

ANS 361
CAPTIALISM, CONSUMPTION, AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN KOREA
Unique #31125
Fall 2009

Meets: Tu 3:30-6:30, PAR 203
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Overview: This is a course about contemporary social and political life in urban South Korea—to use a complex and problematic concept, about Korean modernity. It focuses on present conditions and their historical background: on capitalism and development from the colonial era (1910-1945) to the present, on the perspectives of workers, white-collar employees, and students over time, on the lifestyles of the new middle class, and on the struggle for democracy and its aftermath. We will read ethnographies of corporations, factory work, consumption, and activism, as well as accounts of popular culture and changing gender systems and roles. We will also watch several recent films and examine other visual materials.

Course Activities: Classes will consist of student presentations, discussion, and films. Most classes are divided into A and B segments of an hour each, with a film screening making up the third hour. For the most part, we will begin watching a film in the final hour of one class and continue it in the first hour of the next class, at which point we will have a presentation and discussion of the film.

Assignments/Grading: This is a SWC course, so writing makes up a significant portion of the class grade. I will grade writing based upon the presence and quality of an argument, your use of sources, and the structure and style of your paper. Please do try to be accurate in grammar and spelling; I encourage you to use the writing center or to have a friend read over a paper for errors. That said, I will not mark off for minor English errors unless they get in the way of comprehension or seem to indicate laziness on your part. I am here to teach writing, not grammar, and there is a difference.

Ten (10) 1-page reading reactions	15% (1.5% each)
One “super-short” (2-3 pp.) paper	5%
One midterm paper (5-6 pp.)	25%
One final paper (6-8 pp.)	30%
Class presentation on readings/film	10%
Class participation/attendance	15%

Reading reactions: For 10 of the 13 classes beginning with the second week of class, you should submit a one page (1-2 paragraph) reaction to some aspect of that week’s readings (not films) BY MONDAY EVENING before the class is to be held. I

will ask you to upload your response to the discussion board on EReserve; please note that there are folders for each class date. Everyone should start their own thread, though feel free to respond to others. The other aspect of this assignment is that YOU SHOULD GO ONTO ERES AND READ the reactions of others Monday night or so before class. We will use these reaction papers as a partial basis for discussion.

Part of the point of assigning short reading reaction papers is, indeed, to check that you are reading for this class. However, **reading reactions should not be summaries**, and mere summaries will have points subtracted. Rather, I want you to identify a particular aspect of an author's argument that you find especially important (and explain why), argue with a text, or pose a **conceptual** (not merely factual) question for discussion. You may focus on all or part of one reading, or the relationship between various readings; you do not need to cover all the material for a given class.

"Super-short" paper: Towards the beginning of the term, I will assign a very short paper that will, however, require you to use sources and offer an argument. This is only worth 5% of your grade and you might be tempted to blow it off. Don't. This is an opportunity for you to get feedback on your writing before undertaking assignments that will substantially affect your course grade, but that feedback will only be useful to you if you write to the best of your ability.

Midterm and final papers: Each will be assigned and due on dates indicated below. I will provide questions or problems for you to write on, but there will be considerable latitude. Both readings and films are fair game (for you and for me)!

Class presentation: Each student will be called upon to present on class readings or a film once during the term. Each presentation should be a MAXIMUM of 10 minutes in length—I WILL time you and I WILL cut you off. As with reading reactions, presentations should not be summaries; rather, they should suggest important issues that a set of readings or a film raises and pose questions for class discussion. Basically, your grade on this component of the class will depend on how well and coherently you do this. You may find, incidentally, that looking at your classmates' reading responses on Monday night will suggest ideas; please give credit where credit is due.

If you present on a reading or set of readings, I have also provided some broad framing questions in the syllabus to think about what you might want to say. You do not have to answer these questions, necessarily, and you should feel free to suggest your own. If you present on a film, I hope you will relate the film to other class topics. **Also please note** that you will be expected to present on a film immediately after we finish watching it in class, so it would be good if you had watched it in its entirety beforehand. The price of presenting on a film is going to the library to pre-screen it on your own time!

We will sign up for presentations on the first class meeting day. One student per presentation slot, please.

