

## Korean Popular Culture in the Inter-Asian and Global Context

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### Course Description

This course will look into the shaping of South Korean popular culture not merely on a national scale, but also in its complex inter-Asian and global historical context. Through the lens of popular culture, we can observe how the nation responded to the inroads of modern western culture during the early modern period, especially under Japanese colonial rule; how the politics of the Cold War and American hegemony affected them; how Korean popular culture has evolved and adapted to the rapid socioeconomic changes and intertwined with other Asian popular cultures such as Chinese (first from Hong Kong and Taiwan and later from mainland) and Japanese.

In addition to academic texts, this course will make use of a wealth of materials from literature, music, film, TV dramas, cartoon, animation, and sports. In terms of both export industry and lifestyle practice, the Korean pop culture phenomenon – commonly known as the ‘Korean Wave’ or *Hallyu* – has come to enjoy global recognition. We will explore the significance of popular culture in the globalized political-economic landscapes, and examine the role of policy intervention in cultivating the media-culture industry. In light of South Korea’s newfound soft power and its global impact that reaches even North Korea, we will also look at how popular culture has been mediating the complex, tormented relationship between North and South Korea.

### Required Texts and Course Materials

Textbook: Kyung Hyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., *The Korean Popular Culture Reader* Duke University Press, 2014 (hereafter *KPCR*) – available as an e-book at the OSU library.

All course readings listed on the syllabus are required and readily accessible on Carmen. Students are expected to finish all required readings before coming to class.

### Assignments and Grading

#### Pop quizzes

There is no written midterm or final exam, but a total of six pop quizzes will be taken over the semester. The lowest quiz score will be dropped and the remaining five scores will count for 35% of the final grade (i.e., 7% per quiz). No makeup quiz will be given.

### **Documentary film review papers**

All students are required to write a minimum of 400-word review paper for each of the three documentary films screened in class. Each paper counts for 5% of the final grade. Review paper is due in the next class following each screening. Late submission will be penalized by 1% point deduction for each day past due.

### **Final research project: presentation and term paper**

All students are required to conduct a group or individual project, which consists of a proposal, a class presentation and a final term paper. Students can form a group (of no more than four) to do a project together. Students will choose a topic, seek for instructor's approval by Week 5, and then write a short proposal of about 500-600 words in length (about 2 double-spaced pages) including a list of references by Week 9. Presentation should be about 10-15 minutes long for an individual and 15-20 minutes long for a group. Final paper should be at minimum 2,500 words (about 10 double-spaced pages) for single-author (4,000 for two 6,000 for three, and 8,000 for four co-authors) including proper citations, endnotes and bibliography. The final project counts for 35% of the final grade: 5% for proposal, 5% for presentation, and 25% for term paper.

### **Class attendance and participation**

An absence will be counted as an absence regardless of the reason, and will be excused only upon the instructor's discretion for extenuating circumstances with verifiable written document on a case by case basis. A missing class will result in 1% deduction from attendance and participation, which counts for 15% of the final grade. Leaving early without instructor approval constitutes an absence. Those who are late (arriving well after class begins) will have 0.5% deduction. And the same 0.5% penalty will be assessed on those who distract themselves and other students using any digital device (cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) for non-class purposes.

### **Grading scheme**

Pop quizzes (7% x 5 quiz scores):	35%
Review papers (5% x 3 papers):	15%
Final project (proposal 5% + presentation 5% + paper 25%):	35%
Attendance and participation:	15%

93-100 A	90-92.9 A-	
87-89.9 B+	83-86.9 B	80-82.9 B-
77-79.9 C+	73-76.9 C	70-72.9 C-
67-69.9 D+	63-66.9 D	62.9 ~ E

### **Academic misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct (The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations). Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

### **Disability services**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

## Course Schedule (subject to change)

### **Week 1. Overview: Globalization and Popular Culture**

Course introduction

Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Globalization as Hybridization" *Globalization and Culture: Global Melange* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009) pp. 65-94

### **Week 2. The Rise of the Korean Wave and K-Pop**

Elisabeth Schober (2014) "Itaewon's Suspence: Masculinities, Place-making, and the US Armed Forces in a Seoul Entertainment District," *Social Anthropology* 22(1): 36-51.

KOCIS (2011) *The Korean Wave: A New Pop Culture Phenomenon*, pp. 9-55.

**Documentary screening #1:** Hark-Joon Lee (2012) *9 Muses of Star Empire*

### **Week 3. East Asian Pop Culture? An Inter-Asian Perspective**

**Documentary review paper #1 due**

Beng Huat Chua, "Introduction" and "East Asian Pop Culture: Mapping the Contours," *Structure, Audience and Soft Power in East Asian Pop Culture* (Hong Kong University Press, 2012) pp. 1-30.

Meaghan Morris (2004) "Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema: Hong Kong and the Making of a Global Popular Culture," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5(2): 181-199.

