Issues in U.S.-Korea Relations
EASTASN189K/289K

Winter Quarter 2014

Instructor: Ambassador Kathleen Stephens
Encina Hall, C324
Phone: 650-724-6404
Email: ks1156@stanford.edu

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 2:15 pm – 5:05 pm, Thornt207,
Thornton Center, 379 Santa Teresa Street

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-4:30 pm and by appointment

Course Description:
This course aims at an understanding of the relationship between the United States and Korea, historical and contemporary, and an analysis of key issues in the relationship. Taught by a former American diplomat who served several times in Korea including as U.S. ambassador, the course will examine U.S. diplomatic and policy approaches in Korea. We will pay particular attention to the role of the U.S. in Korea’s tumultuous modern journey of dynastic collapse, colonial subjugation and liberation, division, war, and the divergent paths of North and South in the ensuing years. How has the U.S. figured in South Korea’s economic, political and social transformations, its relationship with its neighbors, and its current global weight? How does the U.S.-ROK alliance fit into U.S. “rebalancing” toward Asia and China’s rerise? We will also review U.S. policy toward North Korea, including consideration of nuclear, human rights, North-South, and unification issues.

Requirements and Grading:
1. Attendance, class participation, oral presentation, and reading (40%):
   Students should attend every seminar prepared to engage actively in discussions informed by thorough familiarity of assigned readings.
Students will at least once during the course be asked to prepare in advance to brief the class for 5-10 minutes on selected readings

2. Policy papers (60%): Each student will submit a total of two policy papers on topics selected from an instructor-provided list, or by individual approval. Each paper should draw on a selected week’s readings as well as optional supplemental sources to 1) define the policy challenge(s) and 2) assess the approach taken and/or make a recommendation. The papers will be due on the following class dates: February 18 and March 11. Each should be typed and double-spaced, with a length of no more than 1000 words.

Key Books:

(All will be on library reserve as well as available at the bookstore.)

Oberdorfer, Don and Carlin, Robert. The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History, revised and updated, 2014 (Be sure to use 2014 revised version)


Recommended optional reading:


Week One – January 7, 2014

Course Introduction and Overview


Week Two – January 14

Modern Challenge, Dynastic Collapse

Guest Speaker: Jonathan Cheng, Wall Street Journal staff correspondent, Seoul

Cumings, Bruce. Korea’s Place in the Sun, pp 7-184.


Week Three – January 21

Liberation, Division, Occupation, War.

Cumings, Bruce. Korea’s Place in the Sun, pp. 185-298.


Memo, August 21, 1950 to the Secretary of State from Counselor George F. Kennan, “Thoughts about Far Eastern Policy.” (Desmond Lim - class
NSC81, “A Report to the National Security Council” by the Executive Secretary on “United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea,” September 1, 1950. (Victoria Sienczewski - class presentation)

Week Four – January 28

Armistice, Alliance, Enmity. The Cold War. Legitimacy Wars.

Guest Speaker: Katarina Zellweger, CISAC -- North Korea

Oberdorfer and Carlin, pp. xv-xviii, pp 1 -86.


Brazinsky, pp 13-70 - Student presentation


Week Five – February 4

South Korea: The economic and social transformation – The Park Chung Hee Era and Beyond

Park Chung Hee, Our Nation's path (Seoul: Dong-a Pulishing Company 1962, pp. 216-247).

Week Six – February 11

South Korea: The Political Transformation

Guest Speaker: Professor David Straub, Associate Director, APARC. Former Political Counselor, US Embassy Seoul, and Director of State Department Korea Desk.

Oberdorfer and Carlin, pp. 87-153.

Lilley, James, China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage and Diplomacy in Asia, pp. 264-296.

Cumings, pp. 342-403.

Kim and Vogel, pp. 233-261, 373-400.


Brazinsky, pp. 223-250.

Week Seven – February 18

North Korea: The nuclear issue. Humanitarian and Human rights. Inter-Korean relations.

Guest Speaker: Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, former U.S. Ambassador to the ROK, Former U.S. Special Representative for North Korea

Cumings, pp 404-447.
Jager, pp 427-463.
North Korean Human Rights Act (US Congress – link or course reader
Agreed Framework 1994
Cha, Chapter 7, “CVID, The Impossible State, pp 247- 314
Lankov, Andrei, “Why the US will have to accept a nuclear North Korea,” The Korean journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 21, No. 3 (September 2009) pp 2510264
Hecker, ‘What I Found in North Korea”

**Week Eight - February 25**

North Korea continued --

Guest Speaker: Sunny Lee, PANTECH Fellow, APARC

Oberdorfer and Carlin - pp. 154-380

**Week Nine – March 4**

Guest Speaker: Dr. Jin Park, former Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ROK National Assembly.

Korean Identity. Changing Attitudes toward the US. Role of Public
opinion in Korea.

Haesook Chae and Steven Kim, ‘Conservatives and Progressives in South Korea”

Shin, Gi-Wook, One Alliance, Two Lenses, pp 1-27, 50-105.

Oberdorfer and Carlin - pp. 381-418


Cumings, pp. 448-469
Oberdorfer and Carlin, pp. 419-464

Week Ten – March 11


Cumings, pp 470-513.

Jager, pp 464-480.

Shin, pp. 190-209.

Brazinsky, pp. 251-260.