



SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY KOREA

Spring 2025: Asian 336/Soc 336
Professor Eunsil Oh

Contents

1 Instructors and Communications	2
2 Course Description and Lecture Overview	2
3 Learning Outcomes	4
4 Course Workload and Assignments/Exams	4
5 Weekly Schedules, Lectures, and Readings	6
6 Grading	9
7 Course Policies	11
8 Department and University-wide Policies	12

1. Instructors and Communications

Classroom: Sewell Social Science Building Room 8108 (Haven's Roome)

Class: Mondays 2:25PM-5PM*

Instructor: Eunsil Oh (eunsil.oh@wisc.edu)

Office: Social Sciences Building Unit 8116B

Office Hours: Mondays (11:30AM – 12:30PM) or by appointment

Email Policy & Office Hours

If you have a logistic question, please first consult the syllabus and Canvas. The best way to communicate with me is via email (eunsil.oh@wisc.edu). Try writing your email with a proper title and greeting and make sure to write your name as you prefer to be called. Please show your respect by being professional through email and avoid being too casual (i.e. Hi there, Hey, Ms., etc). Email me with the course number (i.e. Soc 336) in the subject line to talk about accommodations or to schedule an appointment if my office hours do not work for you. I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the workday (9AM-5PM). If you have to miss a lecture, please contact the professor and contact a fellow student for notes. If you will be missing more than four lectures, email the professor. Also, if you have any questions or comments about course material, it is best to sign up and to visit me during my office hour.

2. Course Description and Lecture Overview

Course Description

Using theories and concepts from sociology, in particular, theories explaining social continuity and change, this course provides a social science perspective of contemporary South Korea. Course contents are divided based on different institutions of a society - political, economic, and societal/cultural spheres. This is a sociology course, but the nature and orientation of the course are interdisciplinary, incorporating readings in anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, and law. Timeframe wise, we focus on South Korea (hereafter, Korea) after the division or the 'two Koreas.'

This course pays careful attention to the intersection of multiple structures of inequality such as gender, race/ethnicity, citizenship, class, and sexuality. Also, critically examining the modernization theory that assume linear progression of societies, idea that sex and gender are fixed biological realities, this course discusses what sociologists have contributed to our understanding of social change; continuity; and contemporary South Korea.

Each class will consist of half lecture and half discussion. During lectures, the assigned readings are placed in a larger framework. During our discussion time, we are going to understand, apply, and creatively develop sociological concepts using the case of contemporary Korea. We will utilize various means including Canvas and zoom to maximize our learning process. In addition, we will do small group exercises (pairing to grouping) in class to facilitate discussions. This will allow you to better work through challenging concepts

and theories, and to apply these theories to your own experiences. Come prepared to participate and to share your thoughts and questions with the rest of the class.

Lecture Overview

Introduction

W1: Introduction

Sociological Toolkits to Understand Social Change
Postcolonial Lens and Going Beyond the Western Eye

Part1: Political Organization and Social Change

W2: Gender Politics in Post-war S. Korea: Sex Slaves, the “Comfort Women” Issue

Intersectionality: Colonialism, Class-ism, and Sexism

W3: The Authoritarian State and Democracy Movement

(Film: A Taxi Driver)
Trajectories to Democracy

Part2: Economic Organization and Social Change

W4: The Emergence of the Capitalist Economy

The Great Transformation and Agrarian Revolution

W5: Economic Development and the Emergence of Chaebol

Miracle (vs. Mirage) on the Han River

W6: Labor Market Inequality

Intergenerational Educational Mobility and Economic Inequality

Part3: Society, Culture, and Social Change

W7: Social Transformation

Compressed Modernity

W8: Envisioning Social Change

Feminism and the Politics of Motherhood

[Guest Speaker: Jinsook Kim’s Talk on Feminism in Korea on Mar18]

[Film Screening: MARquee theatre Kim Jiyoung born 1982 on Mar18]

W9: Spring Break

W10: Family (1) Post-war S. Korea

Korean Adoption

Macro-, Interactional-, and Micro-level Processes

W11: Family (2) Low Fertility Crisis

Demographic Transition Theory and Korea as a Case

W12: Gender and Class Mobility Project

Making Employment Decisions

[Cho, NamJu’s talk at Madison Public Library on April 15 (moderated by Oh)]

