

**History 290/390**  
**North Korea in Historical Perspective**

Fall 2016 Mondays 1:30–4:20 p.m.  
Classroom 160–314

Professor: Yumi Moon  
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00–3:00 p.m., and by appointment

**Course Description**

North Korea is now one of the most mysterious and problematic countries of the world and we have very limited access to reliable information to figure out the country's past, present, and future. The main objectives of this colloquium are to understand North Korea from a longer historical perspective, to critically review the most recent scholarly work on North Korea, and to obtain a balanced view from which to approach the country's current crisis and its future. Themes will include the northern region before 1945, Kim Il Sung and Manchurian guerrillas, the USSR and the North Korean Revolution, the reconstruction after the Korean War, Juche ideology and the political system, the everyday life of North Korean people, the Cold War and North Korean diplomacy, culture and mass performance, the North Korean economy in transition, and refugees and the succession of leadership.

\*Some primary and visual sources released by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be used to complement the readings published in English by Western authors.

\*For the final research paper, students may use the websites on North Korea in any language and analyze their characteristics and information according to the student's research questions and methodology. Details should be discussed with the professor according to the course schedule.

**Requirements**

**Grading:** Class Participation, **40%** (Presentations 10% and In-Class Discussion 30%)  
Response Questions on the Four Assigned Films, **20%**  
Final Research Paper, **40%** (Research Prospectus 5%, Progress Report 10%,  
and Final Paper 25%)

**Class Participation:** This is a weekly three-hour seminar centered on discussion and debate. You will be expected to complete all the assigned readings and participate actively in each week's seminar.

- 1) Each week, one or two students will present brief comments and their questions for discussion on the assigned readings. Your presentations will be made at the beginning of class and should be 5–7 minutes long and no longer. *The presenters should also email the professor their list of discussion questions by midnight of the day before class.* You can select the weeks for your presentations in accordance with your interests or schedule. The number of students in the class will determine how many times each student presents comments and questions throughout the course.
- 2) For Week 2, 3, 8, and 10, you are required to watch the assigned films and post to *the course website* your discussion questions for the assigned movie *by 10 a.m. on the class date.*
- 3) Attendance is mandatory.

**Final Research Paper:** You will write one final research paper (7–8 pages long for undergraduates, and 11–13 for graduate students, both excluding bibliography). You can choose a research topic of your interest, but you should relate it to the course themes and the periods covered in the course.

- 1) You will have an individual session with the instructor in order to decide your topic for the final paper. The consultation will occur between Week 4 and Week 5. You will submit *a brief (1–2 pages single-spaced) research paper prospectus describing the question/issue to be researched, methodology, and sources on Oct. 31 (Week 6) at the beginning of class.*
- 2) You will submit *a progress report of your research (4–6 pages double-spaced) on Dec. 5 (Week 11) at the beginning of class. The final paper is due on Dec. 15 (Fri.) by midnight. You can email your paper to the professor.*

**Required Books and Films:** The following is the schedule of our classes, and the assigned readings for each class. The books can be purchased at the Stanford Bookstore. Readings marked # are available as Stanford Library e-books. All other readings will be available on reserve at the Green Library and on the coursework website. The films will be available in **Media/Microtext**, Green Library Lower Level.

### **Books**

- # Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), Stanford Library E-Book available.
- # Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), Stanford Library E-Book available.

Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Charles Robert Jenkins, *The Reluctant Communist: My Desertion, Court-Martial, and Forty-Year Imprisonment in North Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

### **Films**

*The Red Chapel* (2009, 88 mins.). A Danish documentary directed by Mads Brüger. Winner of Best Foreign Documentary at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival.

*The Flower Girl* (1972, 121 mins.). A North Korean film directed by Pak Hak and released by Chosŏn Yŏnghwa Such'uripsa in Pyongyang, DPR Korea.

*A Family Bright with Songs* (2011, 76 mins.). A North Korea Film directed by Im Ch'ang-bŏm and Chang In-hak and released by Mongnan Pideo in Pyongyang, DPR Korea.

