

Introduction to Korea Through Film Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Areum Jeong

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Lecture: Wed 6:30 pm to 9:05 pm / Zone 4, Room 204

Office Hours: Mon and Tue 10 am to 12 pm and by appointment / Zone 3, Room 320 B

Course Description

This course offers a broad overview of modern Korean history and Korean film history, from the beginning of the twentieth century into the present, tracing the correlation between film and major cultural, historical, and political events over the same period. Focusing on how film narratives represent social reality, we will analyze the construction and imagination of cultural tradition (and its critique) and national identity across these films, which will follow a loose chronology by theme rather than production date. Students should come away with a sense both of the development of modern Korean film and its relationship with aspects of Korean culture and society. In addition, the course will include a strong writing component; discussion and written assignments will focus both on the films themselves as well as on related critical texts.

No Korean language ability is required; no background knowledge in Korean culture or history is assumed; all course materials are subtitled in English.

Course Objectives

- Students will identify major material conditions and social contexts that generated the Korean cultural industry as conscious consumer-scholars that reflect on and account for its globalization.
- Students will rehearse the presentation of their own research through oral presentation.
- Students will develop skills in formal analysis and improve critical writing with an emphasis on developing thesis-driven arguments.

Course Assessment

Weekly Blackboard Forum Posts 30%

Group Presentation 20%

Final Paper Proposal 10%

Final Paper 40%

Course Assignments and Requirements

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and active participation are mandatory for all students. Students are expected to arrive to lecture **and** screening on time and remain until class is dismissed. Students are expected to come to lecture prepared, with assigned readings and any additional assignments completed. All readings will be available as PDFs and uploaded on the course webpage. Students are highly

encouraged to print out the readings, make notes, and bring both the readings and notes to lecture.

Electronic devices—cell phones, e-readers, laptops, pagers, tablets, etc.—must be turned off during class except with special permission from the instructor. Classroom courtesy includes the full participation of every student. If you must leave the room during class, do so quietly and unobtrusively. Disruptive eating, sleeping, and unnecessary talking will not be permitted. Anyone found to be in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately.

Attendance is taken at each lecture. Note: you may miss two lectures with no grade penalty. After two free absences, each unexcused absence will bear a penalty of a third of a letter grade. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the instructor is able to note their attendance. In the case of absences, only documented medical emergencies and death of immediate family will be accepted.

Weekly Blackboard Forum Posts

Write a short (250-300 words) response to the week's prompt/question on Blackboard by 9 pm, the day before class. Each week's prompt/question will be posted on Blackboard as a new discussion forum, and you will be required to write and post your answer as a thread. There will be 10 forums in total. See appendix for grading rubric.

Group Presentation

Present on a topic in relation to the course texts and prepare 2-3 questions to lead the discussion. An ideal presentation ties case studies into the course texts, provides visual resources (images, video, etc.), and opens up deeper questions to the entire class to think together on. For your presentation case study/topic, you may introduce a Korean actor, director, film, or production company in relation to the readings. In addition, your group must submit a short essay (3 pages max, double-spaced, size 12, Times New Roman) that summarizes the presentation's key points, linking the observations to relevant themes or theoretical tools.

Final Paper Proposal

You must submit your paper topic and thesis statement by Week 14. You are free to explore a topic of your choice, but all topics (and topic changes) must be approved by the instructor.

Final Paper

The final paper will be 10-12 typed pages (double-spaced, size 12, Times New Roman, minimum 3000 words) with a complete formatted bibliography/works cited and all necessary footnoting.

Write an analytical paper examining one or two films. Select an aspect of Korean culture and society, such as class, gender, or sexuality, and see how it is depicted in the films.

The paper should be an analytical research paper, centered on an arguable thesis, and address the relationship of the case study to its cultural and/or socio-political context.

