

**Title: Korean Wave and Beyond: South Korean Popular Culture**

**History 2166A 570**

**Time, Date and Location: Monday, 1:30-4:30 in Labatt Hall 103**

**Description:** This course will introduce social, cultural and political developments in South Korea via films, music and popular culture. Referring to earlier periods and to North Korea when necessary and continuing to the present-day Korean Wave, we will explore Korean popular culture to understand the modern history of Korea.

Please note that lecture locations can change with very little notice before the beginning of term.

So be sure to check again before class begins.

**Instructor:** Dr. Adam Bohnet, Associate Professor, Department of History. **Office:** South Annex 059. E-mail: [abohnet@uwo.ca](mailto:abohnet@uwo.ca). **Office Hours:** Thursday, 1:30-2:30, or by appointment.

**Prerequisites: None.**

**Office Hours and E-mail:** My office is South Annex 059. I will be there during my office hours on Tuesday 11:00-12:00. I will often be there at other times as well, and will usually be willing to talk to students (especially if my door is already open). If I am too busy right then, I will ask you to come by later - so it doesn't hurt to ask!

I will also respond to student questions by e-mail. I will try to respond promptly within a day, but students should allow for two days for a response.

Do be sure to make it clear in the subject line that you are a student in my course. It also helps to hint at the matter at hand in the subject line also – ie, if you want a letter of reference, or have a question about the essay, please don't send me an e-mail with the subject line "How are things?" as that will likely end up in my "to be read later" file, but with a subject line like "Student of Korean Wave and Beyond: Request for Letter of Reference" or "Korean Wave and Beyond: Question about Essay." Please note that non-UWO e-mail may go missing.

I will do my best to assist students in all matters academic, but for those matters which exceed my professional competence, please note that King's has an extensive array of services available to help students with personal and academic issues. Please make full use of these services - you are paying for them anyway! For information, see [www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services).

**OWL:** All students in this class must sign up for the OWL page. Certain assignments have to be submitted via the OWL page. I will make announcements on OWL which you may find useful.

**Internet Sources:** There are a number of on-line sources which students may find useful. I myself will employ a certain number of such resources during class. However,

(1) For exams, generally make sure to understand the readings that I provide;

(2) For the written assignment, be sure to be critical in your reading of all unapproved Internet resources - and be especially careful with texts for which a secure date, author and publisher cannot be found;

(3) For instance, you may well want to consult fan pages, online newspapers and magazines, or indeed such celebrity news pages as <http://www.koreaboo.com>. Note, however, that such sources are to be used carefully. An article in a well-known newspaper, perhaps written by a respected critic, might well be almost as reliable as a scholarly article - although, like a scholarly article, it should still be read critically;

(4) On the other hand, a celebrity page discussing the latest scandal, or describing in superlative terms the wonderful nature of this popular singer is obviously not critical scholarship, but might be an informative primary source to be analysed and critiqued

**Language:** The only language students need for this class is English, which is the language of the lectures and the readings, but I also encourage students to make full use of all their talents, including knowledge of languages other than English.

I endeavour to make my classes accessible both to unilingual English-speakers with little knowledge of East Asian history and to those who speak English as a foreign language but who have considerable experience of the world outside of London.

It is my experience that students who are enthusiastic to learn about East Asian history do much better than students who think they know it all. It is also my experience that students who struggle to write good essays in English frequently write better essays than those who think that they can rely on their native fluency in English.

**Computer Use:** I receive regular complaints from my students that their fellows are distracting them by checking facebook during class. Be aware that the **only** electronic devices that may be in use during lectures under any circumstances are **laptop computers**, and that only after receiving special permission, and on the strict understanding that those computers will be used **exclusively for taking notes. I am very likely to limit laptop use in the front-rows of the classroom to protect students in back rows from being distracted.**

Students are informed that there has been significant research on the use of computers for note-taking that has revealed that computers are less effective for taking notes than are pen and paper. A recent paper [posted to your OWL] is Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25, no. 6 (2014): 1159-1168.

**Textbook:** Michael E. Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

The only textbook you need to purchase for this class is Michael E. Robinson's *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey*. It is short and fairly cheap survey of modern Korean history. Because we will not have time to review in class all aspects of the background that you need for this course, I am requiring that students fill in the background for the class with careful reading of the textbook. Not all of it is required, but all of it is recommended.

