Gender, Work and Family in South Korea  
Summer 2015

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Course Description  
What is “gender,” how is it constructed, and what impacts does it have on identities, relations and institutions in South Korean society, both historically and currently? This course examines debates about femininity and masculinity and how they are often reduced to binaries of ‘appropriate’ vs. ‘deviant,’ ‘traditional’ vs. ‘modern’ and ‘sexist’ vs. ‘egalitarian.’ Critiquing these narrow framings, this course seeks to examine the broad constructions of gender and sexuality, the conditions that shape them, and how they have changed over the last century in South Korea. Specific topics will include: historical concepts such as ‘filial piety’ and ‘new women’ which have shaped women’s position in Korean society; the conscription of “comfort women” under Japanese colonial rule; ideal images of women in North and South Korea; contemporary struggles to balance work and family responsibilities; gendered nationalism and social welfare policies; impacts of militarization; reproductive politics; adoption; GLBTQ communities; representations of gender in K-pop and Hallyu; and South Korean feminist movements and scholarship.

Course Goals  
• Understand how gender has shaped Korean society in different historical periods and in the present day  
• Learn key concepts and debates in women, gender and sexuality studies and analysis of the ways gender is socially constructed  
• Envision social change and ways it can be achieved  
• Develop analytical skills to express clear and supported verbal and written arguments

Course Structure  
Classes will include short lectures but will be based mostly on discussion of readings, films and other resources. Students will sign up to write short response papers to different readings (2-3 paragraphs) which they will submit before class and then present to the class and facilitate discussion. The class is designed to foster student interaction and engagement.

Course Requirements & Grade Distribution  
Class Attendance and Participation 25%  
Response Papers and Presentation 25%  
Midterm 20%  
Final 30%

Course Policies  
• Plagiarism: Students should properly cite all work and acknowledge ideas that are not their own.
• **Assignments:** All reading and written assignments should be completed before class. Late assignments will not be accepted without permission and will be deducted a half a grade per day.

• **Attendance:** Regular class attendance is mandatory and absences must be documented and discussed with the instructor in order to be excused. More than three absences will result in a failing grade.

• **Gadgets:** It is expected that students turn off all cell phones and only use laptops to take notes.

• **Disabilities:** Students with disabilities should contact me for appropriate accommodations.

**Required Texts (additional readings available online)**


**Recommended Texts**


**Draft Class Schedule with Sample Readings (subject to revision)**

**Week 1: Overview: What is gender? Why is it Important in the South Korean Context?**

- Nancy Abelmann, “Women, Mobility, and Desire: Narrating Class and Gender in South Korea,” in *Under Construction* (p. 25-54)
- Elaine H. Kim, “Men’s Talk: A Korean American View of South Korean Constructions of Women, Gender, and Masculinity,” in *Dangerous Women* (p. 67-118)

**Week 2: Gendered History of South Korea: War, Militarization, Labor and Modernization**

- Hyun Sook Kim, “Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: Images of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts,” in *Dangerous Women* (p. 175-202)
- Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea,” in *Dangerous Women* (p. 9-32)
- Film: *Sopyonje* (Dir. Im Kwon-taek, 1993) - Do you agree or disagree with Chungmoo Choi's analysis of the film, why or why not?
Week 3: Gender in Contemporary South Korean Society: Culture, Work, Family and Sexuality

- Film: The Women Outside: Korean Women and the US Military

Week 4: South Korean Constructions of Gender in a Global Context: Migration, Representation and Social Change