

**ASIAN274/HISTORY249**

**Introduction to Korean Civilization**

**Fall 2017**

**Syllabus**

Day/Time: MW 2:30-4:00pm

Location: 2244 USB

Instructor: Prof. Juhn Ahn (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)

Office Hours: W 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

**Prerequisites:** none

\* Note: no credit will be given to students who have completed ASIAN249/HISTORY249, ASIAN270/HISTORY253, ASIAN271/HISTORY254

**Requirements and Distributions:** HU

**Description:**

This course will serve as a general introduction to Korean history and culture from earliest times to the present. A broad historical overview of the various social, economic, political, and religious traditions in premodern Korea will be accompanied by an in-depth discussion of Korea's turbulent path towards modernization. Topics to be covered in this course include foundation myths, ancient literature, colonialism, civil war, authoritarianism, rapid industrialization, and democratization in Korea. In this course we will also examine the relation between state, family, gender, and class. Students will be asked to explore these and other topics by applying a context-sensitive reading and critical analysis of the material that will be covered in this course. There are no prerequisites, but some background in the study of history and culture is recommended. Readings will include both primary material in translation and secondary scholarship.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To become familiar with (a) the history and traditional culture of Korea, (b) different scholarly approaches to the study of Korean civilization, and (c) key terms and concepts related to premodern Korea.
2. To explore new ways of understanding the human condition through the lens of Korean civilization.

## Grading:

Requirements include quizzes, weekly online reading blogs, and a final paper. Late or missed assignments and quizzes may not be made up without a documented, official medical excuse. No exceptions. As for attendance, no more than five unexcused absences are allowed. For each unexcused absence, you will lose 1% of the total grade. For all inquiries concerning grading, the student must schedule an appointment and consult the instructor during office hours and not before, during, or after class.

3 short quizzes (map quiz, multiple choice, fill in the blanks):	30%
Weekly online reading blogs:	45%
Original research paper (3 drafts, minimum 2,000 words):	15%
Participation:	10%

The online reading blogs and original research paper must be submitted via the course website hosted on Canvas. A link that you can use to submit assignments can be found on the course website's homepage. Please submit either a Microsoft Word or pdf file.

- Each week you are required to read scholarly writings with an argument, original Korean readings in English translation, or both. After doing the readings, please write a reading blog that is at least 450 words in length. The weekly online reading blogs must identify AT LEAST one assumption (e.g. about human nature, freedom, readership, power, gender, ethnicity, identity, race etc.) being made in EACH and EVERY assigned reading (unless noted otherwise). The blogs must ALSO briefly hypothesize why this assumption is being made. The grading of the blogs will be based on your ability to identify assumptions being made in the reading(s) (2 points) and the persuasiveness of your reading of the reason(s) for making the assumptions (2 points). How to identify and contextualize assumptions will be demonstrated every week in class.
- For the original research paper, you will be writing 3 drafts. Please submit a short proposal (200-250 words) by Oct 4 (2:30pm). Please submit the first draft by Oct 26. Please submit the second draft by Nov 13 and the last draft by Dec 4. ALL drafts must be at least 2,000 words. Feedback and suggestions for improvement will be provided for the first and second drafts. Please bear in mind that the comments and suggestions are meant to help you improve the quality of your paper. They are not meant to guarantee a higher grade. The research paper must feature an original thesis and evidence (primary sources and/or secondary sources) that support this thesis. Sources that are used for this paper must be given due credit in footnotes. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/01/>). For the thesis, I strongly suggest that you take advantage of the weekly blogs. That is to say, find an original Korean reading—it doesn't have to be one of the required readings—that interests you, identify assumptions being made in the reading, and make a persuasive argument about how to contextualize the assumption. Grading criteria will be detailed in class.

- Participation will be graded on the basis of your performance during in-class discussions and exercises.

### **Academic Accommodation:**

If you need accommodation for a disability, please make an appointment to see me during the first three weeks of the semester. Accommodations will be made through Services for Students with Disabilities in the Division of Student Affairs.

