

Title : Current Issues in Korean Society

Lecturer	Kim, Ha Young
Institution	Dongguk University
Email	hykim2@unitel.co.kr

Course Description:

This course aims at promoting students to have an overall understanding of Korea by focusing on selected contending issues in contemporary Korean society. Korea has made remarkable economic achievements and industrialization with comparable changes in social and cultural life. Korean politics has also revealed its unusual dynamics achieving political democracy while toppling down authoritarian regimes. The civil society in Korea is vibrant with burgeoning political democracy and growing civic participation. Contemporary Korea is open and globalized with its own culture and language. However, Korean society is not free from diverse political and social problems. Regional antagonism, ideological division, changing gender relationship, generation gap, demographic change and aging, political corruption, power tripping in work places, and enduring tension between North and South Korea are such issues that still haunt Korean society. This course will be a good opportunity to look into the diverse and dynamic aspects of rapid-changing Korean society for the students who are not well informed about Korean society, culture, and politics.

Materials/Text:

Michael Breen, *The New Koreans* (St Martin's Press, 2017);

Dowan Goo et al., *Hanguk sahoe munjae (Social issues in Korea)* (Korea National Open University Press, 2017)

Requirements:

- (1) Students are required to write one short paper on the topics that the instructor will suggest during the course.
- (2) Final exam will be conducted at the last day of the course.
- (3) Participation and attendance are crucial to achieving the knowledge offered in the class and good grade.

Schedule: (* The following schedule is tentative, and topics are subject to change.)

Class #	Topic
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| (1) | Introduction to the course; Geography and cultural characteristics of Korea |
| (2) | Korean history and traditional society |
| (3) | Nationalism in Korea; Japanese colonial rule and the resistance of Korean people |
| (4) | Division of Korean peninsula; Origins and processes |
| (5) | Economic development of Korea |
| (6) | From authoritarianism to democracy in Korea |
| (7) | Characteristics of Korean political system |
| (8) | Leaders and elites in Korea |
| (9) | Regionalism in Korea; Regional antagonism |
| (10) | Confrontation of conservatives and liberals |
| (11) | Civil society and social movements in Korea |
| (12) | Changing gender relationship in Korea |
| (13) | Changing demography and aging in Korea |
| (14) | Gapjil; Power tripping in work place |
| (15) | North-South Korea's relationship; unification issue |
| (16) | Final exam |

Assignments: Assignments will be given during the course with specific guidelines.

Evaluation: Attendance 10%; Mid-term paper 30%; Final exam 40%; Participation 20% (Total 100%).