

Street Stories: Exploring South Korea through Local Storytelling

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Class time	Afternoon

Course Description:

Discover South Korea through the lens of everyday design in this fun, four-week summer adventure in South Korea. No art or design experience is needed; just bring curiosity and comfortable walking shoes! Led by a certified Canadian designer/instructor, you will join daily field trips and guided walks through bustling markets, hidden back-alley neighborhoods, subway stations, university districts, and surprising corners of the city. Even if you can't read a single Hangul character, you will learn to "read" the feeling of a place through its colors, shapes, textures, and visual rhythm. Hand-painted restaurant signs, protest posters, delivery-bike stickers, and even manhole covers will reveal the energy, humour, and spirit of Korean life in ways words never could.

Through these field trips, relaxed conversations with locals, quick on-the-spot sketches, and hands-on workshops using recycled and found materials, you will capture that unique Korean vibe and turn it into bold personal creations: custom letters, symbols, pictogram systems, activist graphics, and collaborative zines. Everything stays joyful and meaningful by focusing on accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability. You will embrace real-world limits that spark brilliant ideas (old banners and packaging become fresh designs) and dive into exciting challenges like Semantic Typography, where the shape, size, color, or arrangement of letters adds an extra layer of meaning. For example, "crowded" might appear with letters squished tightly together, or "whisper" in tiny, faint type, so the design itself feels the emotion before anyone reads the word.

The adventure wraps up with a public exhibition where locals and new friends can celebrate your work, plus a beautiful process book that captures the entire journey. You will head home with a truly unique portfolio piece, a confident new visual voice, and a deeper appreciation for how culture shapes design and how you can shape it right back. Ready to see Korea in full color and unlock your own creativity? Come join the instructor for this unforgettable summer!

Materials/Text:

Recommended Materials and Tools

The course is built around resourcefulness, sustainability, and using whatever is already around you.

- Pen and notebook or sketchbook. Essential for quick ideas and on-the-street sketching during field trips.
- Smartphone or small digital camera. Required for photographing signs, textures, colors, and moments throughout the area.
- Laptop and or access to a computer. Nice to have, but not required.

- Scavenged and repurposed materials. A core part of every project! Bring or collect things like old packaging, receipts, cardboard, fabric scraps, stickers, tickets, or anything you find along the way. These found objects become letters, symbols, and textures in projects and activities.

Software and Digital Resources

Everything we use has a free option so cost is never a barrier:

- *Affinity Designer / Photo*. Powerful professional tools that are completely free for this course (Windows or Mac).
- *Figma*. Free, browser-based, and perfect for collaboration and final layouts.
- *Adobe Creative Cloud*. Available if you already have a subscription, but not required.

Requirements:

- Open-mindedness and cultural curiosity: Students should be willing to immerse themselves in a new environment, share their own experiences, and learn from diverse perspectives.
- Collaboration skills: Openness to working in small groups and teams is essential for effective idea exchange and project development.
- Ethical awareness: Participants must understand the impact of design decisions on individuals and communities and approach projects with responsibility and respect.
- Empathy and communication: Students will explore advanced forms of empathy and develop strategies to communicate effectively with intended audiences.
- Positive attitude and respect: Maintaining a supportive and inclusive learning environment is crucial for creativity and collaboration.
- No advanced technical skills or portfolio are required. Curiosity, flexibility, and a willingness to experiment are the most important qualities for success in this workshop.

Schedule:

Classes blend lively in-studio activities with daily field trips and guided walks through neighborhoods. Expect hands-on fun, real-world exploration, and just a touch of light homework or reading to keep the inspiration flowing between adventures.

Week 1 – Sensory Play and Tactile Creation

This week uses the environment as a source of inspiration for expressive, non-traditional letterforms, requiring only basic drawing tools and curiosity. The activities are rooted in the concept of "Feeling Typography / Type Tasting," where students connect typefaces and forms to sensory and emotional experiences, such as texture and sound.

Week 2 – Collaborative Exploration and Visual Mapping

Week two shifts to collaborative learning and systematic observation of the local environment, fulfilling the course goal of helping students "Discover South Korea through Everyday Design",. The

activities include the Democratype Workshop, where participants experience collective design by having each student create one or two characters within a shared system using limited tools.

Week 3 – Minimal Public Art and Cultural Storytelling

This week applies the visual findings to create narrative and public statements using simple, physical methods. Students research and sketch designs for the Cultural Narrative Poster project, choosing a specific local theme (such as street food or protest culture) and using typography as the primary visual element to tell a story.

Week 4 – Collaborative Artifact and Final Showcase

The final week brings everything together into one lasting, collaborative piece and prepares the work for public exhibition. The main outcome is a collective Zine: a tangible publication where every participant designs their own spread to showcase projects and reflections from the month. This shared process book serves as a rich document of the journey and becomes a takehome piece for everyone involved.

The course concludes with the Final Gallery Showcase. All projects are curated and installed on a dedicated wall, creating a vibrant display that invites the wider community (neighbourhood/university) to celebrate what the group has created. By the end, participants leave with a confident new visual voice and a truly one-of-a-kind portfolio piece no one else will ever have.

Evaluation:

A basic evaluation system such as the following will be applied:

A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F
95 – 100	90 – 94.99	85 – 89.99	80 – 84.99	75 – 79.99	70 – 74.99	65 – 69.99	60 – 64.99	0 – 59.99