



2025-2026 Korea University International Winter Campus (KU IWC)

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December 23 (Tue), 2025 - January 9 (Fri), 2026

IWC 271 – Global Korean Cinema

I . Instructor

Professor	Tian (Esther) Li
E-mail	litian0927@gmail.com
Home Institution	Korea University
Class Time	9:00 – 11:55 AM (KST)
Office Hours	TBC
Class Format	Seminar
Academic Field	Humanities/Korean studies

II. Textbook

Required Textbook	There will be no required books. I will make PDF files for all the readings and upload them to Canvas (some of them are available online for which I will provide URLs). All readings are in English.
Recommended Additional Readings	<p>Nayoung Aimee Kwon, "Collaboration, Coproduction, and Code-Switching: Colonial Cinema and Postcolonial Archaeology," <i>Cross Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review</i>, no.5 (2012):9-28;</p> <p>Eun-Young Jung, "Transnational Korea: A Critical Assessment of the Korean Wave in Asia and the United States," <i>Southeast Review of Asian Studies</i>, vol. 31 (2009), 69–80;</p> <p>Doobo Shim. "Globalization and cinema regionalization in East Asia," <i>Korea Journal</i> 45:4 (2005), 1-29.</p> <p>Steven Chung, "Regimes within Regimes: Film and Fashion in the Korean 1950s," in <i>Split Screen Korea</i> (Minneapolis: Minnesota U Press, 2014),47-82;</p> <p>Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "The Past is not Dead," <i>The Past Within Us: Media Memory, History</i> (Verso, 2005), 1-33;</p>

	<p>Carter Eckert, "Koreas Transition to Modernity: A Will to Greatness," <i>Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia</i> (Cambridge: Harva University Press, 2000),121-151.</p> <p>Christina Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Film of Bong Joon-ho," <i>American Quarterly</i> no.4 (2008): 871-898;</p> <p>Jinhee Choi, "Blockbusters, Korean Style," in <i>The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs</i> (Wesleyan University Press, 2010), 31-59;</p> <p>Brian Yecies and Ae-Gyung Shim, "Contemporary Korean Cinema: Challenge and the Transformation of Planet Hollywood," <i>Acta Koreana</i> 14:1 (2011), 15.</p> <p>Kyung Hyun Kim, "Lethal work: Domestic Space and Gender Troubles in <i>Happy End</i> and <i>The Housemaid</i>" in <i>The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema</i> (Duke University Press, 2004), 233-258;</p> <p>Kelley Jeong, "The Quasi Patriarch: Kim Süng-ho and South Korean Postwar Movies," in Kyunghyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., <i>The Korean Popular Culture Reader</i> (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 126-144;</p> <p>Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" <i>Screen</i> 16, no.3 (1975): 6-18.</p> <p>Julian Stringer, "<i>Sopyonje</i> and the Inner Domain of National Culture," in David E.James and Kyung Hyun Kim eds. <i>Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema</i> (Wayne State University Press, 2001), 157-181;</p> <p>Hee-Eun Lee, "Seeking The 'Others' Within Us: Discourses of Korean-ness in Korean Popular Music," in Holden, T, J.M. and Scrase T. J. eds. <i>Medi@sia: Global Media/tion in and Out of Context</i> (London: Routledge, 2006), 128-146;</p>
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	<p>Naoki Sakai, "'You Asians': On the Historical Role of the West and Asia Binary," <i>The South Atlantic Quarterly</i> 99:4 (Fall 2000): 789-818.</p> <p>Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity" in <i>Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity</i>, Edited by Anthony D. King, (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1-12;</p> <p>Olga Fedorenko, "South Korean Advertising as Popular Culture," in Kyung Hyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., <i>The Korean Popular Culture Reader</i> (Duke U. Press, 2014), 341-362;</p> <p>Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, "The Global Hansik Campaign and the Commodification of Korean Cuisine," in Kyung Hyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., <i>The Korean Popular Culture Reader</i> (Duke U. Press, 2014), 363-384.</p> <p>Manas Ghosh, "History, nation, and memory in south Korean cinema: Lee Chang-dong's <i>Peppermint Candy</i>," <i>Asian Cinema</i> no.2 (2012): 129-140;</p> <p>Soyoung Kim, "Gendered trauma in Korean cinema: Peppermint Candy and My Own Breathing," <i>New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film</i> no.3 (2011): 179-187.</p> <p>Kyu Hyun Kim, "Bong Joo-ho and Parasite: A triumph of messy and real Korean culture," <i>Asia Now</i> (2020) https://www.asianstudies.org/bong-joon-ho-and-parasite-a-triumph-of-messy-and-real-korean-culture/</p> <p>Dal Yong Jin, "Cultural politics in Korea's contemporary films under neoliberal globalization," <i>Media, Culture, and Society</i>, 28:5 (2006), 5-23;</p> <p>Seow Ting Lee, "Film as cultural diplomacy: South Korea's national branding through <i>Parasite</i> (2019)," <i>Place Branding and Public Diplomacy</i> (2021): 1-12;</p> <p>Recommend: Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces." <i>Diacritics</i> 16, no.1 (1986): 22-27.</p> <p>Rosi Braidotti, <i>The Posthuman</i> (Polity, 2013), 1-12;</p>
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	<p>Sean Redmon, "Technophobia/Dystopia" in Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner Eds. <i>Liquid metal: the science fiction film reader</i> (Wallflower Press, 2007), 48-56.</p> <p>Shine Choi, "I love you, do you love me?: Conflict, melodrama, and reconciliation, South Korean blockbuster style" in <i>Reimagining North Korea in International Politics: Problems and Alternatives</i> (Routledge, 2015), 135-174;</p> <p>Sohl Lee, "Seung Woo Back's <i>Blow Up</i> (2005–2007): Touristic Fantasy, Photographic Desire, and Catastrophic North Korea" in Kyung Hyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., <i>The Korean Popular Culture Reader</i> (Duke U. Press, 2014), 385-406;</p> <p>Travis Workman, "The Partisan, the Worker, and the Hidden Hero: Popular Icons in North Korean Film," in Kyung Hyun Kim and Youngmin Choe eds., <i>The Korean Popular Culture Reader</i> (Duke U. Press, 2014), 145-167.</p> <p>Youngmin Choe, "Introduction: Distracted Attractions" in <i>Tourist Distractions: Traveling and Feeling in Transnational Hallyu Cinema</i> (Duke University Press, 2016), 1-30;</p> <p>Giorgio Agamben, "The Friend", <i>What is An Apparatus? and Other Essays</i>, (Stanford University Press, 2009), 25-38;</p> <p>Recommend: Jacques Derrida, <i>On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness</i>, tr. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (Routledge, 2001), 1-24.</p>
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III. Course Description and Objectives (1 course = 3 credits)

