Course Description

Korea remains one of the only two divided nations in the world. There has been no substantive change in the confrontational nature of the inter-Korean relationship even three decades after the end of the Cold War international order. In particular, North Korea has been causing serious international concerns in security, humanitarian, economic, and diplomatic areas. The goal of this course is to help students deepen their understanding of the nature of the problems that North Korea has been posing and explore the best ways to solve them. Trying to have clear eyed views is particularly important here because debates on the North Korea-related issues tend to be biased by stereotypes and ideological prejudices.

Some important theoretical puzzles in the field of international relations are embedded in the problems that North Korea has been posing. In particular, debates among realists, neo-conservatives, and neo-functionals reveal how diverse the views are on the ways to deal with these challenges related to North Korea. This course will begin by reviewing basic assumptions, arguments, and policy recommendations of these three approaches to international relations and drawing implications from them for analyzing North Korea-related issues.

It will next analyze the most urgent and important subjects such as North Korea’s development of WMD (focusing on its nuclear weapons program), human rights and humanitarian crises, the changing nature of North Korea’s economy, and then try to explore some possible solutions. After reviewing past inter-Korean interactions in search of peace, this course will conclude by discussing some possible future scenarios for North Korea and the topic of Korean reunification. When reviewing these practical issues, students are encouraged to engage with diverse viewpoints and recognize these problems' complexity by keeping the theoretical debates and the broader international political context in mind.

Grading

Class participation (15%) and weekly assignments (15%): 30%
Paper proposal and presentation: 20%

GOV 94wy: Fall 2021
North Korea and Peace-building on the Korean Peninsula

Contents of the Syllabus are Subject to Change (August 15, 2021)

Professor Young-kwan YOON
youngkwan_yoon@fas.harvard.edu
Classroom: Robinson 107
Class Hours: Wednesday 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Research paper: 50%

☐ Class Participation and Discussion

This is a seminar-style class in which class participation and discussions are essential. Each week, students are expected to submit a two-page response memo (single space) answering those questions raised for each session’s discussion. Beginning from the second week, please submit your response memo to Canvas dropbox before 3:00 p.m. Tuesday. (24 hours before the class.) Please come to class having done the readings and ready to discuss them. Your weekly response memos (15%) and active participation and contribution in class (15%) will count 30 percent of your final grade.

There is one required text to purchase, which is The Two Koreas by Don Oberdorfer and Robert Carlin. This is an excellent, thorough, easy-to-read book which reviews the history of inter-Korean relations and the role of outside powers since the 1970s. This book provides important insights into the history of Korean political and diplomatic affairs in the last half century. (The Harvard Coop offered a streamlined direct link for students who want to order the book. https://tinyurl.com/F21-GOVT-94WY-1)

Most of the other readings will be available either online (hyperlinked), or on the course web page or through e-journals in the Harvard library system (HOLLIS). The average amount of readings will be about 100 pages a week (except Week 5). My goal for each week’s selected readings is to provide you with as many diverse viewpoints as possible on each topic.

☐ Writing Research Paper

The course is also a research seminar. Students will choose a topic which is related to one of the subjects covered in the classes – i.e. North Korea’s security, diplomatic, economic, human rights, humanitarian, and inter-Korean issues. To make yourself familiar with the subjects and research materials related to your topic and develop your preliminary hypothesis and research design, I strongly encourage you to look through the syllabus and read some of the readings in advance to get a head-start in thinking about a potential topic that interests you. I will answer any questions or concerns in my office hours (Monday 3:00-5:00 p.m.). If you cannot make it on Monday 3:00-5:00 p.m., I can meet with you at another time. Please email me in advance to arrange your appointment with me.

Four criteria for an excellent research paper are logical consistency, theoretical understanding, empirical thoroughness and accuracy, and originality. Grading of the paper will be based on a combination of these factors. Also please refer to thesis_guide_2020-2021.pdf (harvard.edu) which provides you helpful guidance on how to write a research paper.

The due date for submission of your final research paper (approximately 20 pages) is December 9 at 11:00 p.m. Your final paper should be double spaced with 1” margins on all sides, 12 pt fonts and submitted via email to ykyoon21@gmail.com as a word document. (Late submission of assignments will result in grade deduction - 1/2 letter grade for every 24 hours.)

There will be in-class presentations of the research proposals during Week 8 (Oct. 27). I don’t know how many students will enroll in this class. Depending on the number of students,
there will be some variance. As of now, I am planning to give each student 3 minutes to present his or her proposal and spend 7 minutes for Q&A discussion with the class. Please post your proposal on the course website by 3:00 p.m. Oct. 25 so that your classmates can read your proposal before they come to the class on Oct. 27.

