

Korea-Southeast Asia Relations (M2052.000400)

SNU GSIS, Spring 2026

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. -12:50 p.m.
Building 140-1, Room 102

Instructor: Yoon Ah Oh (yoonah.oh at snu.ac.kr)
Office Hours: TBA
TA: TBA

Course Description

This seminar provides an intensive study of contemporary South Korea-Southeast Asia relations in economic, security, and cultural domains. In doing so, it pays great attention to how general theories of international relations, political economy, and development studies can be fruitfully applied to the study of the interactions between South Korea and Southeast Asia. Equally importantly, this course is also designed to equip students with abilities to work seriously with both qualitative and quantitative data while informed by historical understanding of these relationships. Students will be asked to gather, describe, and analyze data to gain insights on Korea-Southeast Asia relations.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

1	Attendance and general participation	10 %
2	Comparative country statistics I, II, and III	30 %
3	Midterm exam	10 %
4	Project phase I: Dataset construction	20 %
5	Project phase II: Descriptive analysis and question development	25 %
6	Oral defense of the project	5 %

1. Attendance and general participation

2 Comparative country statistics (Rounds I, II and III): Students will compile country-level statistics in three rounds.

3. Midterm exam

4. Project phase I: Dataset construction: Students will build a dataset on a selected topic and prepare a brief technical note.

5. Project phase II: Descriptive analysis and question development: Using the dataset, students will conduct a preliminary analysis, then formulate a research question and develop a hypothesis.

6. Oral defense of the project: Toward the end of the semester, students will present their project in class and will be evaluated on their ability to explain and justify their research design and execution.

Course Reading

The majority of course readings will be made available through eTL.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism, including presenting generative **AI software content** as your own, is a violation of academic integrity. It is a serious offense and will not be treated lightly. It will result in lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of more serious punishments.

AI Guidelines

Generative AI may be used only as a supplementary learning tool. AI-generated content, whether used directly or edited, **must not be included in written assignments**. The only exception is seeking technical assistance with how to use a software tool or debugging for data-related tasks.

Use of Digital Devices for In-Person Classes

The use of electronic devices is **prohibited**. Violating this policy will negatively impact your participation grade. Students with approved accommodations from the Center for Students with Disabilities permitting the use of personal electronic devices must present the accommodation letter to the instructor in advance.

Paper Note-Taking Required

Bring pen and paper to class. Handwriting improves recall and understanding. Avoiding devices helps minimize digital distraction.

Recording Policy

Video and/or audio recording of any course activity is **prohibited**. This includes using speech-to-text apps to take notes or transcribe lectures. Students with approved accommodations from the Center for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present the accommodation letter to the instructor in advance of any recording being done.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course Overview and Historical Background

Readings Not Required

Week 2: A Framework for Analyzing Korean Policy toward Southeast Asia

Snyder, Scott A. 2018. *South Korea at the Crossroads: Autonomy and Alliance in an Era of Rival Powers*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Chapter 1.

* Recommend:

Easley, Leif-Eric, and Kyuri Park. 2018. "South Korea's Mismatched Diplomacy in Asia: Middle Power Identity, Interests, and Foreign Policy." *International Politics* 55(2): 242-263.

Kim, Sung-Mi. 2016. *South Korea's Middle-Power Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges*. London: Chatham House.

Week 3: South Korea's Relations with Southeast Asia up to 2010

Lecture Notes

* Recommend:

Koh, David. 2010. "South Korea and Southeast Asia: Ideas for Deepening the Partnership." In *Korea's Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations*, Books and Monographs, ed. David I. Steinberg. ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. chapter, 31–47.

Week 4: South Korea's Southeast Asia Policy

Lecture Notes

Oh, Yoon Ah. 2020. "Korea's New Southern Policy: Progress, Problems and Prospects," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, East-West Center, No. 513, July 16.

Oh, Yoon Ah. 2023. "Change or Continuity? Seoul's Approach to Southeast Asia under the New Southern Policy" *Korea Observer* 54(1): 103-126.

* Recommended:

Choe, Wongi. 2021. "New Southern Policy": Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy. *Asie. Visions* No. 118, IFRI, January.

Nicolas, Françoise. 2021. "The Economic Pillar of Korea's New Southern Policy." Center for Asian Studies, Notes de l'Ifri, *Asie. Visions* No. 120, IFRI, February.

Week 5: SE Asia's Reception of Korea's SE Asia policy

Pitsuan, Surin. 2010. "Perspectives on Korea's Role in ASEAN" in Steinberg, David I. ed. *Korea's Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Chapter 2

Ha, Hoang Thi and Glenn Ong. 2020. *Assessing the ROK's New Southern Policy towards ASEAN*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective, no. 7. https://www.iscas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_7.pdf

* Recommended:

Wong, Steven C.M. 2020. "Are the Economics of the New Southern Policy More Aspirational than Real?" In *The New Southern Policy: Catalyst for Deepening ASEAN-ROK Cooperation*, ed. Hoo Chiew Ping. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, 59-73.