### **Academic Integrity:**

In keeping with the LSA Community Standards of Academic Integrity, academic misconduct in this course will be taken very seriously and will result in disciplinary action (see the Office of the Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs' Procedures for Resolving Academic Misconduct in LSA).<sup>1</sup> In essence, taking credit in any way for work that is not his or her own *without acknowledging the source(s)* counts as plagiarism and cheating. If you are still unsure as to what counts as plagiarism or cheating and would like some specific advice on how to avoid it, please consult the following webpage: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/understanding-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity>

### **Note about Romanization:**

Korean is a difficult language to Romanize, not the least because of its abundance of vowels. Different systems of Romanization developed over time, and two are now internationally accepted: McCune-Reischauer System and the Revised Romanization System. South Korean government has adopted the latter, but McCune-Reischauer remains the preferred system in the academic world. I will be using McCune-Reischauer System, as do most of our readings, but you may occasionally come across the other system in your readings as well. To minimize confusion on such occasions, I will provide McCune-Reischauer equivalents. A resource has been uploaded onto Reading which explains the two romanization systems in detail.

### **Textbooks:**

All required readings and lecture slides will be made available as pdfs to students for no cost on Canvas. Please find a link to the readings on the online syllabus (the home page for this course on Canvas).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/procedures/index.html>

### **Suggested readings:**

Lee, Ki-baek. *A New History of Korea*. Translated by Edward W. Wagner. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Ebrey, Patricia B., Anne Walthall, and James B. Palais. *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth Edition. New York: Longman, 2000. (This book is also available online via the UofM library website.)

### **Timetable**

Sep 6            **Why Korea?**

Map of Korea

#### Periodization:

Three Kingdoms (Koguryŏ, Paekche, Silla)

Unified Silla (668-935)

Koryŏ (918-1392)

- Mongol Overlord Period (1270-1356)

Chosŏn (1392-1910)

- Great Korean Empire (Taehan cheguk, 1897-1910)

- Japanese Protectorate (1905-1910)

Japanese Colonial Rule (1910-1945)

Liberation, Committee for the Preparation for Korean

Independence, Korean People's Republic, and Occupation by Allied Forces (1945)

Establishment of the Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (1948)

Korean War (1950-1953)

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### **Origin(s) of Korean history and the question of difference**

Why should we care about origins? Why are foundation myths important? What do we mean by culture and civilization? What is ethnicity? What is nationalism? How was Korea introduced to these ideas and how were they shaped and defined in the Korean context? How did Korea come to articulate identity through territory?

(Key words: culture, civilization, Eastern barbarians [Tong-i], Neolithic, comb-patterned pottery, Bronze Age, foundation myth, shamanism, Tan'gun, Old Chosŏn, Iron Age, Kija, Wiman, Chinese Han dynasty, three

kingdoms, interaction model, colonialism, Kwanggaet'o, *minjok* nationalism, Sin Ch'ae-ho, and historiography)

Readings

*Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Vol. Two*, pp. 423-425 (#1)

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 3-13 (#2)

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 24-26 (#3)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Sep 11)*

Sep 11 *Tan'gun*

Sep 13 *King Kwanggaet'o*

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**Buddhism and the emergence of centralized kingdoms**

Why is the rise of the three kingdoms important? How did the three kingdoms expand their territories? How did the three kingdoms maintain social order? What role did kinship and religion play in the rise of the three kingdoms? What is "Buddhism" and why was it so important in premodern Korea? Who benefited from Buddhism's presence? What did Buddhism's presence in Korea make possible? How should we make sense of the effort to construct temples and monasteries?

(Key words: three kingdoms, hwabaek council, bone rank, Buddhism, criminal and administrative code, sacred space and monastery construction, ritual technology, professional ruling elite, Tang dynasty, physiognomy, [aristocratic] virtue, hwarang, Kim Yusin, Kaya, and Wŏn'gwang, and Wŏnhyo)

Readings

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 26-32, 48-51, 54-56, and 65-72 (#4)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Sep 18)*

Sep 18 *Buddhism as paradigm and technology*

Sep 20 *"Flower boys," bone ranks, and a professional ruling elite*

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**Koryŏ: more of the same or something new?**

How should we make sense of the significance of the collapse of the Silla dynasty? Did the founding of Koryŏ introduce significant change to Korea? How did the new Koryŏ dynasty manage the tensions between centripetal

and centrifugal forces in Korea? How should we make sense of the Ten Injunctions and its attitude towards Buddhism? How should we make sense of Ch'oe Sŭng-no's criticism of Buddhism?