W13: Popular Culture (K-everything)

Performing Gender

Concluding Remarks

W14: Final Project Presentation and Review

3. Learning Outcomes

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

- Through a critique of the status quo along class, gender, and racial/ethnic dynamics of contemporary Korean society, you will develop a more nuanced understanding of modern Korean society and its location in the modern world.
- Discern the patterns, rules, and logic that undergird a social system and the consequences of these for social change and continuity within the Korean context.
- Be able to explain in your own language, how individuals' lives are shaped by social institutions such as the family, education, and work.
- Demystifying Korea and increase a social science literacy of contemporary Korea.
- Create your own viewpoint on social issues, with the capability to support your arguments.

4. Course Workload and Assignments/Exams

Course Workload

This is a 3-credit course. In accordance with the UW-Madison credit hour policy standards, this credit load is equivalent to the following:

- 150 minutes of classroom instruction (lecture and discussions)
- A minimum of 6 hours of out of class student work each week (on average).
- Your readings and assessment tasks have been selected accordingly.

Assignments and Exams

	Points
Weekly Memo and Participation	200
Weekly Quiz	200
Field Statement	300
- Graded progress report (1)	50
- Graded progress report (2)	100
- Field Statement	150
Discussion Leading Project	300
- Graded progress report (1) - revision	100
- Graded progress report (2) – slides/outlines	100
- Final presentation	100
Total	1000

Attendance (Impact on the Final Grade). Attendance is mandatory and there will be free two passes, meaning you can feel free to use your free passes. More than two absences will result in your final grade falling by one-half of a grade (e.g. from A to AB, B to BC, etc.).

Weekly Memo and Participation (200). All students – regardless of the anticipated attendance - have to upload a weekly memo. In the memo, include 1) a synthesis (limiting to 250 words per reading) of all the readings for the upcoming week and 2) two topics (each with a question and a rationale behind your question, limiting to 250 words per topic) to discuss further in class. The memos are due by 5pm Friday (before the upcoming class). Please check specific prompt for each week before submitting.

The weekly posting starts from Week 1 (due January 24th). Based on the questions uploaded by the students, the instructor will formulate a discussion flow for the last 30-40 mins of the class. Your participation grade will include overall participation in class as well as how you engage in the discussion. Also, persistent tardiness will have a negative effect on your evaluation. Your active participation is essential for the success of a course of this kind. Please refer to Canvas for the guidelines to have productive discussion.

Weekly Quiz (200). There will be weekly quizzes composed of 6 questions. These quizzes will mainly be on the course readings, and lectures. These quizzes will take place every Monday at 2:30pm in class (if you cannot attend the class, you can still take the quiz online from home) via Canvas. Our first quiz will take place on our Week 2 (February 3rd).

Field Statement (300). Write a 8-10 pages-long (double-spaced) field statement that synthesizes (not summarizes) past, present, and future studies on a specific topic of your choice. This is an exercise to understand the landscape of the literature on a topic and to systematically synthesize the knowledge that has been accumulated. There will be two graded-progress reports that will be due before submitting the final version. Detailed guidelines are uploaded in the Canvas (Under Files). Final product due 5pm on March 21st.

K-Project Final Presentation: (300). Students will continue to work on their field statement starting with revising their statement based on the instructor's comments. Then, you will prepare to present the contents of your field statement to your classmates on the last week of our class (on April 28th). Final projects will be worth 300 points, with part of the grade determined by the two progress reports and the final presentation (100 pts each). Detailed guidelines are uploaded in the Canvas (Under Files).

Example of your Week 1 and Week 2

Friday (Jan 24 th)	W1 Monday (Jan 27 th)	Friday (Jan 31 st)	W2 Monday (Jan 3 rd)
5pm	Class 2:25pm-5pm	5pm	Class 2:25pm-5pm
Memo due for W1		Memo due for W2	In-class Weekly Quiz for W2 at 2:30pm

5. Weekly Schedules, Lectures, and Readings

Readings

All readings and other materials (newspaper, films, novels) are posted on Canvas (under 'Files'). The instructor will upload the link to the file under each week's module in Canvas.

