

Cultures of Protest in South Korea

KOR 152 (Spring 2023)

MW 6:30 – 7:45 PM

North Hall (NH) 1109

Instructor: Susan Hwang

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Office hours: Via Zoom on Tuesdays 10 – 11AM, Thursdays 10 – 11AM, and by appointment
<https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/2986890845>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the second half of the 20th century, as the divided Korea became a stage for the Cold War, South Korea experienced military dictatorships, democratization, and neoliberalization. This course explores how culture was mobilized as an active site of dissent, protest, and resistance during such turbulent times. We will be looking at a wide array of cultural media and the social and/or political purposes they served. What are the relevant histories, participants, events, and strategies in protest events? How did advancement in technology allow for diversification and proliferation of protest practices and the relevant cultural conduits? How does Korean pop culture (i.e., K-dramas, K-pop) operate as expression and/or representation of dissent? By engaging with diverse media—literature, songs, films, and digital media—this course explores how political protests and social movements were shaped at critical junctures in South Korea's recent history. Thematic concerns will include: history and its contemporary manifestations, censorship, forms of solidarity and collectivity, gender and difference, performance of protest. All course material will be available in English or English translation. There are no prerequisites to this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Acquire knowledge of the historical specificities of social movements that extend far beyond the Korean peninsula by situating literature within a sociopolitical history and thinking about the relationship between cultural forms and protest practices.
2. Enhance the skills necessary for critical analysis and historical contextualization of diverse cultural texts, including but not limited to literary works, films, television, and songs.
3. Apply a dynamic set of terms with which to perform analyses of diverse genres and cultural artifacts.
4. Gain facility in the writing conventions of cultural studies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

You will not be required to purchase any texts for this class. All course readings and links to other course material will be made available on Canvas under “Files.” You are responsible for making sure you have access to the readings ahead of class so that 1) you can join each class having finished the reading for that day 2) you have access to the readings during class meetings. We will be making references to specific passages to the readings during class discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & participation	Regular attendance and active, informed participation	20%
Discussion posting & reading quizzes	Weekly postings (1 pg. double-spaced) and reading quizzes ----- Weekly discussion posts for Monday readings are due on Sundays by midnight. Post on Canvas under “Assignments.” Late posting will be penalized by 5% per day. Posts will not be accepted for credit after 3 late days. Beginning with the second week of the quarter, each week you will be asked to write a 1-page double-spaced response on the readings for the Monday class. You are encouraged to make connections with previous readings and/or things discussed in class. For these postings, you will not be graded on grammar and/or stylistic issues, but you will still be expected to deliver your thoughts in a clear manner. You will be assessed on your efforts to engage with the relevant texts, concepts, and/or ideas. Your postings will be graded on a scale of ✓+ (10/10) ✓ (8.5/10), and ✓- (7.5/10). Each Wednesday in class, at the beginning of class, we will have a brief reading quiz on the readings for that day.	30%
Midterm exam	In-class midterm consisting of ID questions, short answer questions, and an essay question. Exam is on Wednesday May 3 in class.	25%
Final group project	In a group of 3 or 4, create a 15-minute film or podcast that deals with a major concept discussed in class. You will also write an accompanying essay of 5 pages double-spaced about how and why the podcast is relevant to cultures of protest in South Korea and beyond, as well as make a meaningful connection to a relevant current event of your choice.	25%

	1) Film/podcast and essay due on June 15 by midnight . Late submissions will not be accepted.	
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GRADING SCALE

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
Min %	97.0	93.0	90.0	87.0	83.0	80.0	77.0	73.0	70.0	67.0	63.0	60.0

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

UCSB is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to students with disabilities (<http://www.ada.ucsb.edu>). If you anticipate experiencing difficulty in this course for any reason, please consult with the instructor. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact the Disabled Students Program as soon as possible. Any student wishing to receive accommodations for a verified disability should request academic accommodations through the Disabled Students Program (<http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>, 893-2668) as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Honesty and integrity in all academic work are essential for a valuable educational experience. The Office of Judicial Affairs has policies, tips, and resources for proper citation use, recognizing actions considered to be cheating or other forms of academic theft, and students' responsibilities, available on their website at: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu>. Students are responsible for educating themselves on the policies and to abide by them.

SCHEDULE (Subject to change with notice)

4/3 Course introduction / syllabus overview

MODERN KOREA

4/5 Brief history of modern Korea

4/10 The Tonghak Uprisings of 1894

READ: (1) Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 115-20; (2) excerpts from Ch'oe Yŏngho et al. eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000): (a) "A Call to Arms Issued at Paeksan," (b) "The Tonghak Peasant Army Manifesto at Mujang," (c) "Twelve Reforms Proclaimed by the Tonghak Overseer's Office," (d) "The Tonghak Proclamation to Soldiers and Civilians," and (e) "Interrogation of Chŏn Pongjun, First Session 9 February 1895," pp. 262-272.

