



Understanding Korean Society & Culture

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A decorative graphic featuring a light green rectangular background with a gradient. Overlaid on this background is a complex, stylized green vine design. The vine consists of numerous thin, swirling lines that form loops and curls, interspersed with small, five-petaled flowers and clusters of leaves. The overall aesthetic is clean and organic.

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

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- 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>

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



“Culture” can be categorized into ...

- 1) **Non-material culture:** symbols, language, values, norms
- 2) **Material culture:** items that one can touch, taste or feel (eg) food, music, art, clothing, architecture



In understanding Culture, we need to think about ...

Ethnocentrism: occurs when a person uses his/her culture to judge another culture

Xenophobia: fear and hostility towards people who are from other countries or cultures

Cultural Relativism: consists of a deliberate effort to appreciate a group's way of life in its own context without prejudice

Multiculturalism : supports the inherent value of different cultures within a society (cf. assimilation: minority groups adopt dominant culture)

A decorative graphic of a green vine with leaves and small flowers, swirling around the text. The vine starts from the bottom left, goes up and around the text, and then goes down and around the text again.

II. SOCIAL CHANGE IN KOREA : AN OVERVIEW



1. Quick Korean history

-Dangun Choseon 2333 B.C. (Hwanwoong)


National Foundation Day (Gaecheonjeol) ?

-3 Kingdoms Period (18 B.C. – 668 A.D.)

3 Kingdoms

(source: <http://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki>)



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- Goguryeo 37 B.C. – 668 A.D.
 - Baekje 18 B.C. – 660 A.D.
 - Silla 57 B.C. – 935 A.D.
 - Unified Silla: 668 A.D. – 935 A.D.
 - Koryeo 918 A.D. – 1392 A.D.
 - Choseon 1392 A.D. – 1910 A.D.



- Japanese Colonial Period 1910 – 1945
- American Military Government 1945 – 1948
- South Korean Government 대한민국(Republic of Korea) 1948 –
- North Korean Government 조선민주주의인민공화국 (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) 1948 -



668?

1910?

1919?

1945?

1950?

1961?

1980?

1987?

1997?

2012?



2. Main features of Korean social change

Kyong-dong Kim(2008): Korean social change of 100 years

- (1) abruptness: colonization, liberation, division, war, coup d'etat, assassination
- (2) discontinuity & reshuffling
- (3) rapidity: GNP growth 566 times (1953-2005); TFR decline; aging; divorce rate; ppalli-ppalli culture (빨리빨리)
- (4) explosiveness: explosion of cities, technologies, information, civic organizations, environmental problems
- (5) excessiveness: excess competition, excess conflicts
- (6) one-sided pursuit of biased goals: “Economy First”
- (7) Condensed history-compact modernization:
agrarian/industrial/information society



3. Driving forces of Korean social change

- (1) International factors: US, Japan, North Korea
- (2) Human elements: education, political leadership, economic leadership (chaebol), the military, labor force, psychology of 'han': sense of remorse and revenge; this was directed into the positive channels of economic growth.
- (3) Principles of social organization: hierarchical authoritarianism, collectivism (familism), mobilizational society.
- (4) Technology/innovation.