Hist 335: Korean History, 1945 to present

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Lectures: TR 11:00-12:15, Education Science 304  
Film Screenings: F 2:30-4:30, Humanities 1217

Just five years after the end of World War II, another war erupted in what was then an obscure backwater in Northeast Asia. Known as the Korean War, this devastating conflict involved twenty-one countries and resulted in nearly 3.5 million civilian and military deaths. A cease-fire agreement brought an end to combat in 1953, but the primary combatants technically remain in a state of war today – a full sixty years later. Although sometimes referred to by Americans as the “forgotten war,” the Korean War is far from forgotten in North Korea and South Korea. In fact, the foundational event was sewn tightly – and permanently – into the fabric of the two Koreas. This course explores the impact of the Korean War on North and South by paying close attention to the topics of cold war ideologies, political activism, historical memory, and contemporary North-South relations. The objectives of this course are:

1) to see the importance of considering multiple perspectives on a key event in modern history.

2) to think about the ways in which the past shapes the present.

3) to learn how to find and analyze primary sources.

4) to take part in open and intelligent discussions both in class and online.

5) to write a historical research paper.

Required Texts:


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

(1) **Attendance and Participation**: Regular attendance, close readings of assigned materials, and consistent classroom participation are expected from all students. Attendance and participation will make up 20% of your final grade.

(2) **Blog Postings**: We will be using Edublogs this semester. The URL for our course blog is [http://contemporarykoreanhistory.edublogs.org/](http://contemporarykoreanhistory.edublogs.org/). The blog is intended to be an open forum for you to make observations, raise points, and pose questions about course materials. *In this sense, it is an extension of our class meetings.* What you post in your entries will help me to gain a better understanding of how you are engaging with the materials that I have assigned. You can write entries in response to readings, films, images, and your own research (later in the semester). You're also welcome to relate a contemporary news story or film or TV series or other topic that relates in a pertinent way to this class.

You will be graded for your top 10 blog entries, and you may post more than 10 times over the course of the semester. Entries should be at least 250 words in length. *Be sure to post by 9 a.m. on the day of class so that I have time to read what you've written.* Rather than wait until the last few weeks of the semester, get started early! Your blog entries will amount to 25% of the final grade (10 blog entries x 2% = 20%).

(3) **Blog Comments**: Comments are an important component of the blog, so I also want you to contribute intelligent comments to your classmates’ entries on a regular basis. Be prepared to post a minimum of 25 comments over the course of the semester. Same request as above: Rather than wait until the last few weeks of the semester, get started early! Blog comments will amount to 5% of the final grade.

(4) **Short Paper**: You will write a 5-6 page paper (12-font, double-spaced) due on March 1. I will give you the guidelines for this assignment on February 14. The short paper will make up 20% of the final grade.

(5) **Final Paper**: You will also write a 10-12 page research paper (12-font, double spaced) due on May 18. We will work on this paper in the second half of the semester. The final paper will make up 30% of the final grade.
(6) Final Paper Preparation: Preliminary research and planning is essential to put together a good final paper. You will get started on this process after the short paper, and will pick up the pace in subsequent weeks. On April 10, the first class meeting after spring break, you will submit a topic proposal. And some time between April 12 and April 19, you will meet with me to discuss it. Topic proposal and one-on-one consultation with me will make up 5% of the final grade.

(7) Recap of Grading:

Attendance & Participation: 20%
Blog Postings: 20%
Blog Comments: 5%
Short Paper (5-6 pages): 20% - Due March 1
Final Paper (10-12 pages): 30% - Due May 18
Paper Preparation (Topic Proposal & Meeting with Instructor): 5%

Course Regulations:

(1) No electronic devices in class without my permission. This includes laptops, tablets, smart phones, and so on.

(2) Late paper submissions will receive a 5-point deduction for each late day.

(3) Plagiarism – the use of another person’s words or ideas without citation – will not be tolerated in any assignment for this course.

(4) 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.

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, but the RR system and other forms of Romanization may appear in readings and other course materials. Just do your best with names, places, and terms. If you have any questions about pronunciation, inconsistent spellings, or anything else concerning Romanization, feel free to ask.

Tues., Jan. 24 – Course Introduction

SECTION 1: Perspectives on the Korean War

Thurs., Jan. 26 – American Perspectives

Read through this syllabus carefully. Consider it a written contract between you and me. It will remain in effect throughout the entirety of the course.

