

PIA2958: INTRODUCTION TO KOREAN SOCIETY

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Introduction to Korean Society

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

2958

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS2958 Introduction to Korean Society

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course serves as an introduction to Korean society. Major social changes in Korea will be explored through lectures and in-class discussions about Korean history, politics, economy, and culture. No prior knowledge of Korea is required. Students will be able to identify and critically analyze key issues in contemporary Korean society.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Obtain a broad understanding of the historical development of Korean society and politics	25	x		
2	Identify key social and political issues in contemporary Korean society	25	x	x	
3	Critically engage with key debates in Korean society and politics	25	x	x	
4	Compare and contrast some of the key aspects of Korean society with those of other East Asian countries	25	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	CILO 1	Lectures that are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical development of Korean society and politics	1	1.5 hours
2	CILO 2	Reading assignments (book chapters, journal articles, and newspaper articles) are provided to enable students to discuss major social and political issues in contemporary Korean society	2	2 hours (extra)

3	CILO 3	Small in-class group discussion are organised to encourage students to critically engage with key debates in Korean society and politics	3	0.5 hour
4	CILO 4	Group presentations and other group learning activities are organised to enable students to analyse and compare the key features of Korean society with those of other East Asian societies	3, 4	1 hour

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Quizzes on the course content	1, 2, 3, 4	60	-	No
2	Individual memo on Korean society and politics	2, 3	10	-	No
3	Group research presentation on Korean society and politics	2, 3, 4	20	-	Yes
4	In-class small group discussions	3, 4	10	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Quizzes

Criterion

Concept/Knowledge

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Critical capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal (D)

Basic familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

2. Individual memos

Criterion

Written Report

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal (D)

Minimum familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

3. Group research presentation

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal (D)

Minimum familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Assessment Task

4. In-class discussions

Criterion

Discussions

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Consistently and enthusiastically participates in group discussion; actively listens and collaborates; helps foster a positive group dynamic; offers insightful, original contributions backed by reasoning or evidence; demonstrates strong understanding of the topic; applies concepts skillfully

Good (B+, B, B-)

Participates regularly and thoughtfully, though occasionally needs prompting; works well with others and responds respectfully to peers; provides relevant contributions with some depth; shows solid grasp of subject matter with minor gaps

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Occasionally participates; may be passive or hesitant; engages in group but contributes unevenly or minimally; makes surface-level or unclear comments; displays basic understanding; may lack accuracy or detail

Marginal (D)

Rarely contributes unless called on; shows limited effort to cooperate with group; struggles to offer relevant or meaningful input; demonstrates minimal comprehension of the topic

Failure (F)

Does not participate or disrupts group work; refuses to collaborate or engage; offers no contributions or is off-topic; shows no understanding of the subject

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Colonialism; Korean War; Modernization; Democratic Transition; Nationalism; Gender; Diaspora; Social and Political Culture; Korean Pop Culture

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Eckert, C., Lee, K., Lew, Y., Robinson, M. & Wagner, E. (1990). Korea Old and New: A History. Korea Institute, Harvard University; Ilchokak.
2	Choi, J. S, Hahn I. H., Kim, M. H., Kim, Y. H. & Lee, K. S. (2011). Understanding Contemporary Korean culture. Seoul: Jimoondang.
3	Pai, H. I. & Tangherlini, T. R. eds. Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Cho, H. Y. ed. (2012). Contemporary South Korean Society. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
2	Hwang, K. M. (2010). A History of Korea. Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
3	Kim, E. M, Yang, O.K., Lee, H. & Cho, H. L. (2012). South Korea advances toward a multicultural society. Gyoha-eup Kyeonggi-do, Korea: Nanam.
4	Korean Family Studies Association, ed. (2011). Korean families: continuity and change. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.
5	Lee, N, H. (2007). The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
6	Oh, M & Larson, J. F. (2011). Digital development in Korea: building an information society. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
7	Park, H. J & Kim, K, eds. (2014). Korean Education in Changing Economic and Demographic Contexts. Singapore: Springer
8	Shin, H. S (2005). A brief history of Korea; translated by Lee Jean Young. Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press.
9	Abelmann, N. (1996). Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent: A South Korean Social Movement. University of California Press.
10	Online Resource: Digital Library of Korean Studies http://lib.aks.ac.kr/DLiWebeng/
11	Online Resource: Korea Net - Gateway to Korea http://www.korea.net