For other useful websites on Korean film:

An official Korean Movie Database <http://www.kmdb.or.kr>.

Darcy Paquet's Korean Film Website <http://koreanfilm.org>.

Weekly Schedules

Dates	Topics	Readings
<u>Introduction</u>		
W1 (27 th)	Introduction Sociological Toolkits in Understanding Social Continuity and Change <i>Postcolonial Lens and Going Beyond the Western Eye</i>	Chen, K. H. (2010). <i>Asia as method: Toward deimperialization</i>. Duke University Press. <i>Asia as Method: Overcoming the Present Conditions of Knowledge Production</i>. Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. <i>Feminist review</i>, 30(1), 61-88. In-class activity: Search for articles on S. Korea (in <i>CNN</i>, <i>the economists</i>, <i>Bloomberg</i>, <i>the Guardians</i>, and <i>Korea Expose</i>).
<u>PART 1. Political Organization</u>		
W2 (3 rd)	Gender Politics in Post-war S. Korea Case Study of Sex Slaves, the "Comfort Women" Issue <i>Intersectionality: Colonialism, Class-ism, and Sexism</i>	Min, Pyong Gap. "Korean "Comfort Women" the intersection of colonial power, gender, and class." <i>Gender & Society</i> 17, no. 6 (2003): 938-957. Min, Pyong Gap. 2022. "My Response to Ramseyer's Effort to Deny the History of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery." <i>Journal of International Women's Studies</i>. Vol. 24. Iss. 9, Article 2. https://thediomat.com/2020/01/before-metoo-there-were-the-comfort-women/?fbclid=IwAR2TjzVkI7P6Mog05uvilfCxYz4CBwBIQya7sViliefYEtnnPQt0Dn-kEXg

		https://www.koreaexpose.com/did-metoo-start-in-south-korea/ <i>Film:</i> I can speak (2017) <i>Book:</i> Dangerous women: Gender and Korean nationalism. Chapter 6 by H. Yang. Remembering the Korean Military Comfort Women: Nationalism, Sexuality, and Silencing.
W3 (10 th)	The Authoritarian State and Democratization <i>Trajectories to Democracy and Going Beyond Modernization Model</i> *(Tentatively)* Guest Lecture by social science librarian, Tom Durkin on "How to conduct a good literature search and review?"	<i>Film:</i> A Taxi Driver Chang, Paul Y. "Unintended consequences of repression: Alliance formation in South Korea's democracy movement (1970–1979)." <i>Social Forces</i> 87, no. 2 (2008): 651-677.
<u>PART 2. Economic Organization</u>		
W4 (17 th)	The Emergence of the Capitalist Economy, the Commodification of Land, Labor, and Money. <i>The Great Transformation and Agrarian Revolution</i>	Gi-Wook Shin "Agrarian Conflict and the Origins of Korean Capitalism" <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> Mar 1998 Volume 103, Number 5 pp. 1309 – 1351 Field Statement Workshop (1) Field Statement Graded Progress Assignment due February 19th 5pm
W5 (24 th)	Economic Development and the Emergence of Chaebol <i>Miracle (vs. Mirage) on the Han River</i>	Myungji Yang. 2018. From Miracle to Mirage: The Making and Unmaking of the Korean Middle Class, 1960-2015. <i>Selected Chapters</i> . Eun Mee Kim. 1997. <i>Big Business, Strong State: Collusion and Conflict in South Korean Development, 1960-1990</i> . Chapter 6. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

