THE POLITICS OF DIVIDED KOREA  
Past, Present and Future

Course Objectives and Description:

This is a course on the study of “the politics of divided Korea” by attempting to trace the origins of divided nation-hood of the Korean people at the end of WWII in 1945. The two rival political systems and regimes have arisen to compete on the Korean peninsula, timed with the on-set of the Cold War rivalry between the two super powers of the FSU (former Soviet Union) and the USA (United States of America) in the post-WWII era.

Yet, despite the passing of the Cold War era globally, today’s Korea continues to remain as the Cold War’s last glacier sitting on a powder keg, along the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone) bisecting the peninsula into the two mutually hostile halves. The course also aims to speculate about the possible scenario and prospects for Korea’s future and reunification. This course is organized to deal with each of the following topical areas of concern:

* Origins and development of the modern day Korea, South and North of the DMZ (de-militarized zone);

* The Political structure and processes in the Sixth Republic of Korea (in the South) and in the Post-Kim Il Sung era North Korea;

* The security agenda and economic welfare/foreign policy issues in each of the Two Koreas;

* Korea’s Future, with Implications of “Democratic Peace” thesis for the South, as for the North by “Going Beyond the Kim Dynasty” regime.

Some of the questions the course will address, on South Korean politics, are:

What are the roots of the South Korean political tradition and culture? How unique is South Korea’s Sixth Republic experimentation in liberal democracy? Why do the South Koreans act in politics as they do, either in similar or different ways from people in other countries? What institutions are held responsible for policy making in contemporary South Korea? Who are the influential in decision-making in Korea? What kinds of problems and prospects does South Korea confront in its successfully managing the economy and security threats in the new age? How are South Korea’s foreign policy
and reunification politics affected by the pressures, emanating from both internal forces and externality of the major powers relation with South Korea? These and related policy issues will be examined from the perspectives of the changing United States – Republic of Korea alliance relations.

Other questions to be posed and discussed, on North Korean politics, include:

What are the roots of the North Korean political tradition and culture? How unique is the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) of the Kim Jong Il regime? Why do the North Koreans act in politics as they do, either in similar or different ways from people in other countries? What institutions are responsible for policy making in contemporary North Korea? Who are the most influential leaders for decision-making in the North? What kinds of problems and prospects does North Korea confront in its successfully managing the security and economy? How are North Korea’s nuclear ambitions affected by pressures, emanating from an external environment of the major powers relation with the DPRK? What symbolic meaning, and significance, does the year 2012 suggest to the North Korean elites today?

**Required Readings:**

The following main text books plus a course packet are required for the course:


A Course Packet on: (1) SOUTH KOREA’S DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: Beyond the Roh Moo-Hyun to Lee Myung-Bak Administrations, (2) STAYING POWER OF THE SOCIALIST “HERMIT KINGDOM:” *North Korea, the Politics of Regime Survival*, (3) SPT Post-Mortem Analysis, plus (4) Internet Websites Posting of the selected primary sources and reports on North and South Koreas, and the U.S. Security Strategy policies, and analyses (See pages 9-10 below).

Additional readings are also assigned from the following sources. Some of these readings may be presented to the class for further discussion and analysis:


Course Requirements on Papers:

1. A term paper, on a pre-approved topic, will be submitted at the end of the term, 10-15 pages in length, type-written, double spaced, and properly referenced.
2. A short paper, 1000 words, is due by the end of Week 4, on the following question: “How, and why, are some of the traditional legacies still manifest, and influential, in contemporary Korean politics both in North and South Korea?” as the author Cumings noted in his 1997 book chapters?

Weekly Lecture and Discussion Topics:

Part I. The Historical Context of the “Politics of Divided Korea”

Assigned Readings: Start with Cumings’ 1997 book and finish it’s readings in the first 3-4 weeks. Class members are responsible for the weekly reading material. (To facilitate the class discussion, some selected items including those recommended may be assigned for individual class presentation; Please indicate which ones you would opt to do so in due course).

Week 1. 3/31. Introduction & Legacies of Traditional Korea (Pre-1945)


Week 2. 4/7. The Origins of Divided Korea, with the Rise of Two Rival Korean States, the Korean War, 1945-1953.


**Part II. The Political Dynamics and Policy Process in the South as in the North; What Role, if any, for the USA?**


**Week 6.** 5/5. How and Why do “Institutions also Matter” in Korean Politics today and tomorrow?

Week 7. 5/12. The Challenge of De-Legitimization Politics?


Part III. Korea’s Place in the World; Korea’s Future, Reunification?

Week 8. 5/19. North South Korea Relations; Unification Policy and Politics as formulated and promoted by the South and by the North, the Nuclear North Korea.


**Turn in your term paper** (the last day in class). A paper topic should be approved beforehand by the 5th week. Office Hours: T: 4-5 pm, W: 9-10 am. (A late submission will be marked down).

**A Select Additional Bibliography and References;**

* the ones to be placed on the library reserve desk


Other readings will be added, as we move on, from time to time. The latest books and on-going research on the Korean War History projects written by the noted scholars, for instance, have not been included in this select bibliography.

Some of the inter-net based references and their addresses, for information on North and South Korea that may prove to be useful for your individual research, are as follows:

The Council on Foreign Relations
  South Korea - http://www.cfr.org/region/277/south_korea.html

U.S.-Korea Institute http://www.uskoreainstitute.org/
  http://uskoreainstitute.org/research/projects/NKstrategy


Stanford University, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Korean Studies Program
  http://ksp.stanford.edu/docs/about_ksp/

CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) Websites
  http://csis.org/region/korea

NBR (National Bureau of Asian Research)
  /Research/group.aspx?id=44741690-a272-4060-a707-b463a252ecb7
  Strategic Asia - http://www.nbr.org/research/initiative.aspx?id=b14bf671-686d-
  4f30-859e-681b7d927b58;

  http://www.iie.com/research/researcharea.cfm?
  ResearchTopicID=50&ParentTopicID=7#koreas

The National Committee on North Korea.
  http://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefingpapers/testing
  DPRKPolicy_interests_and_options.htm

  /index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972

International Journal of Korean Studies
  http://www.asia-studies.com/contentIJKS.html

IFES @ Kyungnam.ac.kr
  http://ifes.kyungnam.ac.kr/eng/default.asp

Yonhap News Agency North Korea Newsletter
  http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/0406000000.html

Vantage Points http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/0404000000.html
Title: THE POLITICS OF DIVIDED KOREA: Past, Present and Future

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2. Part II  (on Kim’s DPRK Politics)

Staying power of the socialist ‘Hermit Kingdom’ pp. 73-114

3. Part III  (on the SPT Process analysis, July 2009)


4. Part IV

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