(Key words: nine prefectures system, landed true bone aristocracy, local strongmen, private armies, Chang Po-go, Sŏn Buddhism, Wang Kŏn, Kwangjong, Field and Woodland Rank system, government examination system, slave investiture act, light army, hyangni, Ch'oe Sŭng-no, Hyŏnjong, "Ten Injunctions," Khitan Liao, civil bureaucracy, and geomancy)

#### Readings

Remco Breuker, "The Ten Injunctions" (#5)

Reading blog due (2:30pm, Sep 25)

Sep 25      **Quiz 1**

Sep 27      *Putting Koryŏ on firm ground*

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### **Military Rule and Korean History**

What is geomancy? What is its purpose? How does it work and who used it? How did local society change after the rise of the Koryŏ? What determined one's social status in the Koryŏ dynasty? What enabled the Koryŏ aristocrats to perpetuate themselves as aristocrats and the elite of society? How should we make sense of Myoch'ŏng's "rebellion"? What caused the military coup of 1170? What was the social and historical impact of the military coup? Did Korea always "serve the great" (*sadae*)?

(Key words: ancestral seat, surnames, *hyangni*, geomancy, Tosŏn, Myoch'ŏng, Western Capital, Khitan Liao, Jurchen Jin, pluralist worldview, Yi Cha-gyŏm, Kim Pusik, "natural" disasters and climate change, wandering peasants, military coup of 1170, Ch'oe Ch'ung-hŏn)

#### Readings

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 176-189, 190-200, 246-248 (#6)

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 139-144 (#7)

Reading blog due (2:30pm, Oct 2)

Oct 2      *Myoch'ŏng's Rebellion and Pluralist Worldview in Koryŏ Korea*

Oct 4      *Military Rule*

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## Dynastic change and society redefined

How did the Mongol invasions affect Koryŏ culture, society, and politics? How should we make sense of the critical attitude toward Buddhism during the late Koryŏ? What changed after the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty? How should we evaluate this change? What does this have to do with modernization? How did the status of women change after the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty? How was this change codified, legalized, understood, and challenged?

(Key words: Mongols, King Kongmin, memorial temples, ancestral halls, Sin Ton, Chŏng Tojŏn, prime minister, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, sagehood, values and institutions, Yi Sŏnggye, aristocrats, Ming dynasty, succession struggle, land tenure system, kinship, patrimony, primogeniture, secondary son, descent group, *chokpo* ["genealogy"], funerary practice, Sejong, *han'gŭl*, Hong Kil-tong, Ch'unhyang, *kisaeng*)

### Readings

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, pp. 205-215, 315-326 (#8)

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 160-166 (#9)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Oct 9)*

- Oct 9      *Enter the Mongols*
- Oct 11     *Mother, Daughter, Wife, and Sister*

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Oct 16      **No class (Fall study break)**

Oct 18      **No class**

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## Geopolitics, climate change, and "early modern" Korea

How should we make sense of the literati purges that took place during the Chosŏn dynasty? Should we understand factionalism in Chosŏn Korea in political terms? What was at stake in the factional disputes at the Chosŏn court? What caused the Japanese and Manchu invasions? What determined the outcome of these wars? How did the Chosŏn dynasty react to the invasions? What impact did these invasions have on Chosŏn society and culture? Did "worldview" or "ideology" blind the yangban from reality (e.g. signs of war)? Why should we care about a ritual controversy from

Chosŏn Korea? How did the Chosŏn court imagine its relation to China?  
Did it change and, if so, why?

