

EALC1379: Art, Pop, and Belonging

(How to Talk about Korean Popular Culture)

Fall 2023 | MW 3:30-5pm | Solomon Laboratories (PSYL) C41

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Office hours: W 1pm-3pm by appointment (Williams 806)



From K-pop and film to fashion, cosmetics, food, and art, South Korean culture seems to be everywhere. In this course, we will discuss how the cadences of contemporary Korean art and culture shifted in tandem with the sheer amount of historical and social change experienced by the Korean people throughout the twentieth century. Discussing art, photography, music, and writing, we will analyze how these cultural representations activate a sense of belonging and social coalition for

marginalized communities in South Korea. Specifically, we will discuss and host the prominent South Korean queer artist Ibanjiha; and take a class excursion to *The Shape of Time: Korean Art After 1989* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art—“the first major exhibition of contemporary Korean art at a US museum in more than a decade” (Warhol Foundation). Addressing topics such as modernity and developmental dictatorships, queer politics of visibility, and cultural transnationalism in the neoliberal era, we will pay particular attention to the structures of power and the role of the “other” in the construction of contemporary South Korea. In so doing, we will also rethink our own positionality in consuming Korean popular culture as North America-based scholars “looking at” Korea from a geographic, cultural, and social distance. All course materials will be in English; no prior knowledge of Korean language is required.

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

- Identify major themes and issues in contemporary South Korean culture and society.
- Understand the material conditions and social contexts of contemporary Korean art and popular culture, with an awareness of our roles as conscious consumer-scholars encountering their transnational circulation.

** This course fulfills the University’s Arts & Letters sector, which encompasses studying the means and meaning of visual arts, literature, and music, together with the criticism surrounding them. The objective of Arts and Letters courses is to confront students with works of creativity; cultivate their powers of perception (visual, textual, auditory); and equip them with tools for analysis, interpretation, and criticism.

Required Texts

Unless otherwise noted, all readings will be uploaded on Canvas.

Assessment

Attendance and participation (including museum visit)	10%
Weekly show-and-tell	20%
Study group presentations	20%
Midterm check-in	20%
Final portfolio	30%

Grading Rubric

To achieve the desired grade, you must complete the following:

For an A grade, you must show up to class, complete the weekly show-and-tell, study group presentations, reflection journal (6 entries by midterm check-in), and a completed reflection journal (12 entries by end of term) and a capstone project.

For a B grade, you must show up to class, complete the weekly show-and-tell, study group presentations, reflection journal (4 entries by midterm check-in), and a completed reflection journal (9 entries by end of term) and a capstone project.

For a C grade, you must show up to class, complete the weekly show-and-tell, study group presentations, reflection journal (2 entries by midterm check-in), and a completed reflection journal (3 entries by end of term) and a capstone project.

To pass the course, you must show up to class, complete the weekly show-and-tell, study group presentations, reflection journal (<2 entries by midterm check-in), and a completed reflection journal (<3 entries by end of term) and a capstone project.

Assignments

1. Attendance and participation (10%)

Since this is a discussion-oriented seminar, you are expected to demonstrate consistent, active participation in every class. You must notify me **in advance** regarding any absence. I understand that illness or any other difficulties may arise, so please communicate by email. **More than three unannounced absences in class will result in a F.** Should you email me for anything else, please expect at least 24 hours before hearing back from me.

Laptops, tablets, and electronic reading devices are permitted in class for the sole purpose of consulting class materials or taking lecture notes. Use of e-mail, internet, texting, and any work related to other classes are not permitted. Use of cell phones is not permitted without permission

of instructor. If caught using electronic devices for non-course related purposes during class, you will be asked to demonstrate a K-pop dance in front of everyone.

You are expected to have finished the readings ahead of class time. There are weeks that require **film viewing in your own time**. For those weeks, please see the film prior to doing the reading (otherwise you will regret it, because readings contain spoilers!).

2. Weekly show-and-tell (20%)

On Monday classes, you will be asked to share a visual object or text related to the topic and readings we discuss for the week on a shared Google presentation doc online. You will be asked to briefly introduce your findings in class (<2 minutes).

