



IC/CM 329 READING KOREA: LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, AND SOCIETY
IES Abroad Multi-Location

DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces Korean language, literature, culture, and society to students with no prior background in Korean or Korean studies. Together we will examine how questions of literacy, identity, intellectual authority, and colonialism have shaped the Korean language and its use over time. Key historical contexts and concepts are explained step by step from a transnational perspective that highlights the diversity and complexity of Korea and East Asia. Using primary sources from the premodern to contemporary periods, such as novels, poems, and textbooks, alongside visual materials including films, on-site and online museum exhibitions, and virtual tour of historical sites, students explore how language reveals Korea's social values, history, and cultural identities.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR: Goeun LEE, PhD

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- **Lectures:** professor will provide the historical, social, and cultural context of the content of the course.
- **Analysis of visual materials:** films, images, on-site and online museum exhibitions
- **Class discussions:** based on assigned readings and visual materials. All required readings can be found in (Moodle). The readings listed for a particular session must be completed BEFORE coming to class that day.
- **Course-related trips:** Professor-guided visits to significant sites related to the content and outcomes of the course.
- **Student presentations and peer critique:** students will contribute to a given session by an oral presentation.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class Participation - 10%
- Reading Reflections - 15%
- Fieldtrip Report - 15%
- Midterm Presentation - 30%
- Final Essay - 30%

Class Participation

Students' participation in class is essential and will be assessed. Students are expected to have an active role in the class, participating in class discussions and fulfilling the required work for each session (readings and other possible materials such as films and virtual tours of online exhibitions).

Reading Reflections

Students are required to read three literary works as required readings in class—one from each period (premodern, colonial, and postwar)—and submit three separate reflection papers for each work (700-800 words, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing). Students are expected to connect the work to its historical context and apply key concepts discussed in class. Reflection papers are due by the day after the class session in which the corresponding work is discussed.



Fieldtrip Report

Following the visit to the National Museum of Korea scheduled for Session 6, students will submit a reflection report (800-1000 words, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing) within one week. The report should be based on the students' personal experience and discuss their motivation for taking the course, impressions of the exhibition, and any changes in their thinking before and after coming to Korea, while making clear connections to the themes and content covered in class.

Midterm Presentation

During the Sessions 11–12, each student will give a presentation of approximately 10 minutes on one topic covered earlier in the course, followed by 5 minute Q&A/Discussion. For the presentation topic, students may choose one of the following options: 1) an analytical discussion of the previously assigned readings or visual materials; 2) a comparative, cross-cultural reflection based on their own personal experiences in relation to the themes of the course. Students are strongly encouraged to make active use of visual materials, such as PowerPoint slides, images, or short video clips, to support and illustrate their presentation.

Final Essay

Students will submit a final essay by the last session (2,500-3,000 words, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing). Students are strongly encouraged to build on, connect, or further develop the themes explored in their previous assignments, including the reading reflections, field trip report, or midterm presentation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify key historical events and factors that have shaped language practices and social structures in Korea.
- Interpret how processes of modernization, colonialism, and globalization have influenced the Korean language and the society.
- Describe how Chinese, Japanese, and English have left layered traces in Korean vocabulary and discourse, and discuss how these layers continue to influence everyday life in contemporary Korea.
- Analyze selected literary, visual, and educational texts as sources for understanding Korean society.
- Reflect comparatively on their own linguistic and cultural environments by using concepts in the course of "Reading Korea".

