

Korean History Through Film
For undergraduate and graduate students
Fall, 2017

Meeting time: 3 hours weekly.

Classroom:

Instructor: Sun Joo Kim (Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University)

Office Hour:

This course examines the history of premodern Korea through a selection of contemporary Korean feature films and dramas. Films and dramas with historical themes and personages have been very popular in Korea. We will examine the content of such films, and investigate how “true” or “false” their representation of Korea’s past is, how they imagine and invent that past, and the ways they are useful in better understanding Korea’s history and its people’s lives and cultural practices. Some of the historical topics that this course introduces are: Chosŏn kingship, court structure, and politics; Confucianism; war and technology; social structure and people on the margin; gender relations and family; law and society; arts and material culture; subversive culture; and quotidian lives of people.

Course Requirements for Undergraduate Students:

1. Essay I (1,000 words) due on October 3 in class: 20 percent of the course grade
2. Mid-term Exam on October 24: 20 percent of the course grade
3. Essay II, a research paper (1,500 words) due on November 28 in class: 30 percent of the course grade
4. Web Posting: 20 percent of the course grade (2 percent x 10 times)
Students are expected to read all the reading assignments before the class and required to post two discussion question on the course website before Monday midnight. Course Website > Discussion Page will be locked as of Monday midnight; Late submission is NOT accepted.
5. Class Participation: 10 percent of the course grade

Course Requirements for Graduate Students:

1. Essay I (1,500 words) due on October 3 in class: 20 percent of the course grade
 2. Essay II, a research paper (3–4,000 words), due on November 28 in class: 50 percent of the course grade
 3. Web Posting: 20 percent of the course grade (2 percent x 10 times)
Students are expected to read all the reading assignments before the class and required to post two discussion question on the course website before Monday midnight. Course Website > Discussion Page will be locked as of Monday midnight; Late submission is NOT accepted.
 4. Class Participation: 10 percent of the course grade
- Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. No extensions, substitutions, etc., will be allowed except in extraordinary circumstances such as illness, which should be verified in writing by a doctor or relevant authority.
 - Late submission penalty: one grade down from the assignment grade per day.
 - Attendance for every class is required except in extraordinary circumstances such as illness, which should be verified in writing by a doctor or relevant authority.
 - ALL course requirements should be completed to receive a course grade.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Students should be aware that, in this course, collaboration of any sort on any work submitted for formal evaluation is not permitted. This means that you may not discuss your paper assignments, exams, or any other assignments with other students. All work should be entirely your own and must use appropriate citation practices to acknowledge the use of books, articles, websites, lectures, discussions, etc., that you have consulted to complete your assignments.

Reading Materials:

All the required reading materials for the course are reserved at the Harvard-Yenching Library. E-journal links and other forms of digital readings are available through course website. All films used in the class are reserved at Harvard-Yenching Library or Language Resource Center inside the Lamont Library.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (9/5): Course Introduction

Week 2 (9/12): Founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty

Jeong Do-jeon [Chŏng To-jŏn], KBS TV Drama, 2014

- Duncan, John. "The Social Background to the Founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty: Change or Continuity?" *Journal of Korean Studies* 6 (1988–89): 39–80.
- Baker, Donald. "Rhetoric, Ritual, and Political Legitimacy: Justifying Yi Seong-gye's Ascension to the Throne." *Korea Journal* 53. 4 (winter 2013): 141–167.

Week 3 (9/19): Kingship and Institutions

King and the Clown (Wang ūi namja), directed by Lee Jun-ik, 2005

- Haboush, Jahyun Kim. "The Confucianization of Korean Society." In *The East Asian Region*, edited by Gilbert Rozman (Princeton University Press, 1991), 84–110.
- Kim, Sun Joo. "2. Reciting Life." In *Voice from the North* (Stanford University Press, 2013): 55–100.

Week 4 (9/26): Social Structure: Yangban

The Surrogate Womb (Ssibaji), directed by Im Kwon Taek, 1986

- Kawashima, Fujiya. *What is Yangban? A Legacy for Modern Korea*. Seoul: Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, 2002.
- Kim, Sun Joo. "1. Remembering Yi Sihang, A Local Elite of Significance." In *Voice from the North*, 15–54.

Week 5 (10/3): Social Structure: Slavery

Note: Essay I due in class.