### **Other Readings:**

Other readings are generally scholarly articles. Generally, they are to be accessed via a link to the UWO library website, and you are likely to have to sign in to access the article in question. If you have any trouble, please contact the reference librarian.

I may add a few additional short readings from newspapers and magazines, but otherwise all of have been set as of the time of writing (September 10)

**Films and Music:** Of course, as the class is concerned with popular/mass culture, it is vital to also watch and listen to the works being discussed.

To access some of the films in question, you are likely to need a youtube account (so that you can claim convincingly to be over 18)

Some of the films in question are available for free (and without copyright violation) via the Korean Film Institute. You may

Where possible, I access all songs to be discussed in this class via official youtube sites (sadly, this is not always possible). I provide links.

Some of the films and dramas during the second half of the course are not available legally via youtube. They will be available in King's library and may be viewed there. There may be other means through which to view them. I have set up a forum whereby students can help each other, either to set up joint viewing sessions or to inform students of internet resources (ideally legal ones).

### **Marking Scheme:**

1. 30% - Midterm
2. 40% - Final Exam
3. 15% - Short essay (December 7th)
4. 15% - Poster Session (Last day of classes)

### **Tests and Exams:**

There are two tests/exams in this class. The **midterm**, on October 23, is designed to check student comprehension of the material discussed in the early part of the course. It will be two hours long. It will be made up of short written responses, fill-in-the-blank questions, and perhaps a short essay.

The second, a final exam, will be similar in format, and will be during final exam period.

***Short written assignment and poster session:***

Students are to write a very short written assignment. The purpose of the assignment is to explore one work of mass culture (a TV show, a film, a work of music, a comic, etc.) within its developing historical context. The paper should be between 5 to 6 pages double-spaced, not including pictures, footnotes, or quotations.

There is no real limit over what work you select, provided that it is South Korean. The concept of “South Korea” is understood fairly broadly. To give an example of a range: A Korean-American band active in both the US and South Korea would still count as part of South Korean popular culture, as would, say, a film produced jointly by a South Korean and Hong Kong creative team. However, the Simpsons, despite benefiting from considerable South Korean talent, doesn’t count, nor would a US film with a South Korean actor or actress, nor would the Canadian graphic novel *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, despite the fact that the author is of partly Korean origin (the limit here being is that he is active in the Canadian arts scene and not the South Korean). .

The historical context can be international – say, a South Korean film about the Vietnam War might tell, through its reception in Vietnam, something about the historical memory of the Vietnam War in both Korea and Vietnam.

Students may choose any work of South Korean popular culture that they enjoy. As part of the assignment, they should also tell me how to access the work in question. Students who are not familiar with South Korean popular culture should select a film from the Korean Film Archive: <https://www.youtube.com/user/KoreanFilm>

**It is due on the December 7th. Let me know well in advance if there are problems with that date.**

Further details to be announced.

Vital for success in this assignment will be a good handle of the material in the textbook, plus a certain amount of additional research.

Note also that, in accord with the regulations of the Department of History, all assignments will be penalized 5% for the first day late, and 1% for each following day. No assignment will be accepted a week after the due date.

Finally, please note that students are encouraged to use the Writing Centre at King's, if they do so they should include the name of the writing centre teacher who helped with writing. This is acceptable because the Writing Centre only helps students improve their writing, and leaves the student's voice unfiltered. However, (and this is important): **Students must not have their papers edited.** I much prefer to read slightly clumsy English to reading something that doesn't sound like the student wrote it at all.

**Poster Session:** Because students may well want to share their work with each other, there will be a poster session on the last day of classes, during which students may present their essay topics to other students. Students will be encouraged to work together (perhaps in groups) to present their work to each other. I will go around and grade them (leniently). Details to be announced.

## Reading Schedule

**Week 1 (September 11):** Introduction to Class – discussion of South Korean history and South Korean popular culture.

**Post-class Reading:** (1) Michael E. Robinson, 36-75; **Listening:** (1) Sanjo kayagum; (2) Teresa Teng's "Tian mi mi (1979);" (3) Pak Hyangnim, "Ch'önhwa ilgi" (1937); **Viewing:** (1) Memories of early silent films, Im Kwon-taek, *Changgun ŭi adŭl* (General's Son) (1990), made available via the Korean Film Archive, scene to be discussed starting at 11:12 and ending at 16:00.