Sign up on Edublogs at http://edublogs.org/signup/. By email, send me your username and the email address you wish to use with it. You don’t need to create your own blog. A username is all that you need to be an author on the course blog.


Articles from the Harold Boyle Papers (1950), pp. 1-17.

Fri., Jan. 27 – Steel Helmet (dir. Samuel Fuller, 1951, 85 min.)

Tues., Jan. 31 – South Korean Perspectives: Civilians


Thurs., Feb. 2 – North Korean Perspectives: The State


Fri., Feb. 3 – On the Railway (1966, 90 min.)

OR True Daughter of the Party (Revolutionary Opera, 155 min.)

Tues., Feb. 7 – South Korean Perspectives: The State


Thurs., Feb. 9 – The Korean War: Then and Now


OR Welcome To Dongmakgol (dir. PARK Kwang-Hyun, 133 min., 2005)

Tues., Feb. 14 – Film Discussion and Guidelines for Short Paper


SECTION 2: The Cold War, Economic Development, and Political Protest

Thurs., Feb. 16 – Modernization of the Fatherland

HAN Hong-koo, “South Korea and the Vietnam War,” in Developmental Dictatorship and the Park Chung Hee Era (Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2006), pp. 248-270. NOTE: This reading is not included in the course reader. It will be available on Learn@UW under Content.

CHOI In-Hoon, “The Voice of the Governor General,” in The Voice of the Governor-General and Other Stories of Modern Korea (Norwalk, Conn.: EastBridge, 2002), 165-190.

Fri., Feb. 17 - Silmido (dir. KANG Woo-Suk, 2003, 135 min.)

OR The Road To Sampo (dir. LEE Man-hee, 1975, 98 min.)

Tues., Feb. 21 - Critique and Repression


**Thurs., Feb. 23 – The Kwangju Uprising**


**Fri., Feb. 24 – May 18** (dir. KIM Ji-hun, 2007, 120 min.)

**Tues., Feb. 28 – The Minjung Movement (aka, the Democratization Movement)**


**Thurs., Mar. 1 – No Class: First Paper Due**

**Fri., Mar. 2 – Chilsu and Mansu** (dir. PARK Kwang-su, 1988, 109 min.)
Tues., Mar. 6 – Undongkwôn


Thurs., Mar. 8 – Protest Songs

Guest Lecture by Ms. Hye Eun CHOI (UW-Madison, History Department)

Reading tba

Tues., Mar. 13 – Using Historical Sources (1)


Additional reading tba

Thurs., Mar. 15 – No Class – Preliminary Research

Tues., Mar. 20 – Using Historical Sources (2)


Additional reading tba

SECTION 3: Remembering the War

Thurs., Mar. 22 – Recovering the Past


Fri., Mar. 23 – Last Witness (dir. LEE Doo-yong, 1980, 155 min.)

Tues., Mar. 27 – Truth and Reconciliation?


KIM Dong-choon and Mark Selden, “South Korea’s Embattled Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Japan Focus, March 1, 2010: japanfocus.org/-Kim-Dong_choon/3313


Thurs., Mar. 29 – Korean American Memories


SPRING BREAK: Mar. 31 – Apr. 8

**Tues., Apr. 10** – North Korean War Memories


Additional reading tba.


**PAPER TOPICS DUE IN CLASS**

**Thurs., Apr. 12** – No Class – Individual Consultations with Instructor

**Tues., Apr. 17** – No Class – Individual Consultations with Instructor

**Thurs., Apr. 19** – No Class – Individual Consultations with Instructor

**SECTION 5: Contemporary North Korea**

**Tues., Apr. 24** – North Korean Beliefs (1)


**Thurs., Apr. 26 – North Korean Beliefs (2)**


**Fri., Apr. 27 – Crossing** (dir. KIM Tae-kyun, 2008)

**Tues., May 1 – North Korean Beliefs (3)**


**Thurs., May 3 – Contemporary Issues**

Readings tba

**Fri., May 4 – Film screening tba**

**Tues., May 8 – Contemporary Issues**

Readings tba

**Thurs., May 10 – Reading Day**

**Fri., May 18 – Final Paper Due**

*Submit a hard copy of your final paper no later than 5 pm at my office or in my mailbox.*