Slave Hunters (Ch'uno), KBS TV Drama, 2010

- Palais, James B. "Slave Society." In *Views on Korean Social History* (Yonsei University, 1998).

- Rhee Young-hoon and Yang Donghyu. “Korean Nobi in American Mirror: Yi Dynasty Coerced Labor in Comparison to the Slavery in the Antebellum Southern United States.” Working Paper Series 26, Institute of Economic Research, Seoul National University (1999).
- Kim Kichung. “Unheard Voices: The Life of the Nobi in O Hwi-mun’s Swaemirok.” *Korean Studies* 27 (2003): 10–37.
- “Case 3 A Defiant Slave Challenges His Overlord with Death: Yi Pong-dol (Anüi, Kyöngsang Province, 1842).” In Sun Joo Kim and Jungwon Kim, *Wrongful Deaths: Selected Inquest Records from Nineteenth-Century Korea*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014, 55–61.

Week 6 (10/10): Family, Women, Everyday Life I

Ch’unhyang, directed by Im Kwon Taek, 2000

- “Case 5 A Heartless Wet Nurse Abuses an Infant: Mun Chong-ji (Chunghwa, P’yöngan Province, 1866).” In *Wrongful Deaths: Selected Inquest Records from Nineteenth-Century Korea*, 72–92.
- Kim, Sun Joo. “Letters on Everyday Life” and “Fathers’ Letters Concerning Their Children’s Education.” In *Epistolary Korea*, 226–34 and 277–86.
- Haboush, JaHyun Kim. “Letters between Spouses” and “Mothers’ Letters of Instruction to Their Children.” In *Epistolary Korea*, 249–61 and 287–94.

Week 7 (10/17): Family, Women, Everyday Life II

Ch’unhyang, directed by Im Kwon Taek, 2000

- Rutt, Richard, trans. “The Song of a Faithful Wife, Ch’unhyang.” In *Anthology of Korean Literature* (University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 257–84.
- Deuchler, Martina. “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosön Korea.” In *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, 142–69.
- Kim, Jungwon. “Madam Yi’s Farewell Letter to Her Son” and “Daughters’ Letters of Farewell to Their Fathers.” In *Epistolary Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2009), 375–89.

Week 8 (10/24): Mid-term Exam (and Watch ½ of The Admiral: Roaring Currents (Myöngryang) after the exam)

Week 9 (10/31): War and Technology

The Admiral: Roaring Currents (Myöngryang), directed by Kim Han-min, 2014

- Excerpt from Tonio Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).
- *Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin*, 310–315. Translated by Ha Tae-hung and edited by Sohn Pow-key. Yonsei University Press, 1977.

Week 10 (11/7): Law and Order

Blood Rain (Hyöl üi nu), directed by Kim Tae-süng, 2005.

- “Introduction: Chosŏn Korea in Its Last Century” and “Case 1 An Adulterous Widower Meets a Violent Death: Yang Hang-nyŏn (P’yŏngyang, P’yŏngan Province, 1866).” In *Wrongful Deaths: Selected Inquest Records from Nineteenth-Century Korea*, 3–22 and 23–46.
- Walraven, Boudewijn. “Confucians and Shamans.” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 6.1 (1991): 21–39.

Week 11 (11/14): Rebellions

Les insurges (Yi Chaesu ūi nan), directed by Park Kwang-su, 2001

- Walraven, Boudewijn. “Cheju 1901: Records, Memories and Current Concerns.” *Korean Histories* 1.1 (2009).
- Kim, Sun Joo. “Taxes, the Local Elite, and the Rural Populace in the Chinju Uprising of 1862.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64.4 (November 2007): 993–1027.

Week 12 (11/21): Art and Artist (class meets at the Harvard Art Museum (32 Quincy Street), art seminar room on Level 4)

Strokes of Fire (Chwihwaseon [Ch’wihwasŏn]), directed by Im Kwon Taek, 2002 (Watch this on your own before coming to class; online streaming available at the Language Resource Center, Lamont Library)

Read Yellow-highlighted sections from the following books; the rest is optional.

- Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*. (approximately 27 pages total)
- Silbergeld, Jerome. *Chinese Painting Style: Media, Methods, and Principles of Form*. (approximately 12 pages total)

Week13 (11/28): Student Presentation

Essay II due in class