		<i>Economist</i>. 2011. "Korea Discount." http://www.economist.com/node/2154725 5)
W6 (3 rd)	Labor Market Inequality <i>Intergenerational Educational and Occupational Mobility and Economic Inequality</i>	Chung, Inkwan, and Hyunjoon Park. "Educational expansion and trends in intergenerational social mobility among Korean men." <i>Social Science Research</i> 83 (2019): 102307. Hae Yeon Choo, John Lie, Laura C. Nelson. 2019. Introduction: Gender, Class, and Contemporary South Korea 1-15. Field Statement Workshop (2) Field Statement Graded Progress Assignment due March 5th 5pm
<u>PART 3. Society and Culture</u>		
W7 (10 th)	Social Transformations <i>Compressed Modernity</i>	Chang, Kyung-Sup. "Compressed modernity and its discontents: South Korean society in transition." <i>Economy and Society</i> 28, no. 1 (1999): 30-55. Chang, Kyung-Sup and Song Min-Young. 2010. "The stranded individualizer under compressed modernity: South Korean women in individualization without individualism." <i>The British journal of sociology</i> 61, no. 3 (2010): 539-564. Field Statement Workshop (3)
W8 (17 th)	Envisioning Social Change <i>Feminism and the Politics of Motherhood</i> [GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Jinsook Kim (Emory Univ.) on March 18TH on "Feminism in S. Korea"]	Kim, Jinsook. "Sticky activism: The Gangnam Station murder case and new feminist practices against misogyny and femicide." <i>JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies</i> 60, no. 4 (2021): 37-60. Kim, Sunhye, Na Young, and Yurim Lee. "The role of reproductive justice movements in challenging South Korea's abortion ban." <i>Health and human rights</i> 21, no. 2 (2019): 97.

	[Film Screening: MArquee theatre Kim Jiyoung born 1982 on Mar18]	Field Statement Due March 21st 5pm
<i>W9 Spring Break (no class on 24th)</i>		
W10 (31 st)	Families (1) Post-war S. Korea <i>Korean Adoption</i>	From war orphans to single mothers' children: Korean adoption Oh, Arissa H. "From war waif to ideal immigrant: The Cold War transformation of the Korean orphan." <i>Journal of American Ethnic History</i> 31, no. 4 (2012): 34-55. Koo Y. 2021. "The Question of Adoption: Divided Korea, Neutral Sweden, and Cold War Geopolitics, 1964-75" <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i> 80 (3), 563-585 Koo Y. 'We Deserve to Be Here': The Development of Adoption Critiques by Transnational Korean Adoptees in Denmark. <i>Anthropology Matters Journal</i> 19 (1), 35-71 Koo Y. The Paradoxical Development of Liberal Governance: International Adoption Policy and Professional Social Work in Authoritarian South Korea, 1953-1976 <i>Journal of Social History</i>, 2024 Project Workshop (1)
W11 (7 th)	Families (2) Low Fertility Crisis <i>Demographic Transition Theory and Theorizing Korea</i>	<i>Korean Families Yesterday and Today</i>, edited by Hyunjoon Park and Hyeyoung Woo. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <i>Introduction and Chapter 1.</i> Brinton, Mary C., and Eunsil Oh. "Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women's employment and fertility in East Asia." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 125, no. 1 (2019): 105-140. Project Revision Due April 9th 5pm

W12 (14 th)	Gender and Class Mobility Project <i>Women's Work Decisions</i> <i>Macro-, Interactional-, and Micro-level Processes</i> [Author Cho Nam-joo's talk at the Madison Central Public Library (201 W. Mifflin St) on April 15th at 7-830pm, moderated by Professor Oh]	<i>Film & Novel</i>: Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982 Oh, Eunsil. "Who deserves to work? How women develop expectations of child care support in Korea." <i>Gender & Society</i> 32, no. 4 (2018): 493-515. Jo Hyejeong 2019. Gendered Narratives of Transition to Adulthood among Korean Work-Bound Youth Page 106 in <i>Gender and Class in Contemporary South Korea</i>. Abelmann, Nancy. 1997. "Women's Class Mobility and Identities in South Korea: A Gendered, Transnational, Narrative Approach." <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> 56:398-420. Project Workshop (2)
W13 (21 th)	Popular Culture (K-everything) <i>The Institutional and Cultural Foundations of K-Boom</i> <i>Performing Gender</i>	Kim, Minjeong, and April Lopez. "The deployment of gender for masculine balance: analyzing multi-platform K-pop performances." <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> (2021): 1-17. Jung, Eun-Young, Sangjoon Lee, and Abé Markus Nornes. "K-pop idols, social media, and the remaking of the Korean wave." <i>Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media</i> (2015): 73-89. https://www.koreaexpose.com/k-pop-korean-music-musicians-labor-abuse/ Project Slides/Outlines Due April 25th 5pm
<u>Presentation and Concluding Remarks</u>		
W14 (28 th)	Final Project Presentation & Review Session	Final Project Presentation Day

6. Grading

Total of 1000 points

	Points
Weekly Participation	400
Field Statement	300
Final Project	300

Letter grades and the total points

	Grades
92-100%	A
87-91.9%	AB
82-86.9%	B
77-81.9%	BC
70-76.9%	C
60-69.9%	D

Late Policy for Assignments. The instructor does not accept late submissions. Please try your best to send what you have by the deadline.