The research proposal (approximately 3-4 pages) should include the following: (1) paper topic, (2) background explanation about choosing the topic (why you chose the topic, why you think that topic is important and worthwhile to do research on, how original your topic is, etc.), (3) hypotheses, (4) research design (how you will prove your hypotheses). Please submit your research proposal via e-mail 48 hours prior to your class presentation day. (Oct. 18, 3:00 p.m.)

 *[Collaboration Policy Statement]*

In this course, you are encouraged to discuss with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and share sources. It may be useful for you to do so if you chose the same topic with your classmate. However, please make sure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and your own approach. You must also observe standard citation practices in this discipline.

 *[Academic Honor Code]*

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense. I highly recommend familiarizing yourself with the advice on “Avoiding Plagiarism” provided by the Harvard College Writing Program as well as the “Harvard Guide to Using Sources.” The due date for submitting your final research paper (approximately 20 pages) is 11:00 p.m. December 12.

 *[Students with Disabilities]*

Any student in the class who has a disability and requires some modifications in seating or class requirements should contact me directly. The Student Disability Center’s [University Disability Resources](https://www.harvard.edu/disabilityresource/) has additional information and resources and is located in Suite 900 in the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue (Tel: 617-495-1859/ Email: disabilityresources@harvard.edu).

 *[Class Schedule]*

(Please check the online syllabus each week prior to the next week’s session. There may be minor, last minutes changes in the readings.)

(There will be no class on Sep. 1. following the University’s Monday Schedule.)

Week 1 (Sep. 8) – Course Introduction, The Brief History of Korea

(1). Basic organization, themes of the course, paper writing, etc.
(2). Korea in the Era of Imperialism (1870s-1945): How did international competition among
big powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula unfold?
(3). Liberation, Division, and War (1945-1953): How was Korea divided? How did the Korean War break out and end?


(Or you may prefer reading the following article by the same author, et.al.)


Week 2 (Sep. 15) -- Current Global Geo-Politics and Korea

(1). What kind of grand strategy toward East Asia did Brzezinski recommend for the U.S. in the post-Cold War world?
(2). What's the current state of US-China relations? Will the U.S. and China collide with each other in the future?
(3). What are the implications of the pre-World War I international politics for the current U.S.-China relations?
(4). Will South Korea fall into the orbit of China?


Week 3 (Sep. 22) -- IR Theories and NK: (1) Neo-conservatives and Realists

(1). What are the assumptions, main arguments, and policy recommendations of the neo-conservative approach and the realist approach to international relations and North Korea-related issues?

(2). In your view, what are the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches on U.S. foreign policy, in general, and toward North Korea, in specific?

(3). Can regime change in North Korea be a reasonable policy?


Week 4 (Sep. 29) -- Theories and NK: (2) Neo-functionalist Approach

(1). What are the assumptions, main arguments, policy recommendations, strengths and weaknesses of the neo-functionalist approach?

(2). If the neo-functionalist approach was applied to inter-Korean relations in the form of South Korea’s Sunshine Policy, what would be its achievements?

(3). What would be the criticisms of the Sunshine Policy from the realist or neoconservative perspectives?

(4). Do you think North Korea can be engaged or not?


- The Jean Monnet Association des Amis, “Jean Monnet, the Father of Europe,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KN27x27LuDs (1988). (11 minutes)


Week 5 (Oct. 6) -- The Nuclear Problem: Solutions?

1. What do you think is the main reason for the failure of the U.S. diplomacy in denuclearizing North Korea during the last three decades?
2. What kind of solutions are being proposed by the specialists?
3. What is your evaluation of each policy recommendation?
4. How did the China factor work in the diplomacy of denuclearizing North Korea?

• Don Oberdorfer and Robert Carlin, *Two Koreas*, (rev. ed. 2014), Ch.11-15 (pp.194-288) 18, 19, Afterword (pp.381-464).


Week 6 (Oct. 13) -- The Nuclear Problem: Theoretical perspectives
(1). What are the important theoretical concepts each author adopts in explaining the nature of and the US policy toward the North Korean nuclear threats?
(2). In your view, what are the utilities and weaknesses of their concepts explanations?
(3). Which U.S. administration, do you think, pursued a North Korea policy most closely to Jervis’s policy recommendation during the last three decades?


