



Understanding Korean Society & Culture

Kim, Chul-Kyoo
Dept. of Sociology
Korea University

A decorative graphic featuring a central light green rectangle with a subtle gradient. This rectangle is surrounded by intricate, swirling green lines that form a frame. Small green leaves and tiny flowers are scattered throughout the design, particularly along the left and right sides of the central area. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on natural, organic shapes.

I. INTRODUCTION



Required Texts

- Kim, Kyong-dong (ed.). 2008. *Social Change in Korea*. Seoul: Jimoondang.
- The Korea Herald(ed). 2007. *Insight into Korea*. Seoul: Herald Media.

Course Requirements (KU students)

- 1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
- 2. Mid-term Exam (30%)
- 3. Final Examination (30%)
- 4. Team Research Project (30%)




Important Notice

- Korea Foundation Global E-school program
- Dual Structure of audience & lecture time
- Korea University students & Fudan University students
- Not recommended to upper-year sociology major students at KU



WEEKLY SCHEDULES

- Week 1. Course Introduction
- Week 2. Social Change in Korea: An overview
- Week 3. Who are Koreans: History and Culture
- Week 4. Political economy of development (1)
- Week 5. Political economy of development (2)
- Week 6. Population changes
- Week 7. Education
- Week 8. Mid-term Exam

- 
- Week 9. Environmental issues
 - Week 10. Marriage, Family and Women (1)
 - Week 11. Marriage, Family and Women (2)
 - Week 12. Agriculture and Food
 - Week 13. Religion
 - Week 14-15: Presentation of Research Results
 - Week 16. Final Exam



1. What is this course about?



Current state of Korean society



Social Changes of the past several decades



Key Features of Korean Culture



Mechanisms of Social Change



2. How are we going to study Korean Society?

1) Historically

- Things change over time.
- What happened in the past constructs the present.
- What happens now will affect the future.

Wongak-sa 10 story pagoda (1467) National Treasure #2



Source: <http://ko.wikipedia.org>

대원각사비(Daewongak-sa Monument), 1471
source: <http://enc.daum.net/dic100>



Demanding independence on March 1, 1919





Source: <http://cafe.daum.net/khtrip/>

Tapgol Park for the politics of the elderly

종로 노인단체 분열과정 및 활동거점



대한민국어버이연합회 소속 회원 등이 26일 서울 훈정동 종로공원에 모여 북한을 비난하는 문구가 적힌 팻말을 불태우고 있다.

Being old and poor





Source: <http://job.incruit.com>



2) Sociologically

- Social phenomenon is a result of 'interactions' among different 'actors' and 'social factors'.
- Going beyond the surface and understand the 'mechanism' → Explanation
(eg.) high sex ratio.



Sex Ratio of Korea

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
<i>Average</i>	<i>109.5</i>	<i>116.5</i>	<i>113.2</i>	<i>110.2</i>	<i>107.8</i>	<i>106.9</i>
First Child	106.0	108.5	105.8	106.2	104.8	106.4
Second Child	107.8	117.0	111.7	107.4	106.5	105.8
Third+ Child	134.2	192.7	180.2	143.9	128.5	110.9

Source: Statistics Korea



Sociological methods

1. Survey Research

- a research method in which subjects respond to a series of items or questions in a questionnaire or an interview.
- political attitudes, religious beliefs, etc.
- Relationship between variables.



2. Qualitative Research Method (Participant Observation/In-depth Interview)

- For exploratory and descriptive study of people in a 'natural' setting.
- Generates qualitative data for interpretation.
- Helps us to understand their/insiders' own view.



Research Projects: Previous Examples

- Education: survey of high school students
- Café culture: survey of college students
- Gay community in Korea: mixed methods



What is “society?”

The components of a **society**

- 1) **people**: #, age, gender, race, etc.
- 2) **organization/institution**: family, school, religion ,
business
- 3) **symbolic structure**: culture, value, norms