*Musan Ilgi* (2011, 128 mins.) A South Korean film on a defector's life in South Korea. Directed by Pak Chong-bŏm. Winner of multiple awards including the Tiger Award at the 40<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival Rotterdam.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (Sep. 26): Introduction to the Course**

#### **Week 2 (Oct. 3): Approaches to North Korea**

\*Film: *The Red Chapel*. **RESERVED** in **Media/Microtext**, Green Library Lower Level. Also available online through Stanford Library (<https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/10853767>)

Bruce Cumings, "War Is a Stern Teacher," in idem, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: New Press, 2004), pp. 1–42.

Ralph Hassig and Kongdan Oh, "The Illusion of Unity," in idem, *The Hidden People of North Korea: Everyday Life in the Hermit Kingdom* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), pp. 1–15.

Jasper Becker, "Preface: Rogue State," in idem, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. ix–xiv.

### **Week 3 (Oct. 10): Northern Korea and the Division in 1945**

\*Film: *The Flower Girl*. **RESERVED** in **Media/Microtext**, Green Library Lower Level.

Donald N. Clark, "Half a World Away from Home" & "The Jerusalem of the East," in idem, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900–1950*, pp. 5–9 & 116–141.

Aaron Stephen Moore, "'The Yalu River Era of Developing Asia': Japanese Expertise, Colonial Power, and the Construction of Sup'ung Dam," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Feb. 2013), pp. 115–139.

Shannon McCune, "The Thirty-Eighth Parallel in Korea," *World Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Jan. 1949), pp. 223–232.

Inhan Kim, "Land Reform in South Korea under the U.S. Military Occupation, 1945–1948," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 2016), pp. 97–129.

### **Week 4 (Oct. 17): The North Korean Revolution**

Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution*, pp. 1–22 & 35–125.

A report of the Soviet Occupation Army in North Korea from Woodrow Wilson Center Digital Archive: "Untitled memorandum on the political and morale situation of Soviet troops in North Korea and the economic situation in Korea," January 11, 1946, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the Russian General Staff, op. 480, 29, st. 5, p. 2, pa. 21, k. 35. Translated by Gary Goldberg. (<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114893>), pp. 1–11.

### **Week 5 (Oct. 24): Juche Ideology and the Myth of the Kim Family**

"Kim Il Sung: The Legendary Hero of Korea"  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvHjimm2-NE>)

B. R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (New York: Melville House, 2009), pp. 71–127.

Kim Jŏng Il, "Let Us Highly Display the Korean-Nation-First Spirit," Speech Addressed to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (December 18, 1989) in *Kim Jŏng Il: Selected Works 9, 1987–1989* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1997), pp. 407–430.

### **Week 6 (Oct. 31): North Korean Diplomacy**

**\*Your research paper prospectus is due at the beginning of class.**

Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, pp. 1–136 & 146–155.

### **Week 7 (Nov. 7): The North Korean Economy in Transition**

Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, pp. 34–144.

Kim Il Sung, “On Some Theoretical Problems of the Socialist Economy,” Answers to the Questions Raised by Scientific and Educational Workers on March 1, 1969, in Kim Il Sung, *Juche!: The Speeches and Writings of Kim Il Sung* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972), pp. 127–147.

### **Week 8 (Nov. 14): Everyday Life and North Korean Culture**

\*Film: *A Family Bright with Songs*. **RESERVED** in **Media/Microtext**, Green Library Lower Level.

Andrei Lankov, *North of the DMZ: Essays on Daily Life in North Korea* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2007), pp. 96–140.

# Suk-Young Kim, *Illusive Utopia: Theater, Film, and Everyday Performance in North Korea* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), Stanford Library e-book, pp. 260–308.

### **Week 9 (Nov. 21-25): Thanksgiving Recess (no classes).**

### **Week 10 (Nov. 28): Foreigners and Prison Camps**

Charles Robert Jenkins, *The Reluctant Communist*, pp. 1–135.

“Big Brother is Watching,” in Andrei Lankov, *North of the DMZ: Essays on Daily Life in North Korea* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2007), pp. 170–187.

### **Week 11 (Dec. 5): Defectors and Human Rights**

\*Film: *Musan Ilgi*. **RESERVED** in **Media/Microtext**, Green Library Lower Level.

**\* The progress report on your research (4–6 pages, double-spaced) is due at the beginning of class. Students will make a short presentation of their papers in class.**

*\* The final paper is due on Dec. 15 (Thu.) by midnight. You can email your paper to the professor.*