HH3020: Introduction to Korean History  
SEM 1 AY 2015-2016

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[This is a tentative syllabus based on the last year’s scheme]

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I. Course Description:
This is an introductory seminar course in the history of Korea, focusing on its modern part. Students will be able to understand the major issues in the creation of the Korean nation, the national identity, the growth of its unique social and political structure, and the technological and industrial growth in the modern period. The primary subjects in the seminar include premodern development of the Korean nation and culture, the modernization in the late Chosŏn dynasty, the Japanese colonial era, the liberation after World War II, the Korean War, and the period after the mid-twentieth century when Koreans experienced the shock of their rapid industrialization and urbanization. Students will learn the dynamics of the Korean history which placed the country in the changing global landscape in the contemporary world.

II. Course Design:
There will be a three-hour seminar each week. For the first 20 minutes, the professor will introduce the day’s main subjects with certain points for further thinking. Then, the group responsible for the week’s discussion will present their questions and the rationale behind them. These questions will be used for the subsequent group discussion and presentation. The remaining time should be spent for a deeper and synthetic discussion engaging all attending students. Each student’s performance will be evaluated in accordance with her or his mid-term essay, pre-class questions, participation in the seminars, and role-play. This course, which offers 3 academic units, has no pre-requisites.

III. Course Schedule and Readings:
The Course Readings:
There are two kinds of readings, the required and the recommended. The required readings are the articles or book chapters that you must finish before coming to the class. The recommended readings are those you are encouraged to read if you are particularly interested in one subject. You can use these readings to write your mid-term essay. All the book chapters or journal articles in the required list are available for downloading in the courseweb in NTULearn. Most of the books or book chapters in the recommended list are stored in the NTU (HSS) or NIE libraries’ reserve collection. Some articles among them can be downloaded in the courseweb. Any missing ones are available in the professor’s office.

The Historical Films for the Course:

South Korea has developed its strong movie industry, which is now internationally renowned. One crucial product of this prospering industry is its historical films. Although some of these films have been criticized for their misleading interpretations, there are a number of more serious movies that have been acclaimed for their novel perspectives and deep historical insight. I think that watching these films can be a good way to learn history and its varied standpoints, especially in relation to Korea’s contemporary problems. Moreover, many of the historical films, with good acting, realistic costume, and nuanced narrative, are quite fun to watch! The professor will occasionally show movie clips during the similar, and the students may watch them in full in the NTU’s Business and Communication & Information Libraries. (Some of the mentioned movies are yet to be delivered to NTU.) For the final role-playing project, students may see a few films before writing a scenario.

1. Introduction & Major Questions
   
   Required Readings:
   
   

   Recommended Readings:
   
   

   Movies: The Masquerade (2012)

2. Decline of the Chosŏn Dynasty and the End of an Era?
   
   Required Readings:
   
   Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 8-35.
   
   Cummings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, pp. 67-85.
   
   

   Recommended Readings:
   
   

3. Colonial Society and Culture

**Required Readings:**

Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 36-75.


**Recommended Readings:**


Movies: *YMCA Baseball Team* (2002)

4. Assimilation, Resistance, and the War

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Movies: *Blue Swallow* (Cheong Yeon, 2005)

5. Nation-Building, Security, and the Americans

**Required Reading:**

Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 100-110.

Cummings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, pp. 185-236.


**Recommended Readings:**


Movies: *Jiseul* (2012)

6. The Korean War and the Division

**Required Readings:**

Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 111-120.


Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Jiyun Kim, “The Korean War after the Cold War,” in Sheila


**Recommended Readings:**


**Movies:** *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (2005); *Taegukgi* (2004)

### 7. North Koreans and the Making of a New Dynasty

**Required Readings:**

Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 146-166.


**Recommended Readings:**


**Movies:** *The Game of Their Lives* (2002)

### 8. Militarized Modernity

**Required Readings:**

Robinson, *Korea’s Twentieth Century Odyssey*, pp. 121-140.


**Recommended Readings:**

Cummings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, pp. 299-341.

