

History of Korea

Lecturer	Anders Karlsson
Institution	SOAS, University of London
Email	ak49@soas.ac.uk

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of Korean history from the earliest state-formation to contemporary times. It maintains a balance between political, social and cultural history as well as between pre-modern and modern history. The course expects the students to participate actively through presentations and discussions. Two feature films will be screened and used for discussing specific periods of Korean history and when possible some topic will be supplemented by documentaries. Assessment will be based on a range of elements (see below) to enable students to display different skills.

Materials/Text:

Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006)
A collection of articles to be provided to the students electronically during the course

Requirements: None

Schedule:

- 1) Introduction/Early state formation
- 2) Three Kingdoms/Silla
- 3) Koryŏ
- 4) Early Chosŏn
- 5) Late Chosŏn
- 6) Everyday Life in Chosŏn Korea
- 7) Film Screening/Discussion
- 8) Mid-term exam/Student Presentations
- 9) Late Nineteenth Century
- 10) Colonial Period
- 11) Division and Korean War
- 12) Film Screening/Discussion
- 13) South and North Korea after the war to contemporary times
- 14) Final Exam
- 15) Student Presentations/Concluding discussions

Assignments:

A 2000 word report on one of the following topics:

- 1) Discuss the processes of early state formation on the Korean peninsula and adjacent areas to the north and the establishment of the Three Kingdoms.
- 2) Discuss the political role of Buddhism during the Koryŏ dynasty.
- 3) Discuss the political, social, philosophical and religious consequences of the introduction of Neo-Confucianism in the Koryŏ-Chosŏn transition and early Chosŏn.
- 4) To what extent was the 'Practical Learning' of Late Chosŏn a break with orthodox Neo-Confucianism?
- 5) How did the geo-political situation in East Asia change in the late nineteenth century and how did Korea attempt to adjust to it?
- 6) How did the division of the Korean peninsula and the events of 1945-1950 create the conditions for the Korean War?
- 7) Discuss political suppression and the struggle for democracy in South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s.

Evaluation:

Mid-Term exam 20% (short answer questions)

Report 15%

Presentation 25% (individual or group depending on student numbers)

Final Exam 30% (essay questions)

Attendance 10%