Teo, Sarah, Bhubhinder Singh, and See Seng Tan. 2016. "Southeast Asian Perspectives on South Korea's Middle Power Engagement Initiatives." *Asian Survey* 56(3): 555-580.

Week 6: A Comparative View: China and Japan in Southeast Asia

Chen, Ian Tsung-Yen, and Alan Hao Yang. 2013. "A Harmonized Southeast Asia? Explanatory Typologies of ASEAN Countries' Strategies to the Rise of China." *The Pacific Review* 26(3), 265-288.

Oh, Yoon Ah. 2021. "Southeast Asian Public Perceptions of China: Clusters and Gaps." *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 19(3): 377-403.

Pressello, Andrea. 2014. "The Fukuda Doctrine and Japan's Role in Shaping Post-Vietnam War Southeast Asia." *Japanese Studies* 34(1): 37-59.

* Recommended:

Shambaugh, David L. 2018. "U.S.-China Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Power Shift or Competitive Coexistence?" *International Security* 42(4): 85-127.

Shiraishi, Takashi, and Takaaki Kojima. 2013. *ASEAN-Japan Relations*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Chapters 2 and Skim Chapter 11, and 12

Smith, Stephen N. 2021. "Harmonizing the Periphery: China's Neighborhood Strategy under Xi Jinping." *The Pacific Review* 34(1): 56-84.

Chen, Ping-Kuei. 2020. "Taiwan's 'People-Centered' New Southbound Policy and Its Impact on US-Taiwan Relations." *The Pacific Review* 33(5): 813-841.

Week 7: Korea-Southeast Asia Trade

Lecture Notes

Oh, Yoon Ah. 2024. "A Key Partner Only Now? The Present-Centredness in Korea's Views of its Economic Relations with Southeast Asia." *Asian Affairs* 55(2): 243-262.

* Recommended:

Kim, Kyunghoon. 2023 "Towards sustainable and resilient ASEAN-Korea economic integration 2.0." *Asia and the Global Economy* 3(2): 100061.

Kim, Jong-Kil. 2010. "Korea's Economic Relations with Southeast Asia" in Steinberg, David I. ed. *Korea's Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Statistical data from IMF DOTS, ASEANstats and KITA

Week 8: Foreign Direct Investment in Korea-Southeast Asia Relations I

Lecture Notes

* Recommended:

Lee, Keun. 1994. "Structural Adjustment and Outward Direct Foreign Investment." *Seoul Journal of Economics* 7(2): 179-211.

Statistical data from ASEANstats, UNCTAD, and Korea Exim Bank

Week 9: Midterm exam

Week 10: Foreign Direct Investment in Korea-Southeast Asia Relations II

Lecture Notes

* Recommended:

Tong, Yee-Siong, Ari Kokko, Adnan Seric. 2019. *Linking FDI And Local Firms for Global Value Chain Upgrading: Policy Lessons from Samsung Mobile Phone Production in Viet Nam*. UNIDO Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development Working Paper Series WP 5. <https://www.unido.org/api/opentext/documents/download/15784588/unido-file-15784588>

Week 11: Development Cooperation in Korea-Southeast Asia Relations

Lecture Notes

Statistical data from OECD, the Korea Economic Development Cooperation Fund, and the Korea International Cooperation Agency

Week 12: Project Presentations I

Week 13: Project Presentations II

Week 14: Korea-Southeast Asia Security Cooperation (Class Meets Online)

Lecture Notes

Bae, Ki-Hyun. 2020. "Divergent Ideas, Distant Friendship: Assessing Korea's 30 Years of Political-Security Diplomacy with ASEAN" *Korea Observer* 51(4): 523-550.

*Recommended:

Steinberg, David I. 2010. *Korea's Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. [Chapter 4](#)

Teo, Sarah. 2023. "South Korea in the ASEAN-centered Regional Network." *Asian Politics & Policy* 15(1): 98-112.

Lee Jaehyon. 2016. "South Korea and the South China Sea: A Domestic and International Balancing Act." *Asia Policy* 21(1): 36-40.

Gaad, Adam. 2021. "Why South Korea Fell Behind Japan in Southeast Asia." *The Diplomat*. December 1, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/why-south-korea-fell-behind-japan-in-southeast-asia/>

Bae, Ki-Hyun. 2021. "Regional Security Order Transition and the ROK's Order Management: Critique and Suggestions." *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 33:4, 557-577.

Week 15: People-to-People Exchanges and Public Perceptions in Korea-Southeast Asia Relations

Lecture Notes

Statistical data from Statistics Korea, ASEANstats, and World Bank

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