

DISS241-00: CONTEMPORARY KOREAN SOCIETY

Spring 2015

Division of International Studies

Korea University

Instructor: Professor Andrew Eungi Kim
Office: International Studies Hall #532
Office Hours: 14:00-16:00 Wednesday and Thursday (and by appointments)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the main aspects of contemporary Korean society, including those pertaining to the family, industrialization, gender, aging, labor, population, religion, and political system. The course will specifically focus on topics and issues that figure prominently in the lives of the Korean people, such as patriarchy, modernization, education frenzy, urbanization, authoritarianism, collectivism, and anti-Americanism. Each of these issues will be examined through sociological, historical, and comparative perspectives. The assigned readings include chapters from an introductory sociology textbook to enhance the students' understanding of the workings of society and to help broaden their perspective to appreciate the social institutions of other countries. Every effort will be made to make each session lively and engaging, so your active participation is extremely important and is a vital part of the course.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this course is to prepare students with the knowledge and analytical tools needed to develop balanced views on Korean society. Toward this end, students are expected to:

- understand the key dimensions and principal trends of Korean society;
- comprehend how class, race-ethnicity, gender, and age relate to social institutions such as the family, education, economy, religion, and politics;
- think globally, question commonly held beliefs, assess different perspectives used by sociologists, and to use this process to understand the forces that generate change and continuity in Korean society;

- understand how significant changes in society affect the experiences of diverse groups in Korea;
- identify the significant social institutions involved in domestic governance and assess their contribution; and
- understand various social problems facing Korean society, including inequality, sexism, and aging population.

III. REQUIRED READINGS

Kim, Andrew Eungi and Joonshik Choi. 2015. *Contemporary Korean Culture: The Persistence of Shamanistic and Confucian Values and Practices*. Seoul: Korea University Press.

A reading packet (available from Gongmunhwasa, located just outside the back gate)

Recommended Readings

Alford, C. Fred. 1999. *Think No Evil: Korean Values in the Age of Globalization*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Breen, Michael. 1998. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*. New York: St. Martin's.

Amsden, Alice. 1989. *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kendall, Laurel. 2002. *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Lie, John. 1998. *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Armstrong, Charles. 2002. *Korean Society: Civil Society, Democracy and the State*. New York: Routledge.

Oh, John Kie-Chiang. 1999. *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

IV. REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. Class Attendance and Participation (15% of the final grade):

Class participation is a critical component of this course and it has two dimensions: class attendance and active participation in class discussions. Attendance will be taken on a regular basis. Each unexcused absence will result in a **3-point** reduction from the

total points of 100 AND if you miss class more than five times (and two late attendances count as 1 absence), **YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE “F” AS THE FINAL GRADE.**

Students are invited to share their thoughts on the assigned readings and raise questions for class discussions. The responsibility for having lively discussions rests on you, so it is everyone’s responsibility to come to class prepared, i.e., completing the assigned readings and reflecting on the issues and arguments of the reading, and be willing to engage in discussion. Your participation will be evaluated in terms of both the frequency and quality of your presentation of ideas. Please remember to show respect to other students’ opinions and be thoughtful of others’ opportunities to participate.

2. Midterm Exam (30% of the final grade)

Midterm exam will consist of short- and long-essay questions. **Exam Date: April 21, 2015.**

3. Final Exam (35% of the final grade)

Final exam, which is non-cumulative, will consist of short- and long-essay questions. **Exam Date: June 16, 2015.**

4. Group Presentation (20% of the final grade)

Students will be divided into groups of 3-4 students, and each group is responsible for giving a 20-minute presentation on any aspect of Korean society. A rationale for having a group project is based on the idea that interactions among students should also occur outside the classroom setting and that students should learn to cooperate and collaborate with other students, including the division of labor, and learn to coordinate the works of group members into a coherent whole.

V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Class Attendance: (See **Class Attendance and Participation** above)

Classroom Expectations and Behavior: You are responsible for knowing the material and announcements presented during lectures whether or not you attend class. Please arrange with another student to get missed notes and announcements. Please do not disrupt other students’ ability to hear lectures (e.g., do not arrive late or leave early, be

prepared to take notes before lectures begin, do not read or talk during lecture, and do not begin packing your belongings before class ends). And the **USE OF LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES IS NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS.**

Commitment to Learning: There is no point in taking a course if you are not committed to learning. That means doing the readings, showing up, concentrating, and participating in class discussion and group activities. We will struggle through ideas and readings that are difficult and may seem boring if you do not yet understand them. I strive to make the class interesting, but it is your responsibility to be committed.

Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously and are grounds for failure in this course. Students caught cheating during the exam time will automatically fail the course. To plagiarize is to use another's words as your own, without proper attribution given to the original author. If requested, students in this course must provide computer copies of their papers for examination by plagiarism detection software. Keep electronic copies (and backups) of all course work.

VI. GRADING SCALE

A+	95-100	A	90-94
B+	85-89	B	80-84
C+	75-79	C	70-74
D+	65-69	D	60-64
F	59-0		

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENT

Week 1 **Introduction**

Week 2 **What is Culture?**

Required Readings:

Kendall, Diane. "Culture"

Week 3 **Korean Culture: Shamanism**

Required Readings:

Kim and Choi, Introduction & Chapters 1, 2 & 4.

- Week 4 Korean Culture: Confucianism**
Required Readings:
Kim and Choi, Chapters 3, 6 & 7.
- Week 5 The Family**
Required Readings:
Kweon, Sug-In. The Extended Family in Contemporary Korea.
Kim, Yi Eunhee. 1998. Home is a Place to Rest: Constructing the
 Meaning of Work, Family and Gender in the Korean Middle
 Class.
- Week 6 Education**
Required Readings:
Kim and Choi, Ch. 8
Kim, Jongyoung. Aspiration for global cultural capital in the stratified
 realm of global higher education: why do Korean students go
 to US graduate schools?
- Week 7 Gender Inequality**
Required Readings:
Hauer, Robert H. and Jeanette C. Lauer. Gender Inequality.
Kim, Young Lan. The Change of Women's Social Status in Korea:
 Progress and Reaction.
- Week 8 Midterm Exam Midterm Exam (April 21, 2015)**
- Week 9 Urbanization**
Required Readings:
Kwon, Tai-hwan. The Trends and Patterns of Urbanward Migration in
 Korea, 1960-1985.
Kim, Ik Ki. Socioeconomic Concentration in the Seoul Metropolitan
 Area and its Implications in the Urbanization Process of Korea.
- Week 10 Economy**
Required Readings:
Eckert, Carter et al. Economic development in historical perspective,
 1945-1990.
Lee, Sook Jong. The Politics of Chaebol Reform in Korea: Social
 Cleavage and New Financial Rules.

Week 11	Aging Required Readings: Appelbaum, Richard and William Chambliss. Aging. Eun, Gisoo. Population Aging and Social Strategies for Aging Problems in Korea.
Week 12	Multiethnic Korea Required Readings: Andrew Eungi Kim. Global Migration and South Korea. Yoon, In-Jin. Multicultural Minority Groups and Multicultural Coexistence in Korean Society.
Week 13	Group Presentations
Week 14	Group Presentations
Week 15	Group Presentations
June 18	Final Exam