Sample Syllabus 2007

EAST 313: Media and Popular Culture in Korea

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kyong Yoon (Korea Foundation Visiting Professor, McGill University)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

• This course aims to introduce students to Korean popular culture and its contexts. In particular, we will examine meanings of popular culture and cultural changes in contemporary Korea. The course will combine lectures with discussions of reading materials and with individual/group presentations (depending on the number of students). In the course, we will also discuss various audio-visual materials such as TV dramas, films, and pop songs, in order to understand better the texts and contexts of contemporary Korean society. At the end of this course, students will have a comprehensive understanding of the practices of popular culture in Korea.

GRADE EVALUATION

• Assignments: 30% (5 times x 6 %)
  Web-board postings (300-600words each); Use “Discussion” section in “My Course” site.
• Term Paper and Its Presentation: 30% (Paper 20% + Presentation 10%)
  - A reflection paper based upon one of weekly topics (2000 words in length)& 10 min presentation of the reflection in class
  - Paper is due by Week 11 and its presentation will be assigned between week 12 and 13.
• Final Exam (In class quiz): 30%
  A combination of essays and short answers; Open book
• Attendance & Participation: 10 %
  Attendance and completion of required reading materials are required. A student who misses their classes more than 6 times without prior permission may fail the course, regardless of his/her in-class performance

TEXTBOOK

• The packet of reading materials will be available at the university book store (on Sept 9, Monday); the reading material for the first week will be given at the first class on Sept 4 (Tuesday).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


• SPECIAL NEEDS
Students who have any special needs which may require modified means of assessment, or which may have an impact on the way in which the course is taught should inform the instructor by the end of Week 1. Such needs may be the result of visual or hearing difficulties, difficulties in writing, and so forth. If the instructor is not informed of such needs at the start of the semester, it may not be possible to make appropriate arrangements for these special needs.
CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 Introduction: Why Korean Popular Culture? (Sept 4, 6)
• Key Themes:
  - How to study Korean popular culture
  - Contexts of and discourses about the ‘Korean Wave’ in Asia
  - Implications of Intra-Asian Cultural Flows
• Required Readings:
• Further Readings:

WEEK 2 The History and Theories of Korean Popular Culture (Sept 11, 13)
• Key Themes:
  - Introduction to Korean popular and material culture
  - Introduction to the studies of popular culture
  - Cultural Theories & Methodologies
• Required Readings:

WEEK 3 Studying Media Texts (Sept 18, 20)
• Key Themes:
  - Analysis of Media Texts
  - Representations and the Media
  - Effects of Stereotyping
  - Representations of Immigrant Workers and Ethnic Minorities in Korea
• Required Readings:
• Further Readings:

WEEK 4 Studying the Cultural Industries (Sept 25, 27)

- **Key Themes:**
  - Political Economy of the Media
  - The Media and Power
  - Globalization of Cultural Industry
  - Star System

- **Required Readings:**

- **Further Readings:**

WEEK 5 Studying Audiences (Oct 2, 4)

- **Key Themes:**
  - Encoding/Decoding
  - Interpretive Communities
  - Social Practices of Fandom

- **Required Readings:**

- **Further readings:**

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**WEEK 6 The Media and Modernity in Korea (Oct 9, 11)**

- **Key Themes:**
  - The Development of Modern Mass Media in Colonial Korea
  - The Media and Modernity: Emergence of the Mediated Self in Korea
  - Mid-Term Exam (in class on Tuesday)

- **Required Readings:**

- **Further Readings:**

**WEEK 7 Memory, History & Popular Culture (Oct 16, 18)**

- **Key Themes:**
  - Representations of History in the Korean Media: The Reinvention of Tradition in the Media
  - Case Studies

- **Required Readings:**

- **Further Readings:**

**WEEK 8 National Identities in Korean Popular Culture (Oct 23, 25)**

- **Key Themes:**
  - The Making of Korean-ness in Korean Popular Culture
  - Questions of Others in the Korean Media

- **Required Readings:**

- **Further Readings:**

**WEEK 9 Globalization, Popular Culture, and Everyday Life (Oct 30, Nov 1)**

- **Key Themes:**
  - Globalization of Korean Cultural Industries (Case Studies: Rain, Boa & Lee Hyori)
  - Debates on Cultural Globalization
  - Globalization and Everyday Life
- **Required Readings:**
- **Further Readings:**

**WEEK 10 Politics of Representation: Gender, Class & Ethnicity (Nov 6, 8)**

- **Key Themes:**
  - Representations and Questions of Gender Identity
  - Ethnic Minorities in Korean Media
  - Minorities in Recent Korean Films: Failan, If You Were Me, My Wedding Campaign
- **Required Readings:**

**WEEK 11 North Korea and the Media (Nov 13, 15)**

- **Key Themes**
  - The State and Popular Culture in North Korea
  - Media Representations of North Korea
  - Popular Culture and Everyday Life in North Korea
  - Representation of North Korea and its Culture in the Media
  - Discussion about recent Korean Popular Cinema: Shiri, Silmido, JSA, Welcome to Dongmakgol
  - Screening of ‘A State of Mind’ (Daniel Gordon, UK)
• Required Readings:
  - Seo, Bo-Myung (2006). ‘Reunifying Identities: North and South in Contemporary South Korean Cinema’,
    *Bright Light Film Journal*, 52.

• Further Readings:
    University Press.

WEEK 12 Discussion and Presentation (Nov 20, 22)
  • Key Themes:
    - Representation of North Korea and its Culture in the Media
    - Discussion about ‘A State of Mind’ (Daniel Gordon, UK)
    - Presentations

WEEK 13 Presentation and Review (Nov 27, 29)
  • Key Themes:
    - Presentations (continued)
    - Concluding Remark: Cultural studies and Korean popular culture
    - Outline for Final Exam