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, students are expected to be present on time for every session, including course-related excursions. Arrival more than 10 minutes late or leaving early may count as an unexcused absence. If a student misses more than three classes in any course without justification, 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven unjustified absences will result in failure of the course. Absences will only be justified in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 1	Introduction: How the Korean Language Came to Be What It Is Today and How We Will “Read” Korea	No reading
Session 2	Before <i>Hangeul</i> (Vernacular Writing System): Early Korean Writing and Literature	- Seth, Michael J. “Introduction.” In <i>A Concise History of Premodern Korea: From Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century</i>, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 1–8. (8 pages) - Taylor, Insup, and M. Taylor. <i>Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese</i>. Rev. ed., John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014, pp. 157–198. (22 pages)
Session 3	Inventing <i>Hangeul</i> : ‘The Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People’ and Its Contested Reception	- Seth, Michael J. “The Neo-Confucian Revolution and the Chosŏn State, 1392 to the Eighteenth Century.” In <i>A Concise History of Premodern Korea</i>, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 135–166. (32 pages) - Lee, Ki-Moon, and Robert Ramsey. <i>A History of the Korean Language</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 102–107. (6 pages) - Lee, Peter (ed). <i>A History of Korean Literature</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 5–9. (5 pages)
Session 4	<i>Eonhae</i> : Making Classical Chinese Texts Speak Korean	- Seth, Michael J. “Chosŏn Society.” In <i>A Concise History of Premodern Korea</i>, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 167–199. (33 pages) - Oh, Youngkyun. “Printing the Samgang haengsil-to (Illustrated Guide to the Three Relationships), a Premodern Korean Moral Primer.” <i>East Asian Publishing and Society</i> vol.1, no.1 (2011): 1–36. (36 pages)
Session 5	Premodern Korean Literature: <i>The Cloud Dream of the Nine</i> Online Exhibition at the National Library of Korea	- Kim, Man-jung. <i>The Nine Cloud Dream</i>. Trans. Heinz Insu Fenkl, Penguin Classics, 2019, pp. vii–30, 219–222. (41 pages) - Lee, Peter (ed). “Chosŏn Fiction in Korean” in <i>A History of Korean Literature</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.273-281. (9 pages)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 6	Field Trip I: Reading Scripts and Power Course-related trip to the National Museum of Korea (Yongsan)	Seth, Michael J. "Late Chosŏn, Early Eighteenth Century to 1876." In <i>A Concise History of Premodern Korea</i>, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 201–230. (30 pages)
Session 7	At the Turn of the Twentieth Century I: Reform, New Education, and Old Hierarchies	- Seth, Michael J. "Korea in the Nineteenth Century." In <i>A Concise History of Premodern Korea</i>, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 233–251. (19 pages) - Yuh, Leighanne. "Late Nineteenth-Century Modern Education in Korea: The State, Ideology, and Moral Education." In Andrew Hall and Leighanne Yuh (eds), <i>Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945</i>, Brill, 2023, pp. 79–101. (21 pages)
Session 8	At the Turn of the Twentieth Century II: Newspapers, Vernacular Writing and the Making of 'National Language'	- Robinson, Michael E. "A New Century and the End of an Era." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>, University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 8–35. (28 pages) - Schmid, Andre. "Decentering the Middle Kingdom and Realigning the East." In <i>Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919</i>, Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 55–72. (18 pages)
Session 9	At the Turn of the Twentieth Century III: Western Missionaries and Their Bilingual Dictionaries	- Pieper, Daniel. "Linguistic Modernity, Education, and Nationalizing the Vernacular in Pre-colonial Korea." In Andrew Hall and Leighanne Yuh (eds), <i>Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945</i>, Brill, 2023, pp. 19–48. (30 pages) - King, Ross. "Western Protestant Missionaries and the Origins of Korean Language Modernization." <i>Journal of International and Area Studies</i> vol.11, no.3 (2004): 7–33. (27 pages)
Session 10	Korean Textbooks At the Turn of the Twentieth Century Online Exhibition at eMuseum Archive	Lim, Sang-Seok. "Korean Language Textbooks, 1895–1937: Mixed Script, Hanmun, and Colonization." In Andrew Hall and Leighanne Yuh (eds), <i>Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945</i>. Brill, 2023, pp. 178–193. (16 pages)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 11	Midterm Presentations I	
Session 12	Midterm Presentations II	
Session 13	Colonial Rule I: Education Policies and the Rise of Japanese Influence	- Hall, Andrew. "Japan's Education Policies in Korea in the 1910s." In Andrew Hall and Leighanne Yuh (eds), <i>Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945</i>. Brill, 2023, pp. 123–157. (35 pages) - Robinson, Michael E. "Colonial State and Society." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 36–55. (20 pages)
Session 14	Colonial Rule II: 'Transitional Literacy'? Korean, Japanese, and Classical Chinese in Competition	- Pieper, Daniel. "Korean as Transitional Literacy: Language Policy and Korean Colonial Education, 1910–1919." <i>Acta Koreana</i> vol.18, no.2 (2015): 393–416. (24 pages) - Robinson, Michael E. "Class and Nation in Colonial Korea." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 56–68. (13 pages)
Session 15	Colonial Rule III: Korean Responses Film screening Eom Yuna, <i>Mal-Mo-E: The Secret Mission</i>, 2019. (135 minutes) and in-class discussion	- Caprio, Mark E. "Korean Reactions to Japanese Education Policy under Cultural Rule." In Andrew Hall and Leighanne Yuh (eds), <i>Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945</i>. Brill, 2023, pp. 215–238. (24 pages) - Robinson, Michael E. "Colonial Modernity, Assimilation, and War." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 76–99. (24 pages)
Session 16	Poems in Colonial Korea: <i>Sky, Wind, and Stars</i> Virtual tour of Yoon Dong-ju Memorial Hall	- Yun, Dong-ju. <i>Sky, Wind, and Stars</i>. Trans. Kyung-Nyun K. Richards and Steffen F. Richards. Asian Humanities Press, 2003, pp. xiii–xix, 1–3, 82–83. (12 pages) - Lee, Peter (ed). "Early twentieth-century poetry" in <i>A History of Korean Literature</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.336–373. (38 pages)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 17	Postwar Korea I: Standard Language and Nation-Building After 1945	- Robinson, Michael E. "Liberation, Civil War, and Division." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 100–120. (20 pages) - Kim, Michael. "The Han'gŭl Crisis and Language Standardization: Clashing Orthographic Identities and the Politics of Cultural Construction." <i>Journal of Korean Studies</i> vol.22, no.1 (2017): 5–26. (22 pages)
Session 18	Postwar Korea II: Diverging Gaps Between the Two Koreas	- Robinson, Michael E. "Going It Alone: The DPRK." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 146–166. (21 pages) - King, Ross. "North and South Korea." In Andrew Simpson (ed), <i>Language and National Identity in Asia</i>. Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 200–234. (35 pages)
Session 19	Postwar Korea III: Urban Life and Everyday Speech	Robinson, Michael E. "Political and Economic Development in South Korea", "Democratization in South Korea: 1987–2000." In <i>Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History</i>. University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, pp. 121–145, 167–181. (40 pages)
Session 20	Field Trip II: Traces of Language Policy Course-related trip to the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History (Gwanghwamun)	
Session 21	Postwar Korean Literature: <i>Who Ate Up All the Shinga?</i>	- Park, Wan-suh. <i>Who Ate Up All the Shinga?</i> Trans. Yu Young-nan and Stephen Epstein. Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 159–209. (50 pages) - Ch'oe Yun, "Late twentieth-century fiction by women" in Peter Lee(ed). <i>A History of Korean Literature</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.481-490. (10 pages)