4/12 Nation vs. Class

READ (March 1st Movement of 1919): Excerpts from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Vol. 2: (a) editors' comments about the March First Movement; (b) "Declaration of Independence", pp. 333-339.

READ (Class consciousness through literature): Song Yöng, “The Blast Furnace” (1926), p. 15-39.

NATIONAL DIVISION AND ITS AFTERMATH

- 4/17 Jeju Uprising, 1948-1949
READ: Hunjoon Kim, “Seeking Truth after 50 Years: The National Committee for Investigation of the Truth about the Jeju 4.3 Events,” *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, vol. 3 2009, 406-423.
LISTEN: “The Southern Land That Does Not Sleep” 잠들지 않는 남도 (1989)
- 4/19 The April 1960 Uprising
READ: (1) Excerpt from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Vol. 2, “Declaration of the Seoul National University Students Association, April 1960,” pp. 393-395; (2) Excerpt from Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 25-33

AUTHORITARIAN ERA

- 4/24 The Park Chung Hee Era: Korea under Developmental Dictatorship
READ: (1) Excerpt from Carter Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1991), pp. 359-367; (2) Jung Min Mina Lee, “Singing its Way to Prosperity; Shaping the Public Mind through “Healthy Popular Music” in South Korea,” in *Music and Politics*, 14:1 (Winter 2020)
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0014.105>
VIEW: State propaganda images from the 1960s and 70s
LISTEN: Select “healthy songs” (*könjön kayo*) of the 1970s
- 4/26 Anti-Authoritarian Resistance through Poetry
READ: (1) Kim Chi-ha, “Five Bandits” (1970), pp. 94-104; (2) Yang Söng-u, “The Winter Republic” (1975), pp. 23-37; (3) Excerpt from Youngju Ryu, *Writers of the Winter Republic: Literature and Resistance in Park Chung Hee’s Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015)
LISTEN: “In Burning Thirst” 타는 목마름으로 (1987)
- 5/1 Catch-up day / midterm review
- 5/3 In-class midterm
- 5/8 Singing Against Propaganda and Censorship
READ: (1) Roald Maliangkay, “Pop for Progress: South Korea’s Propaganda Songs,” in Keith Howard (ed.), *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Korean Wave* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2006), 48-61; (2)
LISTEN: (1) Select songs of folksinger Kim Min-ki

OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE

- 5/10 *Minjung* Dissent and the National Literature Movement
READ: Excerpts from Cho Se-hüi’s *The Dwarf* (1978), pp. 47-91.

- 5/15 Martyrdom as a Form of Protest
READ: Excerpt from Hagen Koo, *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 69-74.
WATCH: *A Single Spark* 아름다운 청년 전태일 (dir. Park Kwang-su, 1995, 90 min.)
LISTEN: “When That Day Comes” 그 날이 오면 (1985)
- 5/17 The Kwangju Uprising of 1980
READ: Gi-Wook Shin, “Introduction,” in Gi-Wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang eds., *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18 Uprising in Korea’s Past and Present* (Lanham: Rowman and Little Publishers, 2003), pp. xi-xxv.
LISTEN: “March for the Beloved” 임을 위한 행진곡 (1982)
- 5/22 “Of the people, by the people, for the people”: Poetry of Laborers
READ: Poems by Pak Nohae
LISTEN: “Four Seasons” 사계 (1989)

PROTEST IN THE ERA OF POST-’S

- 5/24 Protesting against the Era of Protest
READ: Ch’oe Yun, “The Gray Snowman” (1992)
LISTEN: Songs by Seo Taeji and Boys
- 5/29 Memorial Day – NO CLASS
- 5/31 Social Critique in the Age of Neoliberalism
WATCH: *The Host* 괴물 (dir. Bong Joon-ho, 2006, 119 min.)

PROTEST IN THE AGE OF “DIGITAL NATIVES”

- 6/5 Revolution through Podcasts
READ: (1) Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 153-194; (2) Choe Sang-hun, “By Lampooning Leaders, Talk Show Channels Young People’s Anger (Nov 1, 2011); (3) Choe Sang-hun, “Prosecutors Detail Attempt to Sway South Korean Election,” *New York Times* (Nov 21, 2013).
WATCH: (1) Video of a politicized flash mob (December 2013); (2) BBC report on the political podcast “I am a petty cheat” (나는 꼼수다)
- 6/7 K-pop and Social Commentary Gone Viral
WATCH: Select music videos of Girls’ Generation 소녀시대 and BTS 방탄소년단
LISTEN: Select songs of Girls’ Generation and BTS
READ: Articles on K-pop as protest songs