7. Course Policies

Number One Rule

- We will try our best to be critical about the privileges that we have and have benefited from. Ignoring the existence of systemic racism and sexism will be considered as an intellectual humiliation in this course.

Respect

- All are welcome in this course regardless of your age, sex, gender, race, national origin, disability, background, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or other identified or protected status. Class members are expected to respect others' backgrounds and to contribute to a healthy learning environment in all course activities. This course is based on respect; any willful disrespect of the beliefs, opinions, or actions of others will not be tolerated. We are all, including the teaching team, both learners and teachers in this class. Your ideas will be received with the utmost respect even when in conflict with others' opinions. We want you to feel comfortable in sharing your thoughts, comments, and questions, even if they turn out to be misconceptions. If you ever feel you are not being respected by anyone that is part of this class, please contact us via phone, email, letter, or in person. Furthermore, the policy of UW-Madison states: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and

diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background.

General In-class and Online Rule

- You are responsible for reading all assigned materials before coming to class, and you should make your best effort to contribute positively to class discussion.

Assignments and Exams

- Turn in your own work.
- There is zero tolerance towards sharing answers (amongst the classmates) or plagiarizing others' work.

Classroom Etiquette

- When class begins, please turn off and put away electronic devices (laptops, phones, etc.) and other distractions. Electronics will only be allowed for accessibility reasons or during predetermined activities.
- Respect classmates, instructors, and yourself. Provocative ideas and questions are encouraged; do not be afraid to voice your opinion just because it may be different. However, avoid language whose sole purpose is to provoke or disparage others.
- We are building a conversation. Learn and use your classmates' names. Add to the current conversation. If you contribute frequently, allow others to speak before speaking again.
- Refrain from packing up or leaving until class is over; lecture will end on time.

8. Department and University-wide Policies

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Through McBurney Connect, students generate a Faculty Notification Letter for each class section in which they are requesting accommodations. The notification letters will replace the laminated student VISAs (Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations plan) and will be sent to course instructors of record via email. Instructors will receive customized information about classroom accommodations that are specific to each course, as students will select just those accommodations that are needed for each class. Students will still be instructed to meet with faculty to discuss their accommodations.

Overview of the Accommodation Process

1. Students approved for disability-related accommodations are entered into McBurney Connect based on individualized review and eligibility process.
2. Students [log in to McBurney Connect to select their accommodations and schedule Faculty Notification Letters](#) specific to each class.
3. McBurney Connect will email Faculty Notification Letters to instructors two weeks before classes start, and then on an ongoing basis after that.
4. Students will still be expected to meet with instructors in a timely manner, even though their accommodation plans are delivered via email.

5. [Instructors can log into McBurney Connect](#) to see a list of students who have requested accommodations for each of their courses, including their Faculty Notification Letters

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. For further information on these policies, students may consult this website:

<https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/> as well as this website:

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/#avoid>

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for Asian301/Soc496 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and nonacademic misconduct.

Support

If you are experiencing personal challenges that are affecting your participation and performance in this class, please seek assistance through the resources below. You may also approach me confidentially if you are comfortable, and I will seek to direct you to appropriate resources.

Mental and Physical Health & Safety

Mental Health: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

Prevention: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/>

Violence Prevention & Survivor Services: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/vpss/>

Assistance

Dean of Students Office: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/student-assistance/>

Office of Student Financial Aid: <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/types-ofaid/institutional-loans/>

Office of Child Care and Family Resources: <https://occfr.wisc.edu>

Hate & Bias

Hate & Bias Reporting Process: www.students.wisc.edu/reporthate