3. Study group presentations (20%)

On Wednesday classes starting Week 4, we will have study group presentations (<30 minutes) on a designated topic for the week (*except Week 12, when presentations will take place on Monday). Study groups will be 2-3 people who will also function as your study buddies outside of the classroom—please get to know each other! Make ways to communicate and share your thoughts and ideas. For the presentation assignment, please refer to Appendix A for more information on the group presentation. **Everyone will present twice in total.**

4. Midterm check-in (20%)

Starting Week 3, you are to keep a weekly reflection journal throughout the course of this semester, which will include your own thoughts and responses (written or creative) to the readings, films, museum trip/guest talks, and class discussions every week. For reference, text length of each weekly reflection should be **at least 300-400 words**. This can be done in the format of an online blog, Microsoft Word doc, a handwritten notebook, an audio-visual file, or some combination of all of these. While the reading journal can take any form, it must demonstrate your attempt to engage closely with that week's texts, which may include critical or personal reflection. As a midterm check-in, **submit the reflection journal on October 11.**

5. Final portfolio (30%)

The final portfolio consists of a capstone project and the reflection journal kept throughout the semester. Submit a capstone project that analyzes, reflects on, or discusses one of the following:

1. An artwork from *The Shape of Time* exhibition
2. Queer art and activism by Ibanjiha
3. A different topic, in consultation with me

Capstone project may take the form of a research paper OR a combination of creative output (a collection of poems, a short film, performance, etc.) and a reflection essay. If you are submitting

a creative project, make sure to discuss the project with me in advance. A reflection essay that describes the creative project should be in the following format: 3-4 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12.

If you are writing a final research paper, it should be in the following format: 6-8 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12. Use the key themes, concepts, and strategies we discussed in this course to make a compelling argument about a significant topic.

Use the reflection journal to develop the capstone project, and submit both.

Due 8PM EST December 20.

6. Extra points!

There are three opportunities for extra points in this course, which is to attend the following one-hour lunch colloquium at the Kim Center for Korean Studies and write a brief response in the reflection journal. Lunch will be served at the event.

When: 12pm-1pm

Where: 3600 Market Street, Suite 310

October 19: Jisoo Kim (Associate Prof of History, George Washington): topic TBA

November 16: Hosu Kim (Associate Prof of Sociology, CUNY Staten Island): topic TBA

November 30: Eleana Kim (Prof of Anthropology, UC Irvine): “The Korean DMZ as an Impossible Space: Reflections on Peace Beyond Geopolitics”

General Guideline for Writing Academic Essays

1. Fonts and Spacing: double-spaced 12 pt. Times New Roman or 11 pt. Calibri (or the likes)

2. Citations and bibliography: When referring to the external sources, use Chicago style citations.

- Purdue Online Writing Lab

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmof_rmatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

3. Romanization: Korean is a difficult language to Romanize, not the least because of its abundance of vowels. Different systems of Romanization developed over time, and two are now internationally accepted: McCune-Reischauer System and the Revised Romanization System.

While it does not matter which one you choose to use, please make an effort to adhere to one of the two systems.

- Revised Romanization converter: <http://www.codywatts.com/romanizer/>
- McCune-Reischauer converter: <http://laotouzi.de/kor/>

Writing and Presentation Resources and Assistance

The Marks Family Writing Center works with students on writing assignments. Consider arranging a meeting with the resident writing tutor for free one-on-one sessions to brainstorm ideas or learn strategies to draft, revise, or improve the structure of the academic essay.

<http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with the University's regulations on academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to me before an assignment is due and/or examine the University website. Academic dishonesty includes and is not limited to: cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others' answers, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper or exercise (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student's work). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

Weingarten Center

An invaluable place for learning resources, tutoring, and disability services. Especially those who may need academic accommodation for documented or undocumented disability that may impact learning or participating in the course are strongly encouraged to initiate request service in advance through the Weingarten Center located on 220 South 40th Street, Suite 260 (Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, 215-573-9235, vpul-sds@mail.pobox.upenn.edu). Contact them as soon as possible to best assess your situation and provide reasonable accommodation in the current semester. <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/index.php>

Important Note on Inclusiveness

This course involves participation from students of diverse experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives of the world. We will treat the classroom as a brave space where students can be present, acknowledge one another's differences of race, gender, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, nationalities, and develop critical thinking through honest, courageous conversations. Discussions in this class will focus on developing skills on making constructive criticism and comments that use factual statements free from prejudices. When expressing personal ideas and opinions, students should always navigate the boundaries between potential harassment of peers and academic freedom. Should you, at any point during the semester, experience any discomfort or disagreement from interactions that take place in the class, please come talk to me. If you encounter sexual harassment, misconduct, assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, please contact the Title IX Coordinator and Executive Director Sam Starks (sstarks@upenn.edu). If you report this to a faculty or staff member, they must notify the Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may request confidentiality from the University).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I. Tracing Korean Popular Culture, 1920s-1990s

Week 1. Korean Popular Culture?

