zoom during the months of September and October and then in person in the above designated classroom beginning in November. However, please be aware that this is subject to change.

Procedure in the Event of a Confirmed Case: If a student in the class is confirmed to have contracted Covid-19 while classes are being held in person, class will immediately go online for two weeks. Based on the decision of the administration, tests of students will be conducted when necessary. If a confirmed case occurs in the building where class is being held, class will also be moved online while the building is disinfected according to the decision of the administration.

Student Responsibilities: Students who have been confirmed to have contracted Covid-19, are suspected of possible contraction, or are under investigation for possible contraction must act in accordance with the guidelines of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency and also submit an “Application for Recognition of Attendance” to the instructor to receive recognition of attendance during self-quarantine. However, students should attend the class online when possible.

**Semester Schedule**

Week 1: Introduction

\*Zoom Class

*No readings*

Week 2: International and Domestic “History Wars”

\*Zoom Class

Questions: What lies at the root of disagreements about history in Korea and East Asia? How are disagreements about Korean history in South Korea linked to broader disagreements about history in East Asia? Can and how may these “history wars” be resolved?

Required Readings:

Yang, Daqing. 2008. “Historical Revisionism in East Asia: What Does Politics Have to Do with It?” In *Contested Views of a Common Past: Revisions of History in Contemporary East Asia*, ed Steffi Richter, 25-46. Frankfurt: The University of Chicago Press.

Yoon, Jong-Pil. 2020. “Recent History Wars in South Korea.” *Paedagogica Historica* 56 (4): 548-567.

Week 3: Chuseok Holiday

*No class and No readings*

Week 4: Colonial Development?

\*Zoom Class

Questions: Did Korea’s experience under Japanese colonialism prepare South Korea for its rapid economic development in the 1960s and 1970s? What continuities and discontinuities exist between the colonial era economic development and post-liberation development?

Readings:

Kohli, Atul. 1994. “Where Do High Growth Political Economies Come From? The Japanese Lineage of Korea’s ‘Developmental State.’” *World Development* 22 (9): 1269-1293.

Haggard, Stephan, David Kang, and Chung-in Moon. 1997. “Japanese Colonialism and Korean Development: A Critique.” *World Development* 25 (6): 867-881.

Week 5: Division of Korea

\*Zoom Class

Question: Why was Korea divided after World War II? Was this division the root of the Korean War and to what extent did domestic Korean factors contribute to the outbreak of the Korean War? What future may we imagine for an undivided Korea in the post-War international environment?

Reading:

Cumings, Bruce. 2005. *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History (Updated Edition)*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Chapter 4.

Park, Tae Gyun. 2012. *An Ally and Empire: Two Myths of South Korea-United States Relations, 1945-1980*. Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press. Chapter 1.

Week 6: Life in Post-Liberation Korea

\*Zoom Class

Questions: How did the Korean War impact the lives of Koreans?

Readings:

Kim, Hyun Sun. 2009. “Life and Work of Korean War Widows during the 1950s.” *The Review of Korean Studies* 12 (4): 87-109.

Hahn, Monica. 2020. “Reclaimed Areas and Newly Liberated Areas: Understanding the Borderlands of Division as the Testing Grounds for Reunification.” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 8 (2): 265-290.

Kim, Andrew Eun-gi. 2002. “The Rise of Protestantism in Contemporary South Korea: Non-religious Factors in Conversion.” *The Review of Korean Studies* 5 (1): 11-29.

Week 7: The Developmental State

\*Zoom Class

What are the characteristics of the South Korean developmental state and what factors lay behind South Korea’s rapid economic development beginning in the 1960s?

Readings:

Kim, Byung-Kook. 2011. “The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park.” In *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, eds. Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 7.

Woo, Jung-en. 1991. *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapters 4, 5.

Week 8: South Korea-Japan Relations and Inter-Korean Relations in the 1960s and 1970s

\*Zoom Class

Questions: Why were South Korea-Japan relations not normalized until 1965 and what was the product of the normalization treaty? How did the first inter-Korean dialogue in the early 1970s come about and why did it fail to produce any meaningful change?

Readings:

Lee, Jung-Hoon. 2011. “Normalization of Relations with Japan: Toward a New Partnership.” In *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, eds. Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 15.