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 22	Korean Meets English: Globalization and ‘English Fever’	- Seth, Michael J. “South Korea in Recent Years.” In <i>A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present</i>. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, pp. 239–269. (31 pages) - Smith, Michael D., and Donghwan Kim. “English and Linguistic Imperialism: A Korean Perspective in the Age of Globalization.” <i>The Mirae Journal of English Language and Literature</i> vol.20, no.2 (2015): 331–350. (21 pages) - Bak, Sangmee. “English Fluency as Wind beneath My Children’s Wings: The Imagined and Practiced Value of English Language in Globalizing Korea.” <i>Asian Journal of Education and e-Learning</i> vol.3, no. 1 (2015): 38–42. (5 pages)
Session 23	Final Essay Submission & Wrap-Up	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- The National Museum of Korea – Yongsan, Seoul
- The National Museum of Korean Contemporary History – Gwanghwamun, Seoul

REQUIRED READINGS:
Books/Edited Volumes

- Hall, Andrew, and Leighanne Yuh (eds). *Education, Language, and the Intellectual Underpinnings of Modern Korea, 1875–1945*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023.
- Kim, Man-jung. *The Nine Cloud Dream*. Trans. Heinz Insu Fenkl, Penguin Classics, 2019.
- King, Ross. “North and South Korea.” In *Language and National Identity in Asia*, Andrew Simpson ed., 200–234. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Lee, Ki-Moon, and Robert Ramsey. *A History of the Korean Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Lee, Peter (ed). *A History of Korean Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Park, Wan-suh. *Who Ate Up All the Shinga?* Trans. Yu Young-nan and Stephen Epstein. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Robinson, Michael E. *Korea’s Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007.
- Seth, Michael J. *A Concise History of Premodern Korea: From Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century*. 2nd ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.
- Seth, Michael J. “South Korea in Recent Years.” In *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, 2nd ed., New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.
- Taylor, Insup, and M. Taylor. *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese*. Rev. ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014.
- Yun, Dong-ju. *Sky, Wind, and Stars, and Other Poems*. Trans. K. K. Richards and S. F. Richards. Fremont, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 2003.



Journal Articles

- King, Ross. "Western Protestant Missionaries and the Origins of Korean Language Modernization." *Journal of International and Area Studies* vol. 11, no. 3 (2004): 7–38.
- Oh, Youngkyun. "Printing the Samgang haengsil-to (Illustrated Guide to the Three Relationships), a Premodern Korean Moral Primer." *East Asian Publishing and Society* vol. 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–38.
- Pieper, Daniel. "Korean as Transitional Literacy: Language Policy and Korean Colonial Education, 1910–1919." *Acta Koreana* vol. 18, no. 2 (2015): 393–421.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:

Goeun Lee earned her Ph.D. in Korean Culture and Society from the Academy of Korean Studies. She is currently a research professor at the Institute of Humanities, Chonnam National University. Her current research focuses on the introduction of Christianity to China and Korea at the turn of the twentieth century, Protestant missionary translation, and its impact on printing culture, language, and intellectual hierarchies. Her recent publications include "A Chinese Protestant Literature Tailored for Korean Readers: *Gate of Virtue and Wisdom* (*Tökhye immun* 德慧入門, 1915)," *Journal of Korean Religions* vol.16, no.1 (2025).