History 292/392
The Korean War: the Origins, Outbreak, and Aftermath

Winter 2009 Mon 1:15–3:05pm
Classroom 260–002

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Office Hours: Thursday 1:00–3:00 pm., and by appointment

Course Description

The history of two Koreas began in 1945, when the United States and Soviet Union agreed to divide the country along the 38th parallel and to occupy North and South separately. This division had a great impact on Korea’s decolonization process and resulted in the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. The war quickly developed into the first international war after World War II and completed the regime of the Cold War in East Asia.

This course will examine major themes and scholarly works to understand why Korea’s decolonization led to the Korean War (1950-1953) and the confrontation of the two Koreas. Themes will include the local origins of the Korean War, the legacy of Japanese colonial rule, the internationalization of the Korean War, the motives of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China in the intervention to the war, ideas of key North and South Korean leaders, the role of the United Nations, the Cold War in East Asia, the consolidation of the two different states into North and South after the Korean War.

Requirements

Grading: Class Participation 50%; Presentation 10%, Two Response Papers 10%, In-Class Discussion 30%
                              Final Research Paper 50%; Research Prospectus 5%, Progress Report 15%, Final Paper 30%

Class Participation: This is a weekly two-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. For the missing classes due to the national holidays on Jan. 18 (Martin Luther King Day, Jr., Day) and Feb. 15 (Presidents’ Day), you are
required to submit two assignments to make up the classes. If you want to discuss the readings for Feb. 16, you can meet me during my office hours or arrange a separate time for the discussion.

1) Each week, one student will present brief comments and her or his 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. 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) You are required to watch the film The Steel Helmet (written, produced, directed by Samuel Fuller, 84 min, 1951) and to submit a one-page (single spaced) response paper on the film. The response paper is due on Jan. 26 at the beginning of class.

3) You are required to submit a two-page (single spaced) response paper on the readings for Feb. 16. This is due on Feb. 23 at the beginning of class. Details will be provided later in the course.

4) Attendance is mandatory.

**Final Research Paper:** You will write one final research paper (12–13 pages long for undergraduates, and 15–17 for graduate students, both excluding bibliography). You can choose your research topics of your interest, but you should relate them 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 2 and Week 3 (Jan. 12–Jan. 23). You will submit a brief (1–2 pages single spaced) research paper prospectus describing the question/issue to be researched, methodology, and sources on Feb. 9 at the beginning of class.

2) You will submit a detailed progress report of your research (7–9 pages double spaced) on Mar. 9 at the beginning of class. The final paper will be due on Mar. 20 (Fri) by 5 p.m. You can email your paper to me.

**Required Books:** The following is a schedule of our classes, and the assigned readings for each class. The books can be purchased at the Stanford Book Store. 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.

Week 1 (Jan 4). Introduction to the course and the Hoover Archives on the Korean War

I. The Origins of the Korean War

Week 2 (Jan 11). The End of the Japanese Empire: War and Revolution in East Asia


Jan 18.* Martin Luther King Day, Jr., Day (holiday, no class)

The Steel Helmet (written, produced, directed by Samuel Fuller, 84 min, 1951). RESERVED in Media/Microtext, Green Library Lower Level.

* Individual sessions with the instructor begin this week.

Week 3 (Jan, 25) Class and Nation in Colonial Korea

Modernity in Korea (Cambridge: the Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 70–96.

The Outbreak of the Korean War I: Internationalization of the Korean War

Week 4 (Feb 1). * The United States and the Cold War in East Asia

Bruce Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War, 101-264

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

Week 5 (Feb 8). * Soviets and China

# Chen Jian, China’s Road to the Korean War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1-189.

* Feb 15. Presidents’ Day (holiday, no classes).

II. The Outbreak of the Korean War II: The Korean Conflicts

Week 6 (Feb 22). * North Korea: The North Korean Revolution


* The response paper on the readings for Feb. 8 is due at the beginning of class.

Week 7 (Mar 1). * South Korea: “Liberal Democracy” in the Cold War Context
Bruce Cumings, the Origins of the Korean War, 428-444
Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee: the Man Behind the Myth, pp. 242-293.

* The progress report of your research (7–9 pages double spaced) is due at the beginning of class.

IV. The end of the War and its After

Week 8 (Mar 8) The Armistice and the Consolidation of the Divided Korea

Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea 1942-1960, 400-475