(Key words: yangban, factionalism, literati purges, censorial agencies, *kyohwa* <"moral transformation">, private academies, petitions, *sarim*, Maunder minimum hypothesis, little ice age, epidemics, deforestation, population growth, Imjin War, Taedonggye, Ming dynasty, Yi Sun-sin, turtle ship, righteous army, Manchus, Kwanghae, Injo)

Readings

Michael Shin, *Korean History in Maps*, 81-103 (#10; don't include in blog)  
Jahyun Kim Haboush, "Constructing the Center" (#11)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Oct 23)*

Oct 23 *Hereditary Factionalism and Imjin War*

***First draft of research paper due***

Oct 25 *Manchu Invasions and the Ritual Controversy*

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**Yangban society, local society**

What qualities were yangban expected to possess? What issues concerned the yangban and why? How did hereditary factionalism define court politics? How should we make sense of the Yŏngjo-Sado tragedy? What is "practical" about practical learning [*sirhak*] and what is "impractical" about traditional yangban learning? Were the yangban opposed to change? Why would yangban officials feel threatened by Christianity? How should we make sense of the Chosŏn persecution of Christianity/Catholicism?

(Key words: Neo-Confucianism, Yi Hwang, Yi I, hereditary factionalism, mourning, Qing dynasty, policy of impartiality [*t'angp'yŏngch'aek*], Yŏngjo, Sado, Chŏngjo, practical learning [*sirhak*], Kyujanggak, Chŏng Yag-yong, Catholicism, Western Learning)

Readings

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 172-175, 201-209 (#12)  
Jahyun Kim Haboush, (passages from) "The Memoir of 1805" (#13)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Oct 30)*

Oct 30 *Yangban*

Nov 1 *Yŏngjo, Sado, and Lady Hyegyŏng*



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## From kingdom to empire and then colony

What was the Chosŏn government's relation to the economy? Should wars, invasions, and relations with China be used to explain "substantive" change in Chosŏn Korea? How about weather, population growth, and urbanization? How about the "middle people" (*chungin*)? What conditions necessitated the collapse of Chosŏn and the colonization of Korea? What was an "empire" supposed to look like and what did the effort to establish empire in Korea make possible?

(Key words: *chungin*, slavery, Maunder minimum hypothesis, little ice age, epidemics, Hŏ Chun, deforestation, population growth, peasant rebellions, Taewŏn'gun, Kojong, Queen Min, Opium War, isolationist policy, Kanghwa Treaty, enlightenment, Kapsin coup, Eastern Learning, First Sino-Japanese War, Kabo Reforms, Great Han empire, T'apgol park, Tŏksu Palace, Gwanghwamun square)

### Readings

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume Two, 261-276 (#14)

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 250-261 (#15)

Michael Shin, *Korean History in Maps*, 105-111 (#16; don't include in blog)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Nov 6)*

Nov 6      **Quiz 2**

Nov 8      *Taewŏn'gun and Kabo Reforms*

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## Colonial modernity?

How should we understand the colonization of Korea? Was it "imposed" and "resisted"? How was post-Chosŏn Korea modernized? Who or what modernized it? Can modernization be experienced in different ways by different people? If so, then in what sense can we refer to this as modernization? Can we refer to Korea in the singular during this period? How does our understanding of "history" inflect our understanding of comfort women and the realities of colonial period Korea?

(Key words: colonization, modernization, new woman, cleanliness, productivity, Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere, capitalism, March 1st Movement, Kim Il-sung, class struggle, Manchukuo, industrialization, forced labor, comfort women)

### Readings

Yi Sang, "Wings" (#17)

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 367-372 (#18)

Michael Shin, *Korean History in Maps*, 112-125 (#19; don't include in blog)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Nov 13)*

Nov 13 *Colonial modernity*

***Second draft of research paper due***

Nov 15 *March 1st Movement*

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## **The Korean War**

What is the historical significance of Korea's government in exile? Should the history of Korea be understood against the backdrop of "East Asia" or the "Pacific Rim," and why should we care? What problems emerged under colonial rule and how were these problems processed? What do we mean by "occupation" and "control" in the context of modern Korea? What makes the Korean War "Korean"? What was at stake in this war?