**Week 2 (September 18):** The Culture of Anti-Communism and the Golden Age of South Korean Film. Reading: (1) Michael E. Robinson, 100-127; (2) Hana Lee, "Anticommunism in Popular Culture: The Evolution and Contestation of "Anti-Communist Films" in South Korea," *Asian Journal of German and European Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1-21; (3) Additional Readings (not necessary to read before class): Korean Film Archive, collection of translated newspaper articles concerning Piagol, from brochure included with CD of Piagol, pages 39-44 (posted as PDF).

**Viewing:** LEE Gang-cheon, *Piagol* (1955), via Korean Film Archive.

**Week 3 (September 25):** Trot, Enka and Post-War Music:

**Readings:** (1) Min-Jung Son, "Regulating and Negotiating in T'ŭrot'ŭ, a Korean Popular Song Style," *Asian Music* 37, no. 1 (2006): 51-74.

**Listening:** Examples of T'ŭrot'ŭ and Sinminjo: (1) Yi Nanyŏng, "Mokp'o ŭi Nunmul" [Tears of Mokp'o] (1935); (2) Hyŏn In, "Silla ŭi Talpam" (1947); (3) Yi Mija, "Tongbaek agassi" (My Camelia Girl" (1965); (4) Son In-ho, "Pi naerinŭn Honam sŏn" [Rain falling on the Honam Railroad] (1956); (5) Nam Chin, "Nim kwa hamkkye" (Together with you, dear) (1972). (6) A version of Arirang from sung by Japanese singers

(1951); **(7)** Yi Hwaja, "Hösong sewöl" (1940); **(8)** Pak Hyangnim, "Oppa nün p'unggak chaengi;" **(9)** Paek Nyonsol, "Pokchi malli" [Fortunate land of 10,000 miles] (1941);

**Week 4 (October 2):** Democratic Culture? Youth Culture and Censorships.

**Reading (read before class):** **(1)** Robinson, 125-140; **(2)** Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975," *Postions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 18, no. 1 (2010): 199-230.

**Viewing:** HA Kil-jong, *The March of Fools* (1975) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PvzT5WnNrA&t=2698s>.

**Listening: Early Korean Rok:** **(1)** SIn Chunghyöŋ, "Pisogüi yöin" [Woman in the Rain] (1964); **(2)** Same song covered by Kim Könmö (2001); **(3)** Han Myöng-suk, "Noran syassüi sanai " [The Boy in the Yellow Shirt] (1961);

**Songs from the Sesibong cafe:** **(1)** Han Taesu, "Haru ach'im [one morning]; **(2)** T'win p'olio, "Weding k'eik" [Wedding Cake], 1969; **(3)** Song Ch'angsik, "Korae sanyang" [Whale Hunting] (1975)

**Psychadelic Rock:** **(1)** Yi Chönghwa, "Kkonnip" [Petal], 1967; **(2)** Kim Chöngmi, "Arümdaün kangsan" [Beautiful Mountains and Rivers] (1973); **(3)** Pak Chöng Hui, "Na ui Choguk [My Fatherland];" **(4)** Kim Chöngmi, "Param" [Wind] (1973); **(5)** Kim Chöngmi "Kandago haji mayo" (1972) , and in this case, watch the video portion as well!: **(6)** Pearl Sisters, "Nima" [Hey Dear] (1969); **(7)** Song Ch'angsik, "Wae pullö" [Why do you call me] (1975); **(8)** Yi Changhüi, "küga nö" [It is because of you] (1973)

**Week 5 (October 16):** Student culture and Democratization – The 1980s. **Readings:** **(1)** Michael E. Robinson, 140-145 and 167-181; **(2)** Katherine In-Young Lee, "The Drumming of Dissent during South Korea's Democratization Movement," *Ethnomusicology* 56, no. 2 (2012): 179-205.

**Listening:** We will continue to listen to songs from last week, but also listen to the following **(1)** example of P'ungmul during a demonstration; **(2)** Kim Min'gi, "Ach'im isül" [Morning Dew] (1970); **(3)** An Ch'ihwan's cover of Im ül wihan haengjin gok" [Marching song for my beloved]; **(4)** Another version of

the same song, with pictures of uprising in Kwangju [based on poem by Paek Kiwan]; **(5)** Noch'assa, "Sagye" [Four Seasons] (1987).

