In the first part of the semester, we will examine major political, social, and cultural developments in Korea from antiquity to the twentieth century. In the second part, we will delve into intriguing questions about modern Korea that are rooted in historical developments and processes at the local, regional, and global levels. The aims of this course are as follows:

(1) Gain a solid understanding of Korean cultural history with a focus on the modern era.

(2) Learn about how Korea fits within broader patterns of East Asian and global history.
(3) Learn how to approach the cultural history (of any country) critically and from a variety of angles.

(4) Expand your ability to engage in cross-cultural understanding.

(5) Improve your ability to identify and discuss the main arguments of an academic reading.

**Required Text:**

Course Reader, available at the Humanities Copy Center (1650 Humanities Building)

**Optional Texts:**

We will be working without a textbook this semester. Some of you might like to consult a textbook from time to time for supplementary information about Korean history and culture. I have placed several Korean history textbooks on reserve at College Library to meet this need.


*This is a good overall history of Korea from antiquity to present.*


*This is a good book for twentieth-century Korean history.*


*This is a concise overview of the post-1945 histories of North and South Korea.*

**Evaluation:**

(1) Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and consistent participation in our MWF lectures are expected of all students. This includes your active involvement in small-group activities. Frequent absences (more than 3 over the course of the semester) may
adversely affect your grade. Class participation in our MWF lectures will make up 15% of your final grade.

(2) **Discussion Section**: 10%

(3) **Synopses**: You will write a minimum of 10 one-page synopses (approximately 250 words) to selected secondary source readings that appear in this syllabus. The selected readings for which you can write synopses are marked with an asterisk (*). Synopses for these readings (of which there are approximately 20) are the only ones that you can receive credit for.

Synopses are due at the start of class on the day that the reading has been assigned. *Synopses must be on time to receive credit, so be sure to arrive to class on time.* Evaluation of synopses will be done by your peers, not by the instructor or TA. Evaluated synopses are due at the start of the next class meeting. *You must bring your peer’s synopsis (which you will have evaluated) to the next class meeting in order to receive credit for your own synopsis.* The only exception I will consider for the late return of a peer’s synopsis (and awarding of credit for your own synopsis) is illness or other good reason for absence. On February 28 and April 27, you will submit a folder containing all of your evaluated synopses. Synopses will make up 15% of your final grade.

(4) **Midterms**: There will be two midterms this semester. The first will be on February 18, the second on March 23. The second midterm will be cumulative. The midterms will make up 20% of your final grade.

(5) **Paper**: You will write a 6-8 page paper (12-font, double-spaced) in the second half of the semester. Your paper will be about one of the four topics that make up the second part of this class (March 28-May 2). Your first draft is due no later than the April 29 class, but you should really try to submit your first paper sooner than this. After you receive the first evaluation to your paper, you can revise and re-submit multiple times. The final deadline for your final draft is May 8. The paper will make up 20% of your final grade.

(6) **Final**: For the final, you will create a group project in which you will tackle your own topic about Korean history and present your findings either in a poster or a webpage. All groups will display their final projects on May 8 (time). This assignment will amount to 20% of your final grade.
(7) Recap of Grading:

Attendance & Participation = 15%
Discussion Section = 10%
Synopses = 15%
Midterm = 10% + 10% = 20%
Paper = 20%
Final = 20%

Other Expectations:

(1) The TA and I will evaluate your work in a number of areas – in-class discussion, exams, and written work. Our primary expectation is that you take active part in the process of learning, both at the individual and group levels. To accomplish this, we need you to consistently invest time in the class – to do the readings and assignments in preparation for class meetings, as well as to reflect and form your own views on the readings and other course materials.

(2) Use laptops and other electronic devices in class only for class-related purposes that contribute to the individual and collective learning process.

(3) Observe the submission times and dates for assignments. This is out of fairness to your classmates, and also out of consideration to the graders.

(4) Be sure not to engage in any form of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. For guidelines about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, see the webpage prepared by the Division of Student Life:

http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html

(5) Be accountable. Carefully read this syllabus, course emails, and assignment guidelines, and pay attention to announcements in class and in sections. When in doubt, ask me, the TA, or a classmate.

Note on Romanization:

Nowadays, Korean is written primarily in Hangeul, a phonetic script invented in the fifteenth century. Hangeul is well suited for the Korean language; the Roman alphabet is not. There are two widely used Romanization system for modern
Korean: the **McCune Reischauer System** (MCR) and the **Revised Romanization System** (RR). The South Korean government adopted the latter system in 2000, and its use has expanded a lot since then, especially in South Korean publications. The MCR System was created in the 1930s and remains the Romanization system of choice among scholars, librarians, and publishers. As a result, most scholarly articles and books use the MCR System. In this class, we will use the MCR system. There are pros and cons for each system. I have chosen to use the MCR system primarily because most of our readings use it. Always feel free to ask if there’s a Romanized word that you’re not sure about.

**Part 1: Preliminaries**

**W 1/19 – Course Introduction**

**F 1/21 – What Is Korea?**

Read this syllabus carefully, esp. pp. 1-4.