In recent times, world cinema has witnessed the rise of South Korean cinema as an alternative to Hollywood and includes many distinguished directors such as Park Chan-wook, Lee Chang-dong, Kim Ki-duk, and Bong Joon-ho. This course will explore the Korean film history and aesthetics from its colonial days (1910-1945) to the *hallyu* era (2001-present), and also analyzes several key texts that are critical for understanding this field of study. How is Korean cinema shaped by (re)interpretations of history and society? How do we understand Korean cinema vis-à-vis the public memories of the Korean War, industrialization, social movements, economic development, and globalization? And how do aesthetics and storytelling in Korean cinema contribute to its popularity among local spectators and to its globality in shaping the contours of world cinema? By deeply inquiring into such questions, students will learn how to critically view, think about,

and write about film. Primary texts include literature and film. All films will be screened with English subtitles.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will,

- ✓ Become familiar with important Korean films from a global perspective
- ✓ Discuss the aesthetics and narratives in Korean films with attention to major Korean filmmakers and Korean history and society
- ✓ Apply critical analysis from the field of media and cultural studies and critical theories to visual and textual materials
- ✓ Produce critical and persuasive writing and an oral presentation to demonstrate understanding of the key issues in Korean cinema

IV. Grading

Attendance	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Film Review	25%
Presentation project	20%
Final Exam	20%

V. Class Outline

Date	Topic	Chapter	Remarks
Dec 23 (Tue)	Introduction: the past and the present of Korean cinema		
Dec 24 (Wed)	Post-Korean War and the Fashion		
Dec 25 (Thu)	No Class		
Dec 26 (Fri)	Blockbusters and Genre-Bending		
Dec 29 (Mon)	Gender and Body Politics		
Dec 30 (Tue)	Sound, Landscape, and K-pop		
Dec 31 (Wed)	Hollywood's Korea		
Jan 1 (Thu)	No Class		
Jan 2 (Fri)	Nation, Memory, and Democratization		
Jan 3 (Sat)	Midterm		Make-up Class
Jan 5 (Mon)	Heterotopia, Phantasmagoria, and Subversives		
Jan 6 (Tue)	Zombie and Posthumanism		
Jan 7 (Wed)	Otherness and the Representations of North Korea		
Jan 8 (Thu)	Student Presentation and Discussion		

Jan 9 (Fri)	Last day of Teaching (Final Exam) and Graduation		
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