**Week 7 (Oct. 20) -- Human Rights Issues (I)**

(1). What has been the dynamic relationship between human rights and the nation-state? And how have improvements in the global human rights situation been made since 1945?
(2). What have been the U.S. and international efforts to improve the human rights situation in North Korea?
(3). How did the views of human rights and humanitarian aid groups come to diverge in the US policy-making circle?
(4). In your view, what would be the preferred policy recommendations by neo-conservatives, realists, and neo-functionalists on the North Korean human rights issue?


**Week 8 (Oct. 27) -- Presentation of Paper Proposal**

**Week 9 (Nov. 3) -- Human Rights Issues (II) and Humanitarian Assistance**

(1). What are the achievements and the limitations of the U.S. efforts to improve human rights condition in North Korea? What will be the more effective way of achieving the goal of improving human rights situation in North Korea?

(2). Can engagement work as an instrument for improving human rights condition in North Korea? Or, can human rights situation be improved without engaging the country?

(3). Is it desirable to use food aid as a bargaining chip in nuclear negotiations with North Korea?

(4). What are the effective ways of providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea?


Week 10 (Nov. 10) -- Economic Transition of the Socialist Economies and North Korea

(1). What were the major structural limitations of the socialist economic system or social market economy in the former Soviet Union?

(2). What are the important measures to be taken to make a successful transition from a socialist economic system to a market economic system?

(3). Kornai explains there are two ways of ownership reform. What are they and what is his evaluation of each? How do you compare China’s experience of economic transition with Russia’s?

(3). In what stage, do you think, is North Korean economy located now in terms of this transition process? And what policy actions does Aslund recommend?

https://go-gale.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Newspapers&result_listType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=2&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CGP4100217504&docType=Article&sort=PubDate+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZEHI-MOD1&prodId=ECON&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CGP4100217504&searchId=R3&userGroupName=camb55135&inPS=true


Week 11 (Nov.17) -- Changing Nature of the North Korean Economy

(1). How did the North Korean economy evolve since the 1950s? Prof. Kim says the North Korean economy is “a plan-less planned economy”. Why?

(2). How has informal marketization of North Korea been affecting that country’s regime stability?

(3). What are the two scenarios that Kim and Roland explain? And why do they argue that
the collapse scenario holds more promise for economic development in North Korea?

(4). Why do North Korean elites think the Chinese-style reform is dangerous?


**Week 12 (Nov. 24) -- Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Week 13 (Dec. 1) – Inter-Korean Relations, Korean unification, Future Scenarios**

(1). What are the major factors that have affected ups and downs in inter-Korean relations since the end of the Cold War?

(2). What have been ROK governments’ unification policies since the early 1990s? Can the German model of unification be applied to Korea?

(3). What will be the costs and benefits of the collapse of North Korea for the U.S. and China?

(4). Will there be some ways of harmonizing different strategic intentions of Korea’s neighboring states (U.S., China, Japan, Russia) on Korea’s unification?


- C.P. Freeman, Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission; Developments in China’s North Korea Policy and Contingency Planning. April 2018. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/transcripts/Hearing%20Transcript%20-


(Recommended) Don Oberdorfer and Robert Calin, The Two Koreas (2014), Ch.9-10, 18.

REFERENCES

(Useful Websites)

https://www.38north.org/ (The Stimson Center)
https://www.brookings.edu/topic/northeast-asia/ (Brookings Institution)
https://www.cfr.org/asia/north-korea (Council on Foreign Relations)
https://beyondparallel.csis.org/ (CSIS)
https://www.belfercenter.org/search/all?q=North+Korea&f%5B0%5D=t%3AAAll (The Belfer Center, Harvard University)
https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/content/cisac-north-korea (CISAC, Stanford University)
https://keia.org/#publications (Korea Economic Institute of America)

(Chronology)

https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron (Arms Control Association: chronology)

(Documents)

• The Korean War Armistice Agreement, 1953.
https://www.usfk.mil/Portals/105/Documents/SOFA/G_Armistice_Agreement.pdf


- Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula (Apr. 27, 2018). https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5478/view.do?seq=319130&srchFr=&amp;srchTo =&amp;srchWord=&amp;srchTp=&amp;multi_itm_seq=0&amp;itm_seq_1=0&amp;itm_seq_2=0&amp;company_cd=&amp;company_nm=&amp;page=1&amp;titleNm=


• Full text of Trump-Kim signed statement, June 12, 2018. Full text of Trump-Kim signed statement | CNN
