

DISS241-00: CONTEMPORARY KOREAN SOCIETY

Summer 2023

Division of International Studies

Korea University

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the main aspects of contemporary Korean society, including those pertaining to the family, gender, education, population, religion, economy, and popular culture. The course will specifically focus on topics and issues that figure prominently in the lives of the Korean people, such as the persistence of extended families, the rise of Christianity, education frenzy, population aging, low fertility rate, increasing ethnic diversity and multiculturalism, rapid industrialization, Seoul-based urbanization, and the rise of Hallyu as a global phenomenon. Each of these issues will be examined through sociological, historical, and comparative perspectives. Every effort will be made to make each session lively and engaging, so your active participation is extremely important and is a vital part of the course.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this course is to prepare students with the knowledge and analytical tools needed to develop balanced views on Korean society. Toward this end, students are expected to:

- understand the key dimensions and principal trends of Korean society;
- comprehend how class, race-ethnicity, gender, and age relate to social institutions such as the family, education, economy, religion, and politics;

- think globally, question commonly held beliefs, assess different perspectives used by sociologists, and to use this process to understand the forces that generate change and continuity in Korean society;
- understand how significant changes in society affect the experiences of diverse groups in Korea;
- understand various social problems facing Korean society, including inequality, sexism, and aging population.

III. REQUIRED READINGS

Kim, Andrew Eungi. 2022. *Korean Culture: Confucianism, Shamanism and Other Habits of the Heart*. Seoul: Korea University Press.

Kim, Andrew Eungi, ed. 2018. *Korean Society: An Introduction*. Seoul: Korea University Press

* Kim (2018) is available at the Unistore on the basement floor of Center Square

IV. REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. Class Attendance (10% of the final grade):

Attendance will account for 10% of the final grade. As required by the Ministry of Education, you will automatically fail the course if you miss more than one-third of the classes. So attendance will be counted.

2. Midterm Exam (40% of the final grade)

Short- and long-essay questions.

3. Final Exam (50% of the final grade)

Noncumulative, comprising short- and long-essay questions.

V. GRADING SCALE

A+	95-100	A	90-94		
B+	85-89	B	80-84		
C+	75-79	C	70-74		
D+	65-69	D	60-64	F	0-59

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENT

June 22	Introduction to Culture: Five Keywords to Understand its Characteristics Required Readings: None.
June 26	Korean Culture I: Persistence of Shamanism Required Readings: Kim (2022), Introduction, Chapters 1-2.
June 27	Korean Culture II: Persistence of Confucianism Required Readings: Kim (2022), Chapters 3-4.
June 28	Korean Culture III: The World's Most Confucianized Culture Required Readings: Kim (2022), Chapters 5-6.
June 29	Family: Role Changes & Trends in Marriage and Divorce Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 2
July 3	Gender Inequality: Facts, Causes & Implications Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 3
July 4	Education Frenzy: Economic Burden & Psychological Stress Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 5
July 5	Midterm
July 6	Religious Beliefs Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 8
July 10	Aging of Korea: Demographic Time Bomb Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 9
July 11	Multicultural Korea: Increasing Ethnic Diversity & Implications Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 10
July 12	Hallyu: The Rise of Korean Popular Culture as a Global Phenomenon Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 12
Jan. 13	Population and Urbanization Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 13
July 17	Korean Economic Development: International Factors for the "Miracle of the Han River" Required Readings: Kim (2018), Chapter 14
July 18	Final Exam