

South Korea: K-Entertainment and Tourism in Seoul

Summer, 2025

3 Credits

TBA

Instructor

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Office Location & Hours

TBA

Course Description

This course offers students an exciting opportunity to explore the rich tapestry of Korean popular culture while experiencing firsthand the dynamic city of Seoul. Combining academic discussions with immersive field trips, students will delve into the history and development of South Korea's entertainment industry, including the global phenomena of K-drama/cinema, K-pop, K-beauty, and K-fashion. The course will examine the cultural significance of these industries in shaping both local and global perceptions of Korea, highlighting key figures, major trends, and the intersections of tradition and modernity in the creation of Korea's popular culture. Students will gain insight into the cultural shifts that gave rise to the Korean Wave (Hallyu) and its widespread influence on the global stage. In addition to in-class lectures and discussions, students will visit iconic historical sites and popular cultural landmarks in Seoul that have shaped or been featured in K-dramas, K-pop music videos, and Korean films. By the end of the course, students will have not only a deeper understanding of Korea's history and cultural heritage but also a unique appreciation for how its entertainment industries have become a bridge connecting Korea to the world.

Learning Outcomes

Demonstrate an understanding of the history of South Korea and sociocultural developments of cultural industries that gave rise to K-cinema, K-drama, K-pop, and K-beauty
Visit cultural and historical landmarks in Seoul featured in Korean media and explore the impact of Hallyu on cultural tourism of South Korea
Actively engage in academic discourses through literature review, media text analysis, critical thinking, and visits to cultural landmarks in Seoul

Course Requirements

Course materials will be provided on Brightspace.

Attendance and Participation (36%)

You are required to attend every class (18%) and participate in class lectures and discussions (18%). Participation will be graded based on the submission of your class notes (must be submitted within 10 minutes after each class) and your engagement in class discussions. Missing more than 10 minutes will result in a 1-point deduction. You must provide documents

at least 48 hours before your absence for predictable events (contests, job interviews, and etc) or a medical document that proves your illness. All documentation must contain a date corresponding to the day of the absence from class, and the instructor may request additional proof to verify the reason for your absence.

Response Papers (39%)

You must complete a weekly response paper (a critical summary of weekly readings and lectures; 400-600 words for *each* reading) before 9AM on Wednesdays. For any late submission of weekly response papers, you must write 800-1200 words for each reading before the final paper deadline. If you submit a summary that is irrelevant or insufficient, you will NOT earn credits. You must write a summary of the entire article. Using ChatGPT or other AI-generated writing device will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will result in the university's investigation, a grade deduction, and a failure of the course.

Final Paper (25%)

Your final project will be an ethnography that includes a Korean Wave pilgrimage map. For this ethnographic project, you will choose one K-pop artist/group and visit at least five relevant locations that have become famous tourist sites among fans. The places may be popular for various reasons: the K-pop artist may have frequently visited the location; the location may be related to the artist's childhood and/or personal history; the artist's family may run the business in the area; or the group may have filmed a music video or other media content at the site. You will first conduct online fieldwork to identify which places are famous among fans and decide where to visit.

In your ethnographic paper, you will: (1) briefly introduce the group you have chosen; (2) introduce each site you visited, explaining why and how it has become famous among fans; and most importantly, (3) critically analyze the impact of this "K-pop pilgrimage" experience on idol-fan relationships, geographical and economic impact of this fan activity on local economy, and the broader economic and sociocultural influence of K-pop on tourism in South Korea.

You will receive a deduction of 1% per day for any late submissions. The use of ChatGPT or other AI-generated writing tools is considered a violation of academic integrity and will result in the university's investigation, a grade deduction, and/or failure of the course.

Incomplete Policy

An incomplete grade automatically defaults after a period of 12 months*. Prior to that time, a student can accept the default grade that the instructor has assigned. The default grade is the letter that accompanies the I grade. For example, if an I/B is the current grade, a B is the default grade.

Grading Chart

Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade	Points
A	94-100 points	B-	80-82 points	D+	65-69 points
A-	90-93 points	C+	77-79 points	D	60-64 points
B+	87-89 points	C	73-76 points	F	< 60 points
B	83-86 points	C-	70-72 points		

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	A Brief History of Modern Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seth, Michael. 2024. "Colonial Korea, 1910-1945." In <i>A Concise History of Modern Korea</i>. Lee, Jongsoo. 2016. "The division of Korea and the rise of two Koreas, 1945-1948." In <i>Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History</i>. Kang, Myungkoo. 2011. "Compressed Modernization and the Formation of a Developmentalist Mentalité." In <i>Reassessing the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961-1979</i>. Doucette, Jamie. 2016. "The post-developmental state: Economic and social changes since 1997." In <i>Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History</i>.
Week 2	The Korean Wave and K-drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cho, Junhyoung. 2019. "A Brief History of Korean Cinema." In <i>Rediscovering Korean Cinema</i>. Ju, Hyejung. 2018. "The Korean Wave and Korean Dramas." <i>Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication</i>. Park, Sojeong and Seok-Kyeong Hong. 2023. "Reshaping Hallyu: Global Reception of South Korean Content on Netflix." <i>International Journal of Communication</i> 17:6952-71.
Week 3	Exploring the K-popsphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choi, Stephanie. 2023. "K-pop Idols: Media Commodities, Affective Laborers, and Cultural Capitalists." In <i>Cambridge Companion to K-pop</i>, 139-53. Oh, Youjeong. 2018. <i>Pop City: Korean Popular Culture and the Selling of Place</i>, 105-135. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week	Topic	Assignments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chang, Woongjo and Shun-Eui Park. 2018. "The Fandom of Hallyu, A Tribe in the Digital Network Era: The Case of ARMY of BTS." <i>Kritika Kultura</i> 32: 260-87. "Roundtable: K-Pop—What's in a Name?" edited by Candace Epps-Robertson and Katie Hulme, <i>The Rhizomatic Revolution Review</i> [20130613].
Week 4	Globalization of K-beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holliday, Ruth and Joanna Elfving-Hwang. 2012. "Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea." <i>Body & Society</i> 18(2): 58-51. Park, Sojeong and Seok-Kyeong Hong. 2021. "Performing whiteness: skin beauty as somatechnics in South Korean stardom and celebrity." <i>Celebrity Studies</i> 12: 299-313.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is critical to the learning process. It is your responsibility as a student to complete your work in an honest fashion, upholding the expectations your individual instructors have for you in this regard. The ultimate goal is to ensure that you learn the content in your courses in accordance with the university's academic integrity principles, regardless of whether instruction is in-person or remote. Thank you for upholding your own personal integrity and ensuring the university's tradition of academic excellence.

Distribution of Course Materials

All materials prepared and/or assigned by the instructor for this course are for the students' educational benefit. Other than for permitted collaborative work, students may not photograph, record, reproduce, transmit, distribute, upload, sell or exchange course materials, without the instructor's prior written permission. "Course materials" include, but are not limited to, all instructor-prepared and assigned materials, such as lectures; lecture notes; discussion prompts; study aids; tests and assignments; and presentation materials such as *PowerPoint* slides, *Prezi* slides, or transparencies; and course packets or handouts. Public distribution of such materials may also constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law. Violation of this policy may additionally subject a student to a finding of "academic dishonesty" under the Academic Integrity Policy and/or disciplinary charges under the Student Code of Conduct.

Critical Campus Resources

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services:

120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720
202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800

Health Services:

4350 Maple Rd, Amherst, NY 14226, 716-829-3316

Health Promotion:

114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837