(Key words: government in exile, Pearl Harbor, liberation, atomic bomb, cultural nationalism, people's committees [*inmin wiwŏnhoe*], Communism, Syngman Rhee, separate elections, the "Korean" War, revisionist history, Cheju "insurgency," Yŏsu "rebellion," Nogŭn-ri massacre)

### Readings

Michael Shin, *Korean History in Maps*, 126-139 (#20; don't include in blog)

Lee Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*, 373-381 (#21)

Cummings, "Occurrence at Nogŭn-ri Bridge" (#22)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Nov 20)*

Nov 20 *The "Korean" War*

Nov 22 **Thanksgiving; no class**

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## **Park Chung Hee and industrialization**

How did Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee, and Kim Il-sung shape Korean history and how should their impact be evaluated? Can we think of them as something other than "heroes," "villains," "visionaries," and "puppets"?

What did/does “democracy” mean in the context of modern Korea? Did Korea develop its own form of democracy? If so, how? How should we understand the significance of the April Revolution, May 16 coup d’état, and June Uprising? Are they connected in some meaningful way? How should we understand the urgency of industrialization for post-war Korea? How did the decisions made by the leadership during this period give birth to modern Seoul? What was May 18 Kwangju and what does it mean today?

(Key words: April Revolution, First Republic, parliamentary system, Third Republic, Park Chung Hee, May 16, industrialization, Heavy Chemical Industry Drive, Yŏngdong area development plan, Vietnam, JFK, Japanese reparation funds, chaebol, Hanjin, Posco, Hyundai, Samsung, condensed modernization, developmentalism, regional disparities, Kim Tae-jung, Nixon Doctrine, Yusin, emergency measures, student protests, martial law, KCIA, Pu-Ma Democracy Uprising, Chun Doo-hwan, May 18 Kwangju, June Uprising)

### Readings

*Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume Two, 382-384, 393-400 (#23)

Han Kang, “The Boy, 1980” (#24)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Nov 27)*

Nov 27      *Park Chung Hee*

Nov 29      *Kwangju 5.18*

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## **Post-IMF Korea**

How did Korea transition away from military junta rule? What role did the 88 Seoul Olympics play in this transition? What were the key issues that defined post-junta Korea? Were these issues “local,” “global,” or something else? How did the effort to address these issues affect Korean society? How did condensed modernization change and define Korean society? What is the IMF crisis and how should we make sense of its significance? What efforts did Korea make to overcome this crisis and how should we contextualize these efforts? What problems did Seoul’s growth into a megacity present and how were these problems addressed? What are the key issues that drive Korea today?

(Keywords: 88 Seoul Olympics, democratization, constitution, civil rights, Kim Yŏng-sam, rectifying the past, Kim Tae-jung, government general building, condensed modernization, Sŏngsu bridge, Sampoong Department Store, IMF crisis, neoliberal capitalism, privatization, deregulation, new intellectuals, Lee Myung-bak, Ch’ŏnggye Stream, Park Geun-hye, Sewol)

### Readings

Jesook Song, "Historicization of Homeless Spaces" (#25)

*Reading blog due (2:30pm, Dec 4)*

Dec 4 *IMF and Neoliberalization*

***Final draft of research paper due***

Dec 6 *Megacities, Megaproblems*

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Dec 11 **Quiz 3**

### **Bibliography**

Breuker, Remco E. "The *Ten Injunctions*." In *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918-1170: History, Ideology, and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty*, 351-406. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Cumming, Bruce. "Occurrence at Nogŭn-ri Bridge: An Inquiry into the History and Memory of a Civil War." *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (2001): 509-526.

Lee, Ki-baik. *A New History of Korea*. Translated by Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984

Haboush, JaHyun Kim. "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea." In *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, edited by JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, 46-90. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center, 1999.

Haboush, JaHyun Kim, trans. "The Memoir of 1805." In *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea*, 241-337. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Han, Kang. "The Boy, 1980." In *The Vegetarian*, 191-201. New York: Hogarth, 2016.

Lee, Peter H., and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds. *Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. One: From Early Times through the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Lee, Peter H., and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds. *Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. Two: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Shin, Michael D., Injae Lee, Owen Miller, Jinhoon Park, Hyun-hae Yi, eds. *Korean History in Maps: From Prehistory to the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Song, Jesook. "Historicization of Homeless Spaces: The Seoul Train Station Square and the House of Freedom." *Anthropological Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2006): 193-222.