Class participation: This is a discussion-based class, and you will be rewarded for the quantity and quality of your participation. Attendance is one factor here as well (I will take attendance at the beginning of classes, and bad attendance without proper notification will certainly hurt). At the same time, if you are the vocal type please be respectful of other students and give others a chance to speak as well.

Graduate students should discuss required assignments with me.

I will make use of plus/minus grading. Generally, I regard averages ≥ 92 (rounded) as an A, 89-91 as an A-, 87-88 as a B+, 82-86 as a B, and so on at equivalent points down the scale.

Academic Dishonesty/Cheating can result in automatic course failure and a report to the appropriate Dean. Your work on exams and papers should be your own.

Cellphones/Computers: Cellphones and other communication devices should be turned off or (if you truly need to be in contact) set for silent/vibration mode. If you need to make or receive a call, please leave the room before you begin talking. Don't ask, just go. Likewise if you need to use the bathroom. Don't text in class.

In a discussion based course such as this, you shouldn't have your laptop open during class.

Email: I usually check email once or more a day, but not always, particularly on weekends. Do not rely on me reading emails you send the night before an exam or paper is due.

I would prefer receiving a hard copy of major papers. Basically, I write marginalia while grading, and so someone is going to have to print the paper out...may as well be you. (The Department of Asian Studies, like others at UT, is consistently under pressure to reduce administrative costs. Should your stay in Austin inspire the thought of taking the issue of funding for higher education up with Texas legislative authorities, I will be happy to hold the door for you.) The hard copy rule is not hard and fast, and if there is a real reason why this is difficult for you email the paper instead. But 1) asking first would be nice, and 2) responsibility for technological snafus and incompatibilities ultimately rests with you, so check to be sure I've gotten it.

Special Needs: Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Religious Holy Day Observance: If an assignment or exam falls due on a day when you are observing a religious holy day, I will work with you to find an acceptable alternative time to complete the assignment.

Readings/Films: This class meets only once a week, so it is important to pace yourself and start reading early. For many weeks, we read all or most of a book. Also remember that reading reactions are due the Monday night **before** a Tuesday class, so that we can all have time to get through them and make use of them.

I've ordered the following books for this course, all available at the Coop. They are also on reserve at PCL. I recommend buying/acquiring the books (there or elsewhere) as soon as you commit to the course, if possible, since the Coop returns books to the publisher early in the term and it is best to order additional books early if that becomes necessary:

Laura C. Nelson, *Measured Excess*.
Nancy Abelmann, *The Melodrama of Mobility*.
Denise Potrzeba Lett, *In Pursuit of Status*.
Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung*.

Other readings (as well as course documents such as weekly lists of key concepts, the map quiz review, etc.) will be placed on E-reserve. These are .pdf copies of articles and the like; you can read them on screen or (my recommendation) print them so you can mark them up. E-reserve can be accessed from any computer connected to the UT system. Go to <http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/courseindex.asp> and search by the course number or my name. The required password to access materials for this class is **CapKor** (capital letters matter). This is for the use of students of this class only; please do not share the password with others. The listing should be alphabetical by the author's last name or (when there is no listed author) by the document title.

If there is enough sentiment for having a packet made up for the course, I will try to get that done, I hope by the second week or so. We'll discuss pros and cons.

All films for this class will be placed on reserve at the Audiovisual Library. If you wish to see a film outside of class (whether for review or because you missed the in class screening), you can do so there, although films cannot be taken out of the library.

Schedule:

1) 9/1 *Introduction*

Class introduction and housekeeping

Laurel Kendall, "Introduction," in Kendall, ed., *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea* (Honolulu: U Hawaii, 2002), pp. 1-5 **only {in class reading}**.

2) 9/8 *Genealogies of South Korean Capitalism*

A) Beginnings: Who Cares, and Why? **Presenter:**

Karl Marx, "Marx on the History of His Opinions," (fragment) (originally preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*), in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 5 (only) {the half paragraph from "No social order ever perishes..." to the end of the paragraph}.

Carter Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism*, Preface, Ch. 1, Ch. 8, Conclusion.

What does Eckert mean by capitalism? What is at stake for Eckert and other authors in locating the origins of Korean capitalism? What understanding(s) of history underlie these efforts? If Korean capitalism has "colonial origins," what

consequence might this have for how it is viewed (or should be viewed) in the present?

