

Introduction to Korean Politics (Summer 2025)

Temporary

Professor: Youngho Cho 조영호 (younghocho94@naver.com, Office: 622
Dasan Hall)
Office Hours: TBA; by appointment
T.A.:



1. Class time and place: 10:00~13:00 and OOOO

2. Overview: *Introduction to Korean Politics* is an English lecture and will follow university policy on class format.

This course is purposed to introduce past and current politics of South Korea. It mainly focuses on South Korean politics, dealing partially with North Korea because the two Koreas have influenced each other. This class is a basic course in the area of Korean politics; thus, it aims to deliver systematic and balanced understanding about Korean politics and its related subjects.

South Korea (hereafter, Korea) is the fascinating case to study through the lens of politics. Korea is one of the few countries outside the Western hemisphere that have achieved a strong state, procedural democracy, and capitalist market economy. More interesting is that the Korean people have done these triple transformations within a half century, which deviates from the usual pattern of development.

What motivated Koreans to make these enormous efforts? Why has Korea received such global attention? What makes Koreans of the “*Land of Morning Calm*” such strong, enduring, and vibrant people? What kind of politics do we have? What are institutional and substantial differences between Korea and other countries, including Asian neighbors and Western nations? What are major political problems in Korea and what are their origins? How shall we overcome them? These are some questions we will tackle during this semester. As you can guess, these questions will not be easy to answer. Nonetheless, tough questions are better than easy answers and light information. In human history, those raising new questions have been likely to have power and wealth. Therefore, this class will expose you to those hard questions, and we will collectively seek answers, which is not perfect but is worthy and valuable.

This class is designed to familiarize students with diverse subjects of Korean politics. In particular, the class addresses interesting stories and figures from *historical, theoretical, and comparative perspectives*. The class is *historical* because it introduces historical moments in Korean politics. The class is *theoretical* because it elucidates different explanations of Korean politics and examines causes and conditions for monumental events in Korean politics. Finally, the class is *comparative* because it compares Korean politics with the politics of other countries and this comparison will improve your understanding of Korean politics.

3. Evaluation: This class abides by university policy for evaluation. Evaluation criteria include exams (midterm [30%] and final [30%]), presentation about Korean politics (30%) and participation/attendance [10%).






- **Exam:** The midterm and final exams will be a computer-based, in-class test and consist of true/false questions and a couple of essay questions. Students bring their laptop computer and take the exams in class. The midterm exam covers lecture topics addressed before the midterm exam and the final exam covers lecture topics presented after the midterm exam.



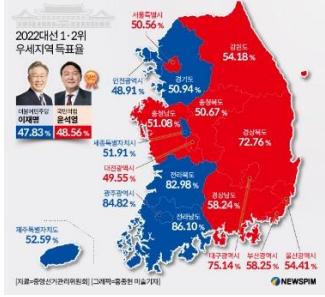

- **Presentation:** Students will make a presentation about current and Korean presidents and famous figures of Korean politics. Or they will make a presentation about certain issues or events: gender, regionalism, May 18, Korean parties, the Korean War, youth, political socialization, Korea-US relations, US Forces Korea, inter-Korea relations, and so on. Students will present individually or as a team, depending on the class size. The presentation will take less than 20 minutes and it be evaluated by class colleagues. My own evaluation will be added.

- **Participation/Attendance (10%):** The class T.A. will check your attendance. Attendance follows university policy. Please ask the class T.A. regarding an issue of attendance: 1) With regard to absences, students must inform me and the T.A. via email before a class begins and students who are absent five times without prior notice will receive a grade of F [F.A.]; 2) students arriving within 15 minutes after the start of class will be marked late; if they are 16 minutes or more late, they'll be marked absent; 3) being late three times will be counted as one absence; 4) absence on account of illness or with a valid reason will be permitted only once and students are required to submit relevant documents.

4. Textbook: I will use chapters of *The Oxford Handbook of South Korean Politics* (2023, Oxford University Press) edited by JeongHun Han, Ramon Pacheco Pardo, and Youngho Cho. You do not need to buy this book; I will upload the chapters from this book and additional readings and articles to be available at the cyber campus.

5. Class Schedule

<p>Class 1</p>	<p>Course overview Assignment of presentations</p>	
<p>Class 2</p>	<p>Latest Korean Politics after the 2016-2017 Candlelight protest</p> <p>Cho, Youngho and Injeong Hwang. 2021. “Who defends democracy and why? Explaining the participation in the 2016–2017 candlelight protest in South Korea.” <i>Democratization</i>.</p>	
<p>Class 3</p>	<p>Historical overview of Korean politics</p> <p>OUP Ch. 2: History of Korea, 1905-45, <i>Hyung-Gu LYNN</i> OUP Ch. 3: History of South Korea, 1945-87, <i>Tae Gyun PARK</i></p>	
<p>Class 4</p>	<p>Political economy I: Developmental state and</p> <p>OUP Ch. 7: Developmental State, <i>Meredith WOO</i></p>	
<p>Class 5</p>	<p>Political economy II: Chaebol (Large Korean conglomerate)</p> <p>OUP Ch. 8: Chaebol, <i>Sang-young RHYU</i></p>	
<p>Class 6</p>	<p>Culture of Korean politics and society</p> <p>OUP Ch. 27: Pop Music, <i>John LIE</i> OUP Ch. 23: Cinema and Television, <i>Hyangjin LEE</i></p>	
<p>Class 7</p>	<p>Continued</p>	
<p>Class 8</p>	<p>Midterm Exam</p>	

<p>Class 9</p>	<p>Democratization and democracy</p> <p>OUP Ch. 6: Conservative Democratization, <i>WooJin KANG</i></p>																																		
<p>Class 10</p>	<p>Government system: presidentialism with parliamentary features</p> <p>OUP Ch. 10: Constitutional Politics, <i>Won-Taek KANG</i></p>																																		
<p>Class 11</p>	<p>Elections and regionalism</p> <p>OUP Ch. 16: Elections and Electoral Systems, <i>Woojin MOON</i> OUP Ch. 5: Regional and Social Division, <i>Kwang-Il YOON</i></p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>2022대선 1-2위 무세지역 득표율</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>지역</th> <th>자유한국당</th> <th>국민의힘</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>서울특별시</td> <td>47.83%</td> <td>48.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>부산광역시</td> <td>48.91%</td> <td>50.94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>대구광역시</td> <td>51.06%</td> <td>50.67%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>대전광역시</td> <td>51.91%</td> <td>51.08%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>충청남도</td> <td>49.55%</td> <td>82.98%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>충청북도</td> <td>84.82%</td> <td>58.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>경기도</td> <td>86.10%</td> <td>72.76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>강원도</td> <td>75.34%</td> <td>58.25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>충청남도</td> <td>54.41%</td> <td>54.41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>제주특별자치도</td> <td>52.59%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	지역	자유한국당	국민의힘	서울특별시	47.83%	48.56%	부산광역시	48.91%	50.94%	대구광역시	51.06%	50.67%	대전광역시	51.91%	51.08%	충청남도	49.55%	82.98%	충청북도	84.82%	58.24%	경기도	86.10%	72.76%	강원도	75.34%	58.25%	충청남도	54.41%	54.41%	제주특별자치도	52.59%	
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<p>Class 12</p>	<p>Political parties</p> <p>OUP Ch. 14: Parties and Party Systems, <i>Sunghack LIM</i></p>																																		
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<p>Class 15</p>	<p>Final Exam</p>																																		