History 290/390
North Korea in Historical Perspective

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

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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**


**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 Yŏnghwasa Ch’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 40th 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](https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/10853767)]*  


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

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


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


**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)


**Week 6 (Oct. 31): North Korean Diplomacy**
*Your research paper prospectus is due at the beginning of class.


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

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


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

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


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

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


**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.