**M 1/24 – What is Sinitic Civilization?**


**W 1/26 – Buddhism: History and Concepts**


F 1/28 – “Korean” Buddhism


*You can write a synopsis for this reading and submit it at the start of class on Friday.

F 1/28 – Film Screening

*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring* (dir. KIM Ki-duk, 2003, 104 min.)

Time and location to be announced.

M 1/31 – Buddhism Today

Guest Lecture by Dr. Kyong-Mi Kwon, East Asian Languages and Literature Department, UW-Madison

Reading will be available on Learn@UW.

W 2/2 – Confucianism in Chosŏn Korea


F 2/4 – Confucianism and National Culture


*You can write a synopsis for the entire Abelmann reading (pp. 261-285) and submit it at the start of class on Friday.

F 2/4 – Film Screening

The Houseguest and My Mother (dir. SHIN Sang-ok, 1961, 102 min.)

Time and location to be announced.

M 2/7 – Confucianism Today

Guest Lecture by Dr. Su Yun Lee

Reading will be available on Learn@UW.

W 2/9 – Confucianism and Postcolonialism

*Eunhee Kim YI, "Mothers and Sons in Modern Korea," Korea Journal 41:4 (Winter 2001), 5-27.


F 2/11 – Nationalism


M 2/14 – Nationalism in Korea

Guest Lecture by Dr. Dafna Zur, University of British Columbia

W 2/16 – Midterm Review

F 2/18 – Midterm #1

M 2/21 – Imperialism in East Asia


W 2/23 – Cultural Nationalism


F 2/25 – Socialist Movements

Michael E. ROBINSON, Korea’s Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 69-75.


M 2/28 – The Asia-Pacific War: The Experiences of Ordinary People (1)

SYNOPSIS FOLDER DUE IN CLASS FOR REVIEW


AND


AND


AND


AND/OR
AHN Juretsu, “Forced Labor,” 192-198,

W 3/2 – The Asia-Pacific War: The Experiences of Ordinary People (2)


AND


AND/OR

YOSHIZAWA Hisako, “Until the War Ended,” 191-220.

F 3/4 – The Asia-Pacific War: The Politics of Memory


M 3/7 – National Division and the Korean War


KANG Sangjung, “Memories of a Zainichi Korean Childhood,” Japan Focus. Available at:

http://japanfocus.org/-Kang-Sangjung/2343

W 3/9 – Economic Development and Its Discontents: South Korea


OPTIONAL:

F 3/11 – Economic Development and Its Discontents: North Korea


*Suk-Young KIM, “Springtime for Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang: City on Stage City as Stage,”* 51:2 (Summer 2007), 24-40.

OPTIONAL:


M 3/21 - Midterm Review

W 3/23 – Midterm #2

Part 2: Understanding Contemporary Korea

F 3/25 – What is Cultural History?


**Question #1: Why do self-immolation, blood pledges (*hyôlsô*), and other patterned forms of protest remain part of South Korea’s political culture?**

M 3/28 – The Cultural Dimension of Protest in South Korea


W 3/30 – Self-Immolation


AND/OR

Michael BIGGS, “The Transnational Diffusion of Protest by Self Immolation,” 1-41. Available at:

www.wzb.eu/zkd/zcm/pdf/presentation/biggs06_berlin.pdf

F 4/1 – Contemporary Protest Issues


M 4/4 – Paper Workshop

Question #2: What forces have shaped Korean families over the past century?

W 4/6 – New Understandings of Affectivity


AND/OR


http://www.ekoreajournal.net/

F 4/8 – Reading Day

M 4/11 – Gender in Contemporary South Korea


W 4/13 – Neoliberalism in South Korea


AND/OR


Both articles are available at:

http://www.ekoreajournal.net/

F 4/15 - Workshop for Final Project

**Question #3: How can we conceptualize Korean cuisine?**

M 4/18 – Food and Postcolonial History


AND


AND/OR

HAN Kyung-Koo, “Noodle Odyssey: East Asia and Beyond,” *Korea Journal* 50:1 (Spring 2010), 60-84. Available at:

http://www.ekoreajournal.net/
W 4/20 – Consuming Coffee


AND

*BAK Sangmee, “From Strange Bitter Concoction to Romantic Necessity: The Social History of Coffee Drinking in South Korea,” Korea Journal 45:2 (Summer 2005), 37-59. Available at:

http://www.ekoreajournal.net/

AND/OR


F 4/22 – Film Screening

* A State of Mind (dir. Daniel GORDON, 2004, 94 min.)

Time and location to be announced.

M 4/25 – Globalization and Korean Foods


Question #4: How do North Koreans see the world?

W 4/27 – Understanding North Korea, Understanding America


SYNOPSIS FOLDER DUE IN CLASS

F 4/29 – Love in North Korea


AND/OR

Sonia RYANG, “Biopolitics or the Logic of Sovereign Love – Love’s Whereabouts in North Korea, in North Korea: Toward a Better Understanding (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 57-84.

LAST DAY TO SUBMIT THE FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER

M 5/2 – Historical Perspectives


W 5/4 – Reading Day

F 5/6 – Reading Day

Su 5/8 – Final Project Presentation

12:25 – 2:25, Location TBA

FINAL DRAFTS OF PAPER ALSO DUE AT 12:25