

KORLIT 134
Korean Literature in Translation

{Preliminary syllabus for SPRING 2024}

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This course combines lecture and seminar-style discussion to introduce undergraduate students to major works, authors, themes, styles, and texture of Korean literature while exploring literature-inspired questions using translated works of Korean literature. The class meets 2 hours 45 minutes, once a week. Graduate students may take this course for credit with an eye toward a research paper or original language-to-English translation project after consultation with the instructor.

This course:

- Combines lecture and seminar-style discussion to introduce undergraduate students to major works, authors, themes, styles, and texture of Korean literature while exploring literature-inspired questions using translated works of Korean literature;
- Does not move chronologically and mixes readings from premodern and modern times;
- Invites speaker to address literary translation or literary translator in action;
- Encourages reading aloud;
- Gives assignments that are diverse, including creative writing, historical co(n)textualization, anthology compilation with a cover art, a critical reflection on translated literature, and a think piece called “a literary problem”;
- Uses pre-reading to orient students with little background knowledge, prompt discussion questions, and reduce the duration of lecture in class; and
- Makes field trips to the Harvard-Yenching Library’s rare book reading room, the Harvard Art Museums, and the Harvard Map Collections.

All readings are in English. No knowledge of the Korean language is required. Knowledge of Korean culture and history is not required.

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance, Participation, Discussing postings 20%:

- Write responses to the readings (at least 8): Length 350–500 words. Pre-reading and prompt questions will be posted by Saturday noon.
- Write responses to classmates’ postings (at least 5).
- Write a brief reflection after the visit to the Harvard-Yenching Library’s Rare Book Reading Room.

Society and Literature Project 15% (including one 7-minute oral presentation): Historical contextualization (highlighting of relevant historical events) of chosen literary text(s). A deck of slides (one TOC slide + 1-3 image slide + one bibliography slide; max. 5 slides) + an

essay/presentation script

Spot-Lift-Create Project 15%: Creative writing + artist's statement (700–850 words).

Literary Problem Project 20%: think piece (1,000-1,500 words) + engagement with an argument or “master narrative” on literature using direct quotes

Anthology Project 30% (including oral presentation on the final day at The Study Gallery at the Harvard Art Museums): Wear an editor’s hat and create an anthology of Korean literature clearly centered on a theme, concept, or question that intrigue you. Elements to include: original title, table of contents, *cover art (along with a caption, 200-300 words), editor's introduction to the anthology (1300-1500 words), an introduction to each of the chosen literary texts (400–500 words), 3 hashtags for each literary text, editor's bio (80-100 words).

*Use materials at The Study Gallery to create a cover art.

*** For all written assignments (excluding response postings), I'll be happy to read your drafts and give feedback. Students from past years who utilized draft submission for feedback say they benefited great from doing so.

THEMES AND READINGS:

Introduction to the Course: The Art of Reading Korean Literature in Translation

Traduttore, Traditore, Transformation:

* Invited Speaker: Translator in Action (Zoom)

- Jiayang Fan, “Han Kang and the Complexity of Translation: The English-language versions of Han’s Work Have Won Wide Acclaim. Are They Faithful to the Original?”
- Excerpt from Cho Haejun, *I Met Loh Kiwan* (2019[2011]).

Memory/Commemoration/Postmemory/Rememory:

- Im Ch’öru, “A Shared Journey”
- Han Kang, *Human Acts*
- Cho Wihan, “Tale of Ch’oe Ch’ök”
- Yu Mongin, “The Royal Dancing Girl”

Human, Anthropomorphism, AI:

- Park Seonghwan, “Readymade Bodhisattva” (2004)
- Sigyöngam. “Biography of Attendant Jeong” (13th c.)
- Yi Kyubo, “Tale of Mr. Cash” (13th c.)

- Anonymous, “Lament for a Needle”

Habitability and Humanity:

- Park Wan-suh, “Identical Apartments” (1974)
- Cho Sehŭi, “The Möbius Strip” (1976) and “Knifeblade” (1975).

Family:

- Pak Min’gyu, “Is That So? I’m a Giraffe” (2004)
- Yun Sŏnghŭi, “To Bury a Treasure Map at the U-turn” (2005)
- Kim Aera, “Run, Dad, Run” (2004)

Body Editing:

- Jung Ihyung, “In the Trunk” (2003)
- Cheon, Woon Young, “Needle” (2000)
- Attributed to An Chŏngbok, “Tale of Woman’s Face-Land” (late 18th c.)
- Anon. “Tale of Lady Pak” (19th century)
- The first few episodes of Hongjakca, “Delusion” (2019)

Untitled:

- Na Hyesŏk, “Kyŏnghŭi” (1918)
- Kang Sinjae, “The Mist” (1950)
- Ch’oe Yun, “The Last of Hanak’o” (1994)

Railways:

- Excerpts from Yi Kwangsu, *The Heartless* (1917)
- Yi Kwangsu, “Record of Travels in the Diamond Mountains: Motivations” (1922)
- Han Sŏrya, “Railroad Crossing” (1936)
- Yi T’aejun, “Record of a Journey to Manchuria” (1941).

Urban Flaneurs and the Colonial Rule:

- Yi Sang, “Wings” (1936)
- Pak T’aewŏn, “A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist” (1934)
- Kim Tongni, “The Shaman Painting” (1936)
- Yi Hyosŏk, “When the Buckwheat Flowers Blooms” (1936)
- Kang Kyŏngae, “The Underground Village” (1936)

Self and/in Post-Liberation, Post-Korean War, Divided Korea:

- Yi T'aejun, "Before and After Liberation" (1946)
- Chŏn Kwangyong. "Kapitan Li" (1962)
- Kim Sŭngok. "Seoul: 1964, Winter" (1965)
- Hwang Sunwŏn. "A Time for You and Me Alone" (1964)

The Texture of Sinitic and Vernacular Poetry:

* Visit to the Harvard-Yenching Library

- Selected Sinitic poems by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, Yi Kyubo, Hŏ Nansŏrhŏn, Maech'ang
- Rutt, Richard. "Paegun Sosŏl, the White Cloud Essays of Yi Kyubo" (1977)
- Selected vernacular verses: "Song of Ch'ŏyong," "The Dumpling Shop," "Fisherman's Calendar"
- Chŏng Naegyo. "Preface to *The Everlasting Words of the Green Hills*" (1728).
- Ko, Jongsok. "Infected Language, Infected Literature: One Perspective on Koreaphone Literature." From *Infected Korean Language, Purity Versus Hybridity*, 47–80.

Epistles and Literature:

- Selections from *Epistolary Korea*.
- Anon. "The Tale of Unyŏng" (17th c.)
- Kim Tongin, "The Photograph and the Letter" (1934)