

HANKUK UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES (HUFS)
2017 INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SESSION in KOREAN & ASIAN STUDIES
July-August, 2017

IS313 GENDER IN SOUTH KOREA

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Course Description and Goals

What is “sex”? What is “gender”? What are “appropriate” and “deviant” gender roles? How do we learn those? What are “femininity” and “masculinity”? Why are these so often presented as opposites? Who gets to decide?

To many people, such questions can seem meaningless, their answers simple common-sense. But let’s ask the questions anyway. Let’s dare to take a second look at things we consider so ordinary, and to seek out things that may be radically different to what we’re used to. That’s how we learn that something that feels so fundamental and fixed as gender is actually so fluid—and changing right before our very eyes.

Providing students with those opportunities for discovery, whether through lectures, extensive class discussions, or cultural experiences, is the main purpose of this course.

No background in gender studies is necessary to take this course, nor can a comprehensive examination of the subject be provided in such a short time. However, by highlighting and critically examining various aspects of Korean daily life through a gender lens, and by frequently comparing and contrasting them with Anglo-American societies, it is expected that students will gain a thorough grounding in contemporary and historical issues in Korean gender, feminism, and sexuality. Although Korean culture plays a strong role in all, you will learn that many of those have far more parallels with other developed capitalist countries than you may expect; also, that many are changing rapidly, at a pace that makes Korea a fascinating place to study. Either way, expect your worldview to be thoroughly challenged through this course, and to be inspired to continue your own further investigations and studies well after its completion.

Course Structure and Grading Distribution

After graduating, 9/10ths of students will likely never write another essay, nor take another test. However, at some point all of you *will* need to speak confidently in front of others, to give some form of presentation, and to head some kind of meeting with the aim of encouraging discussion and brainstorming. Doing so is scary, but the only way to overcome that fear is to try. Consequently, the bulk of your assessment will be based on the effort you put into learning and demonstrating these essential professional and life skills.

Attendance and Participation 30%

Classes will generally consist of a 40-50 minute lecture, with an emphasis on visual sociology, followed by 40 minutes of class discussion. In the first class, students will sign up to help lead the discussion in one class in Weeks 2-4, using the questions about the lecture and readings provided by myself as a guide, and/or by presenting some of their own (because of numbers, probably two students per class will be co-leaders). Active class participation is required from all students in these discussions, and will also make the course more engaging and meaningful. Please come to class prepared, having read carefully and thought about the questions regarding the assigned readings for that day.

Final Presentation 40%

In one of the final classes, each student will be required to make an 8-12 minute presentation on a topic of their choosing (in consultation with myself), followed by opening the floor to questions for approximately 10 minutes. Questions and constructive feedback from listeners are expected, and will contribute to listeners' participation grades.

Please note that presenters will *not* be penalized for nervousness or poor English ability. Rather, assessment will be based on a combination of their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and their ability to present those in a clear and logical manner, both in response to questions and in the presentation itself.

Response Papers 40%

Starting in the first class, students will be presented with brief questions about the topics to be covered in the next class, to aid in understanding the lecture and readings and in participating in the class discussion. After the class, students will be expected to write approximately 1-1.5 A4 pages (i.e., half a page per question) with their responses to 2-3 of the questions, adding their own thoughts, opinions, and observations about what they have learned that day. These will be due by the following class.

As you will have limited time to complete these, the intention is not for students to write miniature academic essays, complete with footnotes, but something much more informal and personal, more akin to diary entries. This way, students can be more open with ideas and more freely demonstrate they are engaging with the topic.

Please note that only 8 response papers are required (making each worth 5% of your grade), allowing students to skip response papers for some classes. However, the deadlines for submitting them are fixed, so students can't retroactively submit papers if they realize they've already skipped too many.

Recommended Text

Laurel Kendall ed., *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea* (2002).

Readings

All required readings for each lecture and discussion should be completed before class, and recommended readings are encouraged. None are difficult or onerous to read the night before. But, as your time in Korea will be limited, and many of the readings are already freely available on the internet, and/or will be made available to enrolled students well in advance of classes, I recommend familiarizing yourself with them early on.