**Movies:** *The President’s Barber* (2004); *The President’s Last Bang* (2005)

### 9. Building Korean Democracy

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


10. Science and Technology in Designing Modernity

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


11. Questions for Civil Society: Politics, Gender, and Religion

Required Readings:


Movies: *Memories of Murder* (2003); *Oraedoen Chŏngwŏn* (Old Garden, 2007)

12. Today and Tomorrow

Required Readings:


13. Summary and Role-Playing

VI. Evaluation:

1. Midterm Essay: (35%)
Students will choose one theme in Korean history and write an essay on it with 1,500-2,000 words (excluding bibliography and footnotes). The themes include 1) the changing place of Korea in international politics 2) the nature of colonial modernity 3) making Korean democracy 4) industrialization and cultural shift. The essay should reflect the class material alongside other relevant papers and books that could be found in the NTU/NIE libraries. If necessary, students can borrow books from the professor’s collection. It is also important to cite and use at least three articles, book chapters, or monographs in the prescribed reading in the syllabus. The format of the essay can be a review, but it should not be a mere summary of the current historical literature on Korea. Students are expected to read and analyze the available material critically with their own perspective. The essay should be submitted to the course’s NTULearn website in the form of the MS word file (a pdf file is not recommended).

2. Pre-Class Questions: (10%)
Each group will in turn propose four or five key questions for discussion during the seminar. The group responsible for the week is supposed to upload the questions in the courseweb in NTULearn before Thursday noon. These questions will be graded according to their relevance, novelty, and ingenuity. When uploading the questions, the group should specify the name of the participating members. All participating members gain the same credit.

3. Discussion Report: (15%)
After the seminar, each group should submit a report of discussion by the end of every Friday. This report reflects not only the content of the reading, but also the outcome of the class members’ conversation and debate about the week’s subject.

4. Participation in the Seminar: (15%)
Each student’s activity is monitored in every seminar and will be used in the final evaluation. Please try to attend every class and be sure to be proactive during the discussion.

5. Role-Playing: (25%)
At the end of the semester, students in each group should perform a role-playing based on actual historical events. This mini-theatrical performance is a kind of short historical drama of 15-25 minutes of duration. To complete this assignment well, students are encouraged to choose one event that interest them and interpret it from their own perspective. Fictional elements can be introduced as far as they do not substantially mislead the audience. All members in each group are expected to play a role, even though some may not participate in the actual performance due to her or his role as “director” or “scenario writer.” It is also possible for one student to play two or more roles, depending on the scenario. For examples, students may watch several movies [available mostly in the Business Library] mentioned in the syllabus that may inspire their choice. This assignment is assessed by the student audience (1/2) and the professor (1/2). The evaluation criteria are 1) historical relevance, 2) novelty of interpretation, and 3) meaning and insight. The quality of performance may count, but the first three factors are much more significant. The group should briefly introduce the topic before the role-play begins. The scenario and its overview (explaining why the theme is historically meaningful and why it is chosen) should be submitted to the professor’s email (hwpark@ntu.edu.sg) in order to gain proper feedback from him. All participating members will gain the same mark, except for some special cases that deserve consideration.

V. Late Submission:
There will be a penalty to a paper submitted after the deadline. The extent of penalty will be decided depending on the general distribution of students’ marks in the entire class. But late
submission can be excused according to the professor’s understanding of the student’s circumstances.

VI. Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is a serious academic misconduct and may endanger a student’s career in a highly severe way. It is done intentionally or unintentionally by using another person’s ideas and writings without any proper citation and/or quotation marks. Paraphrasing is an act of rewriting other people’s ideas or arguments using your own words. While this is an acceptable practice in most cases, it can be an issue if you do not indicate that the ideas have come from another person’s works. If you are not sure about how you should do regarding these issues, please do cite the referred sources in footnotes/endnotes and use the quotation marks around the terms you did not invent. If any plagiarized sentence or paragraph is detected, the grade will be reduced to zero.