HSEA UN3863: THE HISTORY OF MODERN KOREA (Spring 2018)

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:40-3:55 PM
233 Seeley W. Mudd Building

Instructor Information:
Charles K. Armstrong (Columbia University)

Description: The history of Korea from mid-19th century to the present, with an emphasis on political, economic, cultural and social change in the twentieth century.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance, section discussion and Courseworks postings (15% of grade). More than two unexcused absences from either the lecture or discussion will result in the drop of one letter grade.

2. Analysis of primary text, approximately 3 pages, due February 22 (15%).

3. In-class mid-term on Thursday March 8 (30%).

4. Final take-home exam, 2,500 words (approximately 10 pages), due May 3 (40%)

Required Texts


Min Jin Lee, *Pachinko* (Grand Central, 2018)


Han Kang, *Human Acts* (Hogarth, 2016)

Recommended Text: *Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume Two* (Columbia, 2000)

All books are for sale at Book Culture, 536 West 112th Street, and on reserve at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library in Kent Hall. Other readings are available on Courseworks under “Files.”
WEEKLY READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Late Chosŏn, Early Modern

Tuesday 1/16. Course Introduction

Thursday 1/18. Everyday Life in Chosŏn

Required Readings:

Buzo, *Making of Modern Korea*, Chapter 1

“A Typical Day and Year in the Life of the Peasantry” (pp. 47 - 59) in Michael D. Shin, ed. *Everyday Life in Joseon-Era Korea*

Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors* pp. 1 - 65

Week 2: Korea in the World, 1864 - 1894

Tuesday 1/23. The Taewŏngun Era, 1864 - 1873

Thursday 1/25. Eastern Way, Western Method, 1873 - 1894

Required Readings:

Buzo, chapter 2


Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 2:

“Yi Hangno: Sinify the Western Barbarians,” pp. 140 - 42


“Yu Kilchin: Levels of Enlightenment,” pp. 248 - 53

Week 3: The End of Chosŏn

Tuesday, 1/31. The Korean Empire
Thursday, 2/01. The Road to Annexation

**Required Readings:**


*Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 2:*
- “A Call to Arms Issued at Paeksan,” pp. 263 - 4
- “Kabo Reform Edicts,” pp. 273 - 75
- Selections from *The Independent*
  - “His Majesty the King is now Emperor of Korea,” and “Imperial Edict.”
  - “People are the Masters,” pp. 286-288

**Week 4: Joining Japan, 1910 - 1919**

Tuesday, 2/06. The Colonizing Project

Thursday, 2/08. March First and its Aftermath

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 3

*Pachinko*, Book 1 chapters 1 - 11, pp. 5 - 94


**Week 5: Colonial and Anti-Colonial Modernity, 1920 - 1931**

Tuesday, 2/13. “Cultural Politics” and Korean Culture

Thursday, 2/15. Nationalist Movements

**Required Readings:**

Michael Robinson, “Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony and Colonial Modernity,” in Shin and
Robinson, eds. *Colonial Modernity in Korea* pp. 52-67

*Pachinko*, Book 1 chapters 12 - 17, pp. 95-145

*Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 2:*

**Week 6: Wartime Mobilization and Assimilation, 1931 - 1945**

Tuesday, 2/20. The Wartime Colony

Thursday, 2/22. Koreans as Japanese

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapters 4


*Pachinko*, Book 2 chapters 1-9, pp. 149-201

**Week 7: Liberation, Division and War, 1945 – 1953**

Tuesday, 2/27. The “Liberation Space”

Thursday, 3/01. Origins, Outbreak and Conduct of the Korean War

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 5 and 6


*Pachinko*, Book 2 chapters 1-9, pp. 202-236

**Week 8: The Korean War in Memory**

Tuesday, 3/06. The Remembered War

Thursday, 3/08. MID-TERM EXAMINATION
(No required readings or discussion sections this week.)

**Week 9: SPRING BREAK, 3/12 - 3/16**

**Week 10: Post-War Reconstruction**

Tuesday, 3/20. The North and Fraternal Socialist Allies

Thursday, 3/22. The South and the Free World

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 7


**Week 11: Divergence, Development, and Democracy**

Tuesday, March 27. Political Economies of Development

Thursday, April 29. Human Rights and Democratization

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 8

Kim Il Sung “On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution” (1965)


*Human Acts*, chapters 1-3, pp. 1-110
Week 12: The Korean Diaspora

Tuesday, April 3. Special Guest Lecture: Min Jin Lee, author of *Pachinko*

Thursday, April 5. The Korean Diaspora in China, America, Japan and the former USSR

**Required Readings:**


Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Exodus to North Korea*, pp. 3-12, 41-69


*Pachinko*, Book 2 chapters 10-20, pp. 237-321

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Week 13: The Two Koreas and the End of the Cold War

Tuesday, April 10. Inter-Korean Relations and the “Collapse of Communism”

Thursday, April 12. Film: “A Schoolgirl’s Diary” (2006)

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 9


*Human Acts*, pp. 111-end

Bandi, “Record of a Defection” and “Life of a Swift Steed” from *The Accusation*
**Week 14: Culture of the Two Koreas**

Tuesday, April 17. K-Pop and its Discontents  
Guest Lecturer: Keith Howard, SOAS, University of London

Thursday, April 19: Korean Music In and Beyond the Peninsula

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapter 10


*Pachinko*, Book 3, pp. 325-396

**Week 15: Postmodern Korea**

Tuesday, April 23. The Two Koreas in the 21st Century

Thursday, April 25. Korean Futures

**Required Readings:**

Buzo, chapters 11 and 12


Bandi, “Pandemonium” and “The Red Mushroom” from *The Accusation*