You are expected to use a minimum of 7 sources, at least 3 of which should be from outside the assigned readings. You may use scholarly, peer-reviewed online journals, but encyclopedias are not permitted. Magazine and newspaper articles and web pages must be approved in advance. Sources should be cited in the text and in the bibliography/works cited using either Chicago or MLA citation styles. (Other styles of citation, for instance APA, if used consistently throughout the paper, may also be acceptable.)

You must submit the paper in its required stages. Your grade will reflect the overall writing process as well as the final product. See appendix for grading rubric.

Course Website

Assignment guidelines, lecture slides, supplemental handouts and information regarding academic writing and research, and the syllabus will be posted to the course website and/or emailed to students.

Additional readings and materials may be uploaded on a regular basis. Although these are not required reading, you may find them very useful in order to gain more in-depth understanding, which will be helpful for the writing of your papers. You will receive notifications when these additional resources are available, but it is your responsibility to check the course website on a regular basis. Students are also welcome to post thoughtful comments, ideas, and questions on the discussion thread. Please make sure that your e-mail address is up to date on the course website.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

Students are expected to do their own work; this holds, in particular, for the writing assignments you have for the course. All assignments are expected to reflect the student's careful research, original thinking, and writing. Plagiarism—the presentation or submission of work, in any form, that is not a student's own, without acknowledgment of the sources—is a serious offense and can result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal. If you obtain ideas or information from an outside source, that source must be acknowledged. Citations must be provided for the content, ideas, or other materials that originate from other authors. Cheating will not be tolerated and those who do will receive a failing grade on the assignment or for the entire course.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the assignments and schedule when deemed necessary and will offer advance notice.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (February 26) Introduction

Introduction to the course and Korean cinema, etc.

SECTION I: THE MAKING OF A NATION

Week 2 and 3 (March 4 and 11) The Nation I

Assigned viewing: *Assassination* (2015)

Assigned reading:

Bruce Cumings, "Eclipse: 1905-1945" in *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, New York: Norton, 1997, pp. 139-184.

In-class viewing: *The Age of Shadows* (2016)

Week 4 and 5 (March 18 and 25) Remembering the Korean War and National Division

Assigned viewing: *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (2005)

Assigned reading:

Bruce Cumings, "Collision: 1948-1953" in *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, New York: Norton, 1997, pp. 237-298.

In-class viewing: *JSA: Joint Security Area* (2000)

Week 6 (April 1) The Golden Age of Korean Cinema

Assigned viewing: *The Housemaid* (1960)

Assigned reading:

Kathleen A. McHugh, "South Korean Film Melodrama and the Question of National Cinema," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 18:1 (2001): 1-15.

Week 7 (April 8) The Nation II (Historical Memory)

Assigned viewing: *Peppermint Candy* (2000)

Assigned reading:

Bruce Cumings, "The Virtues II, 1960-1996" in *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, New York: Norton, 1997, pp. 337-393.

SECTION II: MAJOR TOPICS AND THEMES

Week 8 and 9 (April 15 and 22) Public Education and the Return of the Living Dead

Assigned viewing: *Whispering Corridors* (1998)

Assigned reading:

Sung-Chul Ju, "A Chronicle of Fear and Youth: On the 10th Anniversary of the *Whispering Corridors* Series," *Korean Cinema Today* 2 (July/August 2009): 34-39.

In-class viewings: *Gonjiam* (2017)*

*** Skype Q&A with Bum-shik Jung (director of *Gonjiam*) (30 min)

Week 10 and 11 (April 29 and May 6) Jee-woon Kim, the Pioneer of New Korean Cinema

Assigned viewing: *A Bittersweet Life* (2005)

Assigned reading:

Susie Jie Young Kim, “Noir Looks and the Flash of Transgression: Trauma and the City’s Edge(s) in *A Bittersweet Life*”
In-class viewing: *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003)

Week 12 (May 13) Jee-woon Kim Master Class

Week 13 and 14 (May 20 and 27) Korean Cinema Today

Assigned viewing: *Parasite* (2019)

Assigned reading: TBA

In-class viewing: TBA

Week 14 (May 27) Group Presentation List and Final Paper Proposal Due / Graduating Seniors’ Final Paper Due