Class Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1: Class Orientation

Thursday, July 13

Class Orientation

This will only be a 30 minute class, focusing on introductions and the practicalities of the course.

The following readings are recommended for becoming familiar with some of the themes that will come up in lectures and discussions over the following weeks, but are not required for this class. (Required readings will begin in Week 2.)

- Amy S. Wharton, “Introduction” in *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research* (2005), pp. 1-13.
- Laurel Kendall, Chapter 1, “Introduction” in *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in South Korea*(2002), pp. 1-24.
- JuHui Judy Han and Jennifer Jihye Chun, “Introduction: Gender and Politics in Contemporary Korea”, *Journal of Korean Studies*, Volume 19, Number 2, Fall 2014, pp.245-255.

Week 2: Korean Gender Issues in Context

Monday, July 17

Gatekeepers and Cultural Baggage

What are Korea’s “appropriate” sex and gender roles, and its beauty ideals? Who gets to decide? What prior knowledge and beliefs do we bring to a study of these subjects, and how might they hinder understanding?

(Please note that these questions are tentative, and are not necessarily the questions you will need to answer in your response papers; however, some may be the same or very similar.)

- Required: Roald Maliangkay, “The effeminacy of male beauty in Korea”, *The Newsletter* (International Institute for Asian Studies), No. 55, Autumn/Winter 2010.

- Recommended: Eugenia Kaw, “Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery”, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1993), pp. 74-89.

Tuesday, July 18

Korean Demographic and Economic Trends 1987-2017

Why do Koreans have so few children? Why don't young Koreans cohabit? Why is the marriage age increasing? What is “Hell Joseon,” and how might it affect gender politics?

- Required: Se-Woong Koo, “Korea, Thy Name is Hell Joseon”, *Korea Exposé*, September 22, 2015. Available at: <https://koreaexpose.com/korea-thy-name-is-hell-joseon/>
- Required: Bruno Payen, *Cohabitation and Social Pressure in Urban Korea: Examining Korean Cohabitants' Behavior from a Comparative Perspective with France*, MA in Anthropology Thesis, Graduate School of Korean Studies, Academy of Korean Studies, 2009, pp. 100-117 & 159-165.

Wednesday, July 19

Korean Developmentalism and Democratization

What different roles did men and women play in these movements? How are these echoed in Korean society today?

- Required: Young-Ok Kim, “Modernization in the 1970s and the Female Body” in Jung-Hwa Oh, ed., *Feminist Cultural Politics in Korea*(2005), pp. 165-194.
- Recommended: Laura Nelson, Chapter 1, “Consumer Nationalism” in *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (2000), pp. 1-29.

Thursday, July 20

The Militarization of Daily Life

How do families, schools, universities, and workplaces perpetuate hierarchy? What is Korean military service like, and why is it such a powerful socialization agent?

- Required: Seungsook Moon, Chapter 4, “The Production and Subversion of Hegemonic Masculinity: Reconfiguring Gender Hierarchy in Contemporary South Korea” in *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in South Korea* (2002), pp. 79-114.
- Recommended: Tae-Seop Lim & Howard Giles, “Differences in American and Korean Evaluations of One-year Age Differences”, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Volume 28, 2007, Issue 5, pp. 349-364.

Week 3: Korean Gender in Practice

Monday, July 24

Gendered Consumerism and its Critics

Why are women often singled out for their “inappropriate,” “frivolous,” and/or “self-serving” consumption choices, but rarely men? What distinguishes Korean critiques and negative stereotypes from those of other developed capitalist societies? In what ways, if at all, are men’s purchases also policed?

- Required: JeeEun Regina Song, “The Soybean Paste Girl: The Cultural and Gender Politics of Coffee Consumption in Contemporary South Korea,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (2014): 429-448.
- Recommended: Laura Nelson, Chapter 5, “Endangering The Nation, Consuming the Future” in *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (2000), pp.139-170.

Tuesday, July 25

Korean Celebrity and Pop Culture

(Depending on student numbers, this class may be extended to 2 classes, shunting remaining classes one day later.)