Aug 30 Introductions

Optional: John Storey, "What Is Popular Culture?" *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2018): 1-17.

Week 2. The Modern Women of Colonial Kyōngsōng

Sep 4 No class

Sep 6

Kyung Moon Hwang, "16. Responses to the Japanese Takeover 1904-18," "17. Stirrings of Social Change in the Long 1920s," "18. Nation, Culture, and Everyday Life in the Late Colonial Period." *A History of Korea* 3rd ed. (MacMillan, 2021), 124-49.
Hyaeweol Choi, "The 'Modern Girl' Question." *New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook* (Routledge, 2013): 72-80.

Week 3. Liberation, Division, and the Korean War

Sep 11

Grace M. Cho, "Diaspora of Camptown: The Forgotten War's Monstrous Family." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34.1-2 (2006): 309-31.

Sep 13

Steven Chung, "Regimes within Regimes: Film and Fashion Cultures in the Korean 1950s." *The Korean Popular Culture Reader*, 103-125.

Week 4. 1960s Urbanization and the Domestic Drama

Sep 18

Film: Kim Ki-young, *The Housemaid* (1960), 111 min. (https://youtu.be/-J_HTZFC32s)
Chris Berry, "The Housemaid (1960): Possessed by the Dispossessed," in *Rediscovering Korean Cinema* p. 147-59.

Sep 20 Study group presentations begin

Kyung Moon Hwang, "23. Striving for Revolution in 1960s South Korea" in *A History of Korea*, pp. 186-194.

Week 5. 1970-1980 Youth Culture under a Military Dictatorship

Sep 25

Kyung Moon Hwang, "24. Culture and Politics in 1970s South Korea," in *A History of Korea*, pp. 195-205.

Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin, "Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Group Sound Rock," *The Korean Popular Culture Reader*, 275-295.

Sep 27

Dong-No Kim, "Social Grievances and Social Protests against the Oppressive State," *Modern Korean Society*, 179-204.

Week 6. Consumerist Boom and Continued Class Struggles

Oct 2

Film: Park Kwang-su, *Chilsu and Mansu* (1988), 109 min. [On reserve at Penn Libraries]
Darcy Paquet, "Chilsu and Mansu (1988): The Voice of the People," in *Rediscovering Korean Cinema* p. 233-245.

Oct 4

Kyung Moon Hwang, "26. South Korea's Extended Democratization" in *A History of Korea*, pp. 216-225.

Hagen Koo, "The Korean Stratification System: Continuity and Change," *Modern Korean Society: Its Development and Prospect* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2007), 36-62.

Week 7. IMF Crisis and the Beginning of Hallyu

Oct 9

Inkyu Kang, "It All Started with a Bang: The Role of PC Bangs in South Korea's Cybercultures." *The Korean Popular Culture Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

Oct 11 **Submit reflection journals by end of class**

Roald Maliangkay, "The Popularity of Individualism: The Seo Taiji Phenomenon in the 1990s." *The Korean Popular Culture Reader*, 296-313.

Part II. Minoritarian Voices, Mainstream Subversions

Week 8. "Hallyu 2.0": Culture, Technology, and Fandom

Oct 16

Marcus Tan, "K-Contagion: Sound, Speed, and Space in 'Gangnam Style.'" *TDR: The Drama Review* 59.1 (2015): pp. 83-96.

Oct 18

Solee I. Shin, "How K-pop Went Global: Digitization and the Market-Making of Korean Entertainment Houses," in *Pop Empires: Transnational and Diasporic Flows of India and Korea* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), pp. 268-81.

* Extra points opportunity #1. October 19: Jisoo Kim talk at the Kim Center

Week 9. *The Shape of Time: Korean Art After 1989* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Oct 23 **Philadelphia Museum of Art visit**

Oct 25

Cho Haejoang. 2002. "Living with Conflicting Subjectivities: Mother, Motherly Wife, and Sexy Woman in the Transition from Colonial-Modern to Postmodern Korea." *Under Construction* (University of Hawaii Press), 165-95.

Week 10. Queer Art and Activism

Oct 30

Tari Young-Jung Na, Ju Hui Judy Han, Se-Woong Koo. 2014. "The South Korean Gender System: LGBTI in the Contexts of Family, Legal Identity, and the Military." *Journal of Korean Studies* 19.2: 357-77.

Nov 1

Hyunjin Kim, "Anomalous Tradition, Queer Enchantment: On the Work of siren eun young jung." *Afterall* 49.1 (2020): 49-57.