Le, Tom Phuong. 2019. “Negotiating in Good Faith: Overcoming Legitimacy Problems in the Japan-South Korea Reconciliation Process.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78 (3): 621-644.

Chae, Ria. 2014. “Diplomatic War: Inter-Korean Relations in the 1970s.” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 27 (2): 307-330.

Week 9: Democratization and Labor Movements

\*In-person Class

Questions: What factors drove the democratization and labor movements in the 1970s and 1980s? How was the democratization movement able to eventually succeed?

Readings:

Lee, Namhee. 2007. *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1.

Sohn, Hak-kyu. 1989. *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea*. London: Routledge. Chapters 4, 6, 7.

Ogle, George E. 1990. *South Korea: Dissent within the Economic Miracle*. London: Zed Books. Chapter 4.

Week 10: The Role of America: Pushing Korea Forward or Holding Korea Back?

\*In-person Class

Questions: Was the U.S. presence in Korea and its intervention into domestic Korean politics a force which progressed democratization in South Korea or did the U.S. inhibit the development of democracy? How may have South Korean political development changed if U.S. policymakers had intervened in different ways at different times?

Readings:

Park, Tae Gyun. 2012. *An Ally and Empire: Two Myths of South Korea-United States Relations, 1945-1980*. Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press. Chapter 7.

Brazinsky, Gregg. 2007. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. Chapter 8 and Conclusion.

Week 11: Political Inter-Korean Relations: Engagement and the Bomb

\*In-person Class

Questions: How have inter-Korean relations developed from hostile competition during the Cold War to phases of tension and rapproachment in the post-Cold War and post-democratization eras? What are the competing perspectives on inter-Korean relations within South Korea?

Readings:

Moon, Chung-In. 2012. *The Sunshine Policy: In Defense of Engagement as a Path to Peace in Korea*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press. Introduction and Chapters 1-3.

Milani, Marco. 2019. “Progressive and Conservative Visions of Inter-Korean Relations.” In *The Korean Paradox: Domestic Political Divide and Foreign Policy in South Korea*, eds. Marco Milani, Antonio Fiori, and Matteo Dian. London: Routledge. Chapter 4.

Week 12: Personal Inter-Korean Relations: Divided Families and “Defectors”

\*In-person Class

Questions: Following the end of the Cold War and a wave of defections from North Korea, how have defectors come to view and adapt to South Korean society? What are the younger generation’s opinions on traditional inter-Korean issues such as unification and divided familes?

Readings:

Foley, James A. 2003. *Korea’s Divided Families: Fifty Years of Separation*. London: Routledge. Chapters 4, 5.

Chun, Kyung Hyo. 2020. “Representation and Self-Presentation of North Korean Defectors in South Korea: Image, Discourse, and Voices.” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 8 (1): 93-112.

Hur, Aram. 2018. “Adapting to Democracy: Identity and the Political Development of North Korean Defectors.” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 18 (1): 97-115.

Week 13: Post-Democratization Korean Politics

\*In-person class

Questions: How have Korean domestic politics developed following the success of the democratization movement in 1987? Is South Korea an exception to the democratic backsliding which has been noted across the globe?

Readings:

Choe, Jang Jip. 2012. *Democracy after Democratization: The Korean Experience*. Stanford: Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. Chapters 1-4.

Chang, Paul. 2018. “Candlelight Protests in South Korea: The Legacies of Authoritarianism and Democratization.” *Ewha Journal of Social Sciences* 34 (1): 5-18.

Shin, Gi-Wook. 2020. “South Korea’s Democratic Decay.” *Journal of Democracy* 31 (3): 100-114.

Week 14: Korea’s Place in the World: Current Status and Prospects

\*In-person Class

Questions: How is South Korea’s relationship with the United States evolving following the rise of China and the increased economic reliance on South Korea-China trade? Is the Korean Wave providing Korea with a new source of soft power which can increase its visibility on the world stage?

Readings:

Lee, Sook Jong. 2011. “South Korean Soft Power and How South Korea Views the Soft Power of Others.” In *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, eds. Sook Jong Lee and Jan Melissen. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 7.

Sohn, Yul. 2019. “South Korea under the United States-China Rivalry: Dynamics of the Economic-Security Nexus in Trade Policymaking.” *The Pacific Review* 32 (6): 1019-1040.

Week 15: Final Exam (take home)

*No Class and No Readings*