What gender roles does Korean popular culture promote? Why? How seriously are they taken? What challenges to them have emerged?

- Required: James Turnbull, “Just beautiful people holding a bottle: the driving forces behind South Korea’s love of celebrity endorsement,” *Celebrity Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 1 (2017), pp. 128-135.
- Required: Stephen Epstein and James Turnbull, Chapter 14, “Girls’ Generation? Gender, (Dis)Empowerment and K-pop” in *The Korean Popular Culture Reader* (2014).

Wednesday, July 26

Body Image

What compels Koreans to have so many cosmetic surgery procedures? What impact does K-pop have on body-image problems? With huge numbers of Korean men using cosmetics, it is still appropriate to think of make-up as “girly”? Is this increasing use of cosmetics by men necessarily a positive development?

- Required: Joanna Elfving-Hwang, "Cosmetic Surgery and Embodying the Moral Self in South Korean Popular Makeover Culture," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 24, No. 2, June 17, 2013. Available at: <http://apjif.org/2013/11/24/Joanna-Elfving-Hwang/3956/article.html>
- Recommended: Stephen J. Epstein and Rachael M. Joo, "Multiple Exposures: Korean Bodies and the Transnational Imagination," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Volume 10, Issue 33, No. 1, August 13, 2012. Available at: <http://apjif.org/2012/10/33/Stephen-Epstein/3807/article.html>

Thursday, July 27

New Women and Modern Girls

Who and what were “New Women” and “Modern Girls”? How did they differ from their counterparts overseas? What precedents did they set for future generations? In what ways did the backlash against their (relative) sexual liberation and increased working possibilities, consumer spending, and education mirror that of misogyny in Korean today?

- Required: Insook Kwon, “The New Women’s Movement’ in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship Between Imperialism and Women”, *Gender & History*, Volume 10, Issue 3, November 1998, pp. 381-405.

Week 4: Let’s Talk About Sex, Baby

Monday, July 31

Sexuality and Sexual Politics

Korea is often described as a “sexually conservative” society, but what does that actually mean? Is it true? In what ways, if at all, do Korea’s double-standards differ from those in Western countries?

- Required: Claire Lee, “Korean teens fight for rights to birth control, sex life”, *Korea Herald*, 11 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160411000776>
- Required: Arang, “Having Sex in a Society That only Recognizes Men’s Sexual Desires,” *Ilda South Korean Feminist Journal*, 25 September 2016. Available at: http://ildaro.blogspot.kr/2016/10/having-sex-in-society-that-only_15.html OR Se-Woong Koo, “Men Who Yearn to Be Erect, and the Women Who Bear Them,” *Korea Exposé*, March 2, 2015. Available at: <https://koreaexpose.com/men-who-yearn-to-be-erect-and-the-women-who-bear-them>

Tuesday, August 1

Korean LGBTQ Issues

The struggle for LGBTQ rights in Korea lags behind those of most other democracies, and the public’s aversion to sexual minorities often shocks given the gender-fluidity of much of Korean pop culture, its many homosocial institutions, and the (relatively) greater toleration during the Joseon dynasty. What are the sources of modern Korean homophobia? When, if ever, do you expect same-sex marriage to be legalized in Korea?

- Required: Hyun-young Kwon Kim & John Cho, “The Korean Gay and Lesbian Movement 1993-2008,” in Gi-wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang, eds., *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society* (2011), pp. 206-223.

- Required: JuHui Judy Han, “The politics of homophobia in South Korea,” *East Asia Forum*, 4 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/07/04/the-politics-of-homophobia-in-south-korea>
- Recommended: Podcast, “2016 Korea Queer Culture Festival & Pride Parade,” *Korea FM*, June 16 2016. Available at: <http://koreafm.net/2016/06/2016-korea-queer-culture-festival-pride-parade>

Wednesday, August 2

(Subject to be determined; depending on class size, student presentations may begin on this day.)

Thursday, August 3

(Subject to be determined; depending on class size, student presentations may begin on this day.)

Week 5: Student Presentations

Monday-Wednesday, August 7-9

- Student Presentations