Week 15 and 16 (June 3 and 10) Students’ Presentations

Week 17 (June 17) Final Paper Due

Appendix

Grading Rubric for Blackboard Forum Posts

Excellent (3)

- Responds directly to the assignment, prompt, and/or question, and includes support material
- Appropriate length to develop a specific idea clearly and fully
- Logically sequenced, organized, well-structured sentences, written in formal language
- Contribution is analytical, original, and thoughtful
- Author makes clear, meaningful connections between ideas and shows understanding of the assignment and (prompt/question) course texts
- Free of grammatical/spelling errors
- Post was submitted before the deadline

Acceptable (2)

- Responds in some part but not directly to the assignment, prompt, and/or question
- Appropriate length, but idea developed is incomplete or vague
- Structure is present but organization of ideas is somewhat sporadic
- Shows evidence of study of the course texts and analytical thought, but analysis is not clearly presented or fully developed
- Some connections between ideas, but connections not clearly presented
- Some grammatical/spelling errors
- Post was submitted before the deadline

Unacceptable (1)

- Does not respond to the assignment, prompt, and/or question
- Short answer which does not develop an idea fully
- Lacks flow, organization, and/or structure

- Lacks depth or insight, does not express opinion clearly, and/or shows little understanding of the assignment (prompt/question) and/or course texts
- Written in informal language (using abbreviations or text lingo)
- Many grammatical errors and poor spelling
- Post was submitted after the deadline

Grading Rubric for Midterm and Final Paper

A/A- – Above and beyond. This paper is well-written with an explicit thesis, points of support that are well-selected to advance the thesis, vivid detail, full development, a strong introduction and conclusion, clear and logical organization, and strong coherence and quote integration/selection and transitions. It should be generally free from contradicting or unrelated points, format/grammar/mechanics errors should be minor and not distracting, and the tone should be appropriate for the reader. This paper shows high engagement with the assignment and critical thought.

B+/B/B- – Solid. This paper contains a thesis that takes an identifiable position, with plausible supporting details and examples. It should be well organized, and format or grammar errors should be minor enough to not distract from the clarity of the paper. It should be generally free of contradicting points, it should show a clear attempt to fulfill the essay prompt, and the tone should be appropriate for the audience. This paper shows a solid attempt to engage with the assignment and is moving in the right direction. Often, it is a strong paper with one big thing holding it back.

C+/C/C- – Average. This paper contains a thesis with an identifiable position although it may be implicit or somewhat disconnected from the evidence. The reader may have to struggle to understand the argument. It may read as simplistic in style or rough/underdeveloped. It should nonetheless show a clear attempt to fulfill the paper prompt. It should be generally organized, and not appear written at the last minute. However, the paper may be less clear due to widespread grammatical, logical, or organizational mishaps, the argument might not follow the thesis or may contain contradictions, the points of support may be unrelated to the argument, or the tone may be inappropriate for the audience. Quotations will be present, but may not be integrated. Transitions may be lacking. Citation has been attempted, but may not follow MLA or Chicago format well.

D+/D/D- – Not passing. This paper must roughly focus on the prompt, with some attempt at maintaining focus, although it may be vague. However, it may have either an incoherent thesis or no thesis at all. Points do not connect with the thesis well. It may be too short/undeveloped to fulfill the prompt, or have such severe grammatical, logical, mechanical, or organizational problems that it is difficult to follow beyond a rough “general idea.” It may appear hastily written at the last minute, or may fail to fully follow the assignment prompt. There will still be some attempt to follow appropriate citation (otherwise it will fall into the “F” range), but it may be inconsistent, such as supplying only the author’s last name in an in-text citation without the page number.

F – To receive this score, the paper shows incoherence on all levels, with an obvious lack of attendance to the prompt. It does not read as a serious attempt at the assignment.

This syllabus is adapted from Dr. Christopher Hanscom's Fall 2013 "Introduction to Korean Cinema" course.