B) Structures and Conditions of South Korean Development **Presenter:**

Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, chs. 1-2 {pp. 25-55}

What is H-L writing against? What was the scope and magnitude of South Korean development, and how/why did it occur? What was its legacy?

Film: “The Aimless Bullet” (오발탄) (1961)

3) 9/15 *Modernization as Triumph, Romance, Tragedy, and Myth*

“Super-short” paper topic assigned (due 9/25, Friday)

Film: “The Aimless Bullet” (conclusion) **Presenter:**

A) Developmentalisms and Anti-developmentalisms **Presenter:**

Park Chung Hee, *To Build a Nation* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1971), pp. 18-31 and 101-134. {READ QUICKLY—skim and look at pictures}

Walt Rostow, “The Republic of Korea: My Marginal Association with a Miracle,” in *Concept and Controversy: Sixty Years of Taking Ideas to Market* (Austin: UT Press, 2003), pp. 254-261.

Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003), short excerpts pp. 42-47, 100-103.

David J. Nemeth, “Blame Walt Rostow: The Sacrifice of South Korea’s Natural Villages,” in Tim Tangherlini and Sallie Yea, eds., *Sitings: Critical Approaches to Geography in Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2008), pp. 83-97.

What were the promises of “modernization,” “nation-building,” and “development” in South Korea and in the broader world? What were its effects? What were the assumptions of classical “modernization theory” of the 1960s, and do they hold sway today?

B) One More Ambivalence after the Last: Modernity as Myth **Presenter:**

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (section), in Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 473-483.

Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin, 1982), "Introduction: Modernity—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" (pp. 15-36).

James Ferguson, "Decomposing Modernity," in *Global Shadows* (Durham: Duke, 2006), ch. 7 (pp. 176-193).

What is "the experience of modernity?" Do you feel it? How do the spiritual conditions of "post-development" compare in South Korea versus other areas – Ferguson's Africa, for example?

4) 9/22 *Inside the System: A Portrait from a Korean Corporation in the 1980s*

A) From the Top Down: Explaining Korean Corporate Leaders Explaining Themselves **Presenter:**

Roger Janelli with Dawnhee Yim, *Making Capitalism: The Social and Cultural Construction of a South Korean Conglomerate* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993), Introduction and chs. 1, 3

How do South Korean corporate leaders legitimate themselves? How do you think the image of such leaders compares to that in other situations/locales? Why do Janelli and Yim talk about "representations" of Korean culture and political economy, and not just culture and political economy?

B) From the Bottom Up: Control, Response, "Resistance" **Presenter:**

Janelli with Yim, chs. 4-5, 7.

How is the control of corporate leaders and managers reproduced? How do lower level employees operate within the system? Is Korean culture on one side or the other? How might we understand Korean culture after this book?

Film: "A Single Spark" (아름다운 청년 전태일) (1995)

***9/25 (Friday 5 p.m.) "Super-short" paper due to me in Asian Studies department

5) 9/29 *The View from Below: The Making of the Korean Working Class*

Film: "A Single Spark" (continued) **Presenter:**

A) Class Culture in Common and in Conflict **Presenter:**

E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), Preface (pp. 8-13).

E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," in *Customs in Common* (New York: New Press, 1993; original in *Past and Present* 38, 1967), pp. 352-403.

What does Thompson mean to do by saying that the English working class was "made"? How was it? What is he arguing against? What is involved in "proletarianization"? What relationship between culture and politics does Thompson envision?

B) Korean Workers and Class Formation **Presenter:**

Hagen Koo, *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), chs. 2-3, 6 (pp. 23-68, 126-152). {All on E-Reserve}

How does Koo use Thompson's argument? What was the Korean working class "made out of"? What sorts of experiences were central, and how do these compare to other contexts/situations? How have custom and culture been important issues in labor conflict in South Korea?

6) 10/6 *Another Angle: The State, Mobilization, and Gender*

A) Men and the Mobilizing State **Presenter:**

Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham: Duke, 2005), chs. 1-2.

Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), ch. 5.

What does Moon mean by "discipline" (evoking Michel Foucault)? How were men disciplined in South Korea's developmentalist years? How did this relate to their subjectivity and their "subjectification" (how they became subjects of history)? What role did the military play? How was/is South Korea a militarized society, according to Moon, and how does this compare with other places?