**Additional Reading: (1)** A good blogpost by Liam Kelly on the exclusion of Vietnamese music from the US consciousness of the 1960s and 1970s. <https://leminhkhai.wordpress.com/2017/09/12/the-soundtrack-of-the-vietnam-war/>

### **Midterm exam on October 23**

**Week 7 (October 30):** The Monetary Crisis and the Gender Crisis. **Viewing:** Ji Woo JUNG, *Happy End* (1999). Available on Short-term loan: Haep'i endu = Happy End: PN1997.H34 1999. Also available legally for a very minor cost via Asian Crush (a less than 5 dollar subscription) and youtube (a small rental fee or 10 dollar purchase). **Reading: (1)** Robinson, 182-189; **(2)** Jesook Song, "Family Breakdown and Invisible Homeless Women: Neoliberal Governance during the Asian Debt Crisis in South Korea, 1997-2001," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 14, no. 1 (2006): 37-65.

**Additional reading: (1)** Dami Lee, "My First Halloween," *New Yorker*, October 27, 2016.

**Week 8 (November 6):** Queering South Korea :

**Reading:** Jeeyoung Shin, "Male Homosexuality in The King and the Clown: Hybrid Construction and Contested Meanings," *Journal of Korean Studies* 18 no. 1 (2013).

**Viewing:** Joon-ik LEE, *The King and the Clown* (2005) - on short-term loan: *Wang ui namja*, PN1997.2.W36 2011.

Let me note that a version with subtitles is also available via Drama Fever. It is possible to get a 30 day trial on Drama Fever. The monthly fee is also not high (5 dollars, so cheaper than Netflix). As the textbook for this course is quite cheap, that might not be such a bad idea. The link is as follows: <https://www.dramafever.com/drama/4773/1/king-and-the-clown/>

**Week 9 (November 13):** South Korean Dramas and Global Audiences. **Reading:** Barbara Wall, "Self-mockery of Hallyu in the Korean Drama *My Love from the Star* (*Byeol eseo on geudaee*) and the Role of

the Seventeenth-century Novel *The Dream of the Nine Clouds (Gyunmong)*," *Journal of Japanese & Korean Cinema* 8, no. 1 (May, 2016): 73-87.

**Viewing:** Watch the first three episodes from T'ae-yu Jang, *My Love from the Star* (SBS, 2013). On short-term load: *Pyör esö on küdae* - PN1997.2.P961 2014.

I note that it is available also via SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) for free. Sadly, it seems to lack subtitles in English or Chinese, so it isn't useful for most students.

Another (online version is on *Drama Fever*, which includes English subtitles:

[https://www.dramafever.com/drama/4325/1/My\\_Love\\_From\\_Another\\_Star/](https://www.dramafever.com/drama/4325/1/My_Love_From_Another_Star/)

As I mention above, it is possible to access *Drama Fever* via a 30 day trial, and after the 30 days are up, it is a mere 5 dollars. It might be worth signing up for the duration of this class, if you prefer not to use the hard-copies in the library.

**Week 10 (November 20):** 90s Youth Culture and New Musical Trends: Eun-Young Jung, "Seo Taiji Syndrome," in *Made in Korea: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Hyön-jun Sin and Süng-a Yi (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017): 143-154.

1. Seo Taiji and Boys, "Nan Arayo" [I know] (1992); (2). Seo Taeji and Boys "Kyosil idea" [Classroom Ideology] (1994);" (3). Seo Taeji and Boys, "Sidae yugam;" [Shame of the Times] (1995); (4) Lee Jung-hyun, "Pakkwö" [Change it!] (1998); (5) Sobangch'a, "Öjetpang iyagi" [Story of Last Night] (1987); (6) Diva's "Up-and-Down" (2000);

**Week 11 (November 27):** K-Pop in International context. Also, review for final and discuss essays.

Readings: **(1)** Robinson, 182-189; **(2)** Sharon Heijin Lee, "Beauty between Empires: Global Feminism, Plastic Surgery, and the Troubles with Self-Esteem," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 37, no. 1 (Jan., 2016): 1-31 **(3)** Max Fisher, "Gangnam Style, Dissected: The Subversive Message Within South Korea's Music Video Sensation," *Atlantic*, March 23, 2012 [NB: We will be reading this last article quite critically].

**Listening:** **(1)** Produce 101, "Pick Me" (2015) **(2)** Wondergirls' "Nobody" (2008); **(3)** Girls Generation, "Gee" (2009); **(4)** PSY, "Gangnam Style" (2012).

**Week 12 (December 4):** Poster Session.

**Final Exam in Final Exam Period.**