Korean Politics and Foreign Policy

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This course examines both North and South Korea’s politics and foreign policy. The course will survey the Korean peninsula’s modern history from Japanese colonialism, partition and the establishment of two separate nations, Cold War politics, the Korean War, and South Korea's democracy movement to the present-day North Korean nuclear crisis and regime transition. Since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, South Korea has developed into one of the largest trading nations in the world with a vibrant democratic polity. North Korea, isolated, destitute, and now ruled by a third-generation hereditary dictatorship, has descended into a perpetually aid-dependent state that maintains internal control through extreme repression. What does the future hold for the two Koreas? Special attention will be given to the South’s condition as “middle power”; and to North's strategy of brinkmanship, nuclear program, and the reasons for the persistent regime non-transition. It is implicit that extreme attention will be reserved to the nature of inter-Korean relations, through a scrupulous analysis and a comparison of the different strategies implemented by Seoul towards Pyongyang (Nordpolitik, Sunshine Policy, Policy of Peace and Prosperity, Vision 3000, Trustpolitik).

Course Requirements: As class participation is an important part of the final course grade, students are expected to attend each class period. Students are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions, and to write a short essay on a topic proposed by the instructor.

Grades: Grades will be based on active participation (60%) and on the essay (40%).

Reading Assignments will consist of journal articles, substantial scholarly opinion columns as well as excerpts from books. All of these reading materials will be in English, as will the lectures. Among others, the following books represent a very good approach to the course topics:

Bruce Cumings, Korea’s Place in the Sun, W.W. Norton, 2005;
ESSENTIAL READINGS

First week: **Historical Development of Politics in the Korean Peninsula**

Second week: **South Korean Political Processes**
(Regionalism; political parties; presidential elections; civil society & social movements; political protest; political culture)

Third week: **South Korea’s Political and Economic Journey From Aid Recipient to Donor: Being a Middle Power in Concrete**
(South Korea’s Foreign Policy; South Korea as a Middle Power; Relations with the United States, China, Japan, and Europe)
- David Shim and Patrick Flamm, “Rising South Korea: A Minor Player or a Regional Power?,” *Pacific Focus*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2013;

Fourth week: **“Knowing the Kims”: North Korea’s Domestic and Foreign Policy**
- Jae-Cheon Lim, “North Korea’s Hereditary Succession: Comparing Two Key Transitions in the DPRK,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 550-570;

Fourth week: **The Nature of Inter-Korean Relations**

Fifth week: **The Future of the Korean Peninsula**