B) Women and the Construction of Nation **Presenter:**

Jager, ch. 3.

Moon, ch. 3.

What was the place of women in the "narrative of nation," e.g. Yi Kwang-su's work, according to Jager? What might one imagine this place to be today – in Korea or elsewhere, in novels or other media? What were the mechanisms that produced gender relations under state developmentalism?

Film: “Green Fish” (초록 물고기) (1997)

7) 10/13 *The Movement Sphere*

Film: “Green Fish” (continued) **Presenter:**

A) Meanings and Conditions of *Minjung* **Presenter:**

Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2007), Intro, chs. 1, 3.

What are the *minjung*? What assumptions (about history, etc.) underlay this category? What were the roles and effects of Yusin, Gwangju/Kwangju, and anti-Americanism?

B) The Counterpublic and the Politics of Alliance **Presenter:**

Namhee Lee, chs. 4, 6-7.

Consider aspects of the culture and practice of the *undonggwôn* – can you compare anything? What were the conditions and difficulties of student attempts to ally with labor? What does Lee mean by the relation between Gramscian organicism and Leninist vanguardism? Does this tension exist anywhere else?

Midterm paper assigned (due 10/30 Friday)

8) 10/20 *The 1990s and “New New Social Movements”*

A) Citizens to the Fore: The Post-1987 Shift **Presenter:**

Sunhyuk Kim, “Civil Society in South Korea: From Grand Democracy Movements to Petty Interest Groups?” *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 15(2): 81-97.

Nancy Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent* (Berkeley: U California Press, 1996), ch. 9 {pp. 226-248}.

Robert Oppenheim, *Kyôngju Things* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2008), ch. 7.

What shifts to these authors identify? What is the relationship between *simin* and *minjung* movements in discourse, life histories, etc.? What other dimensions might we talk about? How do different authors/groups regard these developments of the 1990s?

B) An Exercise: Issues, Networks, and the Self-Presentation of Korean Social Movement Organizations **Presenter:**

Spend some time reading material linked on the following websites (not just the front page):

For the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (경제정의실천시민연합):

<http://www.ccej.or.kr/english/> or <http://www.ccej.or.kr/> (Korean)

For the Korean Federation of Environmental Movements (환경운동연합):

<http://english.kfem.or.kr/> or <http://www.kfem.or.kr/> (Korean)

How do these organizations organize? What issues do they find important? How do they construct their relation to other past or present movements? To society?

Film: "Beat" (비트) (1997)

9) 10/27 *Of Salarymen and Apartment Towers: South Korea's New Middle Class*

Film: "Beat" (continued) **Presenter:**

A) Making Money, Making Families **Presenter:**

Denise Potrzeba Lett, *In Pursuit of Status: The Making of South Korea's "New" Middle Class* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), Intro and Chs. 1-3 {pp. 1-96}.

What is "new" about the new middle class, and what is not? What relationship does Lett see between Confucianism and capitalism, and how is the middle class "between"? What are the advantages and assumptions of a focus on status?

B) Living, Learning, Loving **Presenter:**

Lett, chs. 4-6 and Conclusion {pp. 97-228}.

To what extent can there be said to be a convergence of middle-class lifestyles around the world? What are significant differences in life or motivation? Do you agree (last page) that the middle class has "contributed"?

*****Midterm paper due 10/30 Friday*****

10) 11/3 *Gender, Nationalism, and the Politics of Consumption*

A) Space, Policy, and Strategies of Affluence **Presenter:**

Laura C. Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (New York: Columbia, 2000), Preface and Chs. 1-3.

Consider the Korean real estate market comparatively: how has the housing system contributed to socioeconomic differentiation? What role does the state play in consumption, in South Korea and elsewhere? Why does Nelson choose a strategy of offering “vignettes” and what does it do for her?

B) Consumption, National Time, Domestic Others **Presenter:**

Nelson, chs. 3-6.

How might we best understand consumer nationalism in Korea, according to Nelson? Consider some examples of the temporality of consumption, and the paradoxes of national time. How do the (broken) promises of the South Korean national narrative that Nelson discusses compare to other such narratives?