Jung Joon Lee, "Drawing on repair: Kang Seung Lee and Ibanjiha's transpacific queer of colour critique," *Burlington Contemporary* June 2, 2023.

<https://contemporary.burlington.org.uk/journal/journal/drawing-on-repair-kang-seung-lee-and-ibanjihahas-transpacific-queer-of-colour-critique>

Week 11. Ibanjiha: Art as Survival

Nov 6 In-class screening of Ibanjiha's works

Raymond Kyooyung Ra, "Discovery of the [Queer] Minjung Tradition: The Sinchon Station IDAHOBIT Billboard Vandalism and Queer Korean Politics of Visibility." *International Journal of Korean History* 28.1 (2023): 1-32.

Nov 8 **Ibanjiha class visit**

Week 12. Gender and Sexuality in K-pop

Nov 13 *Study group presentation

John Seabrook, "Factory Girls." *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2012.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/10/08/factory-girls-2>

Chuyun Oh and David C. Oh, "Unmasking Queerness: Blurring and Solidifying Queer Lines through K-pop Cross-Dressing." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 50.1 (2017): 9-29.

Nov 15 No class

* Extra points opportunity #2. Nov 16: Hosu Kim talk at the Kim Center

THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week 13. Racial Politics of K-pop

Nov 27

So-Rim Lee, "From K-pop to Z-pop: The Pan-Asian Production, Consumption, and Circulation of Idols," *The Cambridge Companion to K-pop* (2023), 154-71.

S. Heijin Lee, "The Politics and Promises of 'Gangnam Style,'" in *Pop Empires: Transnational and Diasporic Flows of India and Korea* (Honolulu: University of

Hawaii Press, 2019), p. 97-120.

Nov 29

Michelle Cho, "BTS for BLM: K-pop, Race, and Transcultural Fandom." *Celebrity Studies* 13.2 (2022): 170-179.

* Extra points opportunity #3. November 30: Eleana Kim talk at the Kim Center, "The Korean DMZ as an Impossible Space: Reflections on Peace Beyond Geopolitics"

Week 14. Food and Transnationalism

Dec 4

Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, "The Global Hansik Campaign and the Commodification of Korean Cuisine," *The Korean Popular Culture Reader*, 363-84.

Yang Young-Kyun, "Jajangmyeon and Junggukjip: The changing position and meaning of Chinese food and Chinese restaurants in Korean society," *Korea Journal* 45.2 (2005): 60-88.

Dec 6

Kyoung-Lae Kang, "Talking Hospitality and Televising Ethno-national Boundaries in Contemporary Korea: Considering Korean TV Shows Featuring Foreigners," *Television & New Media* 19.1 (2018): 59-74.

Week 15. Conclusion

Dec 11 Wrap-up—bring snacks!

***Capstone project and reflection journals due 8PM EST December 20 Wednesday**

Appendix: Study Group Presentation Topics

In groups of 2-3, take over the class for up to 30 minutes to discuss the keywords given below. While how you organize your presentation is up to you, I suggest using multimedia aid on slides such as images, videos songs, or any other material objects to illuminate your findings to the class. An ideal presentation should introduce what the keyword is, its historical and social context or biography (if a person), and if relevant, connect it to the readings and/or films of the week in an organized manner. Don't be scared of public speaking—our goal is to create a safe space for everyone to think aloud together on. This is a collaborative exercise, and study groups are put in place so that we learn together. You are not expected to be an “expert” in these keywords, but rather, to demonstrate that you've researched what they are as a group.

Week 4 (Sep 20)	1) Saemaeul Undong (New Village Movement) 2) Jeon Tae-il
Week 5 (Sep 27)	1) Minjung movement 2) Minjung misul
Week 6 (Oct 4)	1) Minjung gayo 2) Lee Bul
Week 7 (Oct 11)	1) Seo Taiji and Boys 2) Apgujeong-dong (neighborhood in Seoul)
Week 8 (Oct 18)	1) SM Entertainment 2) One example of a K-pop fandom/fan club
Week 9 (Oct 25)	1) Kyungah Ham 2) Do Ho Suh
Week 10 (Nov 1)	1) siren eun young jung 2) Ibanjiha
Week 12 (*Nov 13)	1) Gender/sexual minorities in K-pop 2) Queerbaiting in K-pop
Week 13 (Nov 29)	1) Racism and/or cultural appropriation in K-pop 2) Black Lives Matter and K-pop fandom
Week 14 (Dec 6)	1) Jajangmyeon and Jjamppong 2) One example of a Korean TV show featuring foreigners