### **Week 4. 'Mass Culture' at the Gate of Modernity: Colonial Modernity and Popular Culture**

**Quiz #1**

Sun-young Yoo (2001) "Embodiment of American Modernity in Colonial Korea," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2(3): 423-441

Michael Robinson (1999) "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and Colonial Modernity in Korea," *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, pp. 52-69

### **Week 5. Colonial Legacy and Cultural Nationalism**

**Final project topic due**

Jung Hwan Cheon, "Bend It Like a Man of Chosun: Sports Nationalism and Colonial Modernity of 1936," *KPCR*, pp. 199-227

Kyu Hyun Kim, "Fisticuffs, High Kicks, and Colonial Histories: The Ambivalence of Modern Korean Identity in Narrative Comics," *KPCR*, pp. 34-54

### **Week 6. From Rags to Riches: American Dreams in the Cold-War East Asia**

**Quiz #2**

Shunya Yoshimi (2003) "'America' as Desire and Violence: Americanization in Postwar Japan and Asia during the Cold War," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4(3): 433-450

Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin (2010) "The Birth of Rok: Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism and Glocalization of Rock Music in Korea, 1964-1975," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 18(1): 199-230

### **Week 7. North Korea's Self-Image in Popular Literature and Propaganda Arts**

Han Ung-bin (1999) "Second Encounter," *Acta Koreana* 5(2): 18-97.

**Documentary screening #2:** Daniel Gordon (2002) *The Game of Their Lives*

### **Week 8. Portrayals of North Korea in South Korean and Western Media**

**Documentary review paper #2 due**

Sukki Kim, *Without You, There Is No Us: My Time with the Sons of North Korea's Elite* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2014) excerpt

Christopher Green and Stephen Epstein, "Now On My Way to Meet Who? South Korean Television, North Korean Refugees, and the Dilemmas of Representation," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 41, No. 2, October 14, 2013.

### **Week 9. Sports and National Identity: Olympic Games, World Cup Soccer and beyond**

**Quiz #3; Final project proposal due**

Younghan Cho (2008) "The National Crisis and De/reconstructing Nationalism in South Korea during the IMF Intervention," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 9(1): 82-96

Sun-Hee Whang (2006) "Korea and Japan 2002: Public Space and Popular Celebration" in Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, eds., *National Identity and Global Sports Event*, SUNY Press, pp. 215-231.

### **Week 10. Plastic Surgery Nation: Beauty and Body Images**

Stephen J. Epstein and Rachael M. Joo (2012) "Multiple Exposures: Korean Bodies and the Transnational Imagination," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10(33), No. 1.

Joanna Elfving-Hwang (2013) "Cosmetic Surgery and Embodying the Moral Self in South Korean Popular Makeover Culture," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11(24), No. 2

### **Week 11. Gender and Sexuality in Korean Popular Culture**

Stephen J. Epstein and James Turnbull "Girls' Generation? Gender, (Dis)Empowerment, and K-pop," *KPCR*, pp. 314-336

Pil Ho Kim and C. Colin Singer (2011) "Three Periods of Korean Queer Cinema: Invisible, Camouflage, and Blockbuster," *Acta Koreana* 14(1): 115-134

### **Week 12. South Korean Cyberculture: The World's Most Wired Society?**

**Quiz #4**

Inkyu Kang, "It All Started with a Bang: The Role of PC Bangs in South Korea's Cyberculture," *KPCR*, pp. 55-75

Dal Yong Jin, "Digital Hallyu 2.0: Transnationalization of Local Digital Games," *New Korean Wave: Transnational Cultural Power in the Age of Social Media* (University of Illinois Press, 2016) pp. 133-150.

**Documentary screening #3:** Steven Dhoedt (2013) *State of Play*

### **Week 13. Gangnam Style: The Local and the Global in an Unlikely K-Pop Gigahit**

**Documentary review paper #3 due; Quiz #5**

John Lie (2013) "Why Didn't 'Gangnam Style' Go Viral in Japan?: Gender Divide and Subcultural Heterogeneity in Contemporary Japan," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 9: 44-67.

Marcus Tan (2015) “K-Contagion: Sound, Space and Speed in Psy's 'Gangnam Style',” *TDR: The Drama Review*, 59(1): 83-96.

**Week 14. Beyond East Asia: Global Reach of K-Pop Fandom**

**Documentary review paper #3 due**

Nissim Otmazgin and Irina Lyan (2013) “Hallyu across the Desert: K-pop Fandom in Israel and Palestine,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 9: 68-89.

Nayelli Lopez Rocha and Andrii Ryzhkov (2014) “Hallyu, the Current Issues of its Development and Dissemination Process in Mexico,” *Journal of Korean Culture* 26: 119-148.

**Week 15. Student Presentations**

**Quiz #6**

**Final project presentations**

**Final paper due: tba**