Film: “Attack the Gas Station” (주유소 습격 사건) (1999)

11) 11/10 *The Asian Financial Crisis*

*****Final paper assigned (due Friday of the last week of class, 12/4)*****

Film: “Attack the Gas Station” (cont.) **Presenter:**

A) Political Economy **Presenter:**

T.J. Pempel, “Introduction,” in Pempel, ed., *The Politics of the Asian Economic Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1999), pp. 1-14.

Bruce Cumings, “The Asian Crisis, Democracy, and the End of ‘Late’ Development,” in Pempel, pp. 17-44.

Meredith Woo-Cumings, “The State, Democracy, and the Reform of the Corporate Sector in Korea,” in Pempel, pp. 116-142.

What were the causes and consequences of the crisis? What/who is at fault? What does the political perspective the authors offer bring to the table?

B) Neoliberalism and social effects **Presenter:**

Jesook Song, “Family Breakdown and Invisible Homeless Women,” *positions* 14(1): 37-65.

Seung-Kyung Kim and John Finch, “Living with Rhetoric, Living against Rhetoric: Korean Families and the IMF Economic Crisis,” *Korean Studies* 26: 120-39.

What sorts of effects did the Asian Financial (“IMF”) crisis have on Korean families? How was the IMF understood in public discourse, and how did this discourse interact with its practical realities? What is “neoliberalism,” and what sort of shifts in the relations of individuals and society does it gloss?

12) 11/17 *Women, Talk, and Class*

A) Keywords of Social Life after Development **Presenter:**

Nancy Abelmann, *The Melodrama of Mobility* (Honolulu: Hawaii, 2003), Preface and chs. 1-3.

Why melodrama? What would some comparable keywords be?

B) Masculinities, etc. **Presenter:**

Abelmann, chs. 6-7, 9.

How/why does Abelmann bring film into the discussion? How does her look at masculinity compare to others?

Film: “Take Care of my Cat” (고양이를 부탁해) (2001)

13) 11/24 *Globalization, Multiculturalism, New Identities*

Film: “Take Care of my Cat” (cont.) **Presenter:**

A) Meanings of Globalization, and Gay Identities **Presenter:**

Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), ch. 11.

Younghan Cho, “Unfolding Sporting Nationalism in South Korean Media Representations of the 1968, 1984, and 2000 Olympics,” *Media, Culture and Society* 31(3): 347-364.

John (Song Pae) Cho, “The Wedding Banquet Revisited: ‘Contract Marriages’ Between Korean Gays and Lesbians,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 82(2): 401-422.

What have been some of the differing assumptions and agendas of “globalization” in Korea? How has it played out in different contexts? What are the local politics and cultures of gay and lesbian identities?

B) Multicultural Korea(?) **Presenter:**

Cho Uhn, "Towards a Multicultural Society?" *Korea Journal* 47(4).

Han Kyung-Koo, "The Archaeology of the Ethnically Homogeneous Nation-State and Multiculturalism in Korea," *ibid*

Han Geon-Soo, "Multicultural Korea: Celebration or Challenge of Multiethnic Shift in Contemporary Korea?" *ibid*

Eun Mee Kim and Jean S. Kang, "Seoul as a Global City with Ethnic Villages." *ibid*

Is South Korea becoming "multicultural"? Is this inevitable? What might this mean, and how might it compare to other "local multiculturalisms"?

14) 12/1 *Consumption, Meaning, and (Neo-) "Tradition"* **Presenter:**

Hyangjin Lee, "*Chunhyang*: Marketing an Old Tradition in New Korean Cinema," in Shin and Stringer, pp. 63-78.

Sangmee Bak, "McDonald's in Seoul: Food Choices, Identity, and Nationalism," in James L. Watson, ed., *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (Stanford: Stanford UP), pp. 136-160.

Rebecca Ruhlen, "Korean Alterations: Nationalism, Social Consciousness, and 'Traditional' Clothing," in *Re-Orienting Fashion* (London: Berg, 2003), pp. 117-138.

How can we best understand moral discourses on consumption in Korea? What is being consumed in each case? How do objects/goods, places, and practices interrelate?

Film: "The Way Home" (집으로) (2002) **No Presentation**

*****Final Paper due 12/4, Friday (5 pm), in my office in Asian Studies*****

There is no separate final exam for this class.