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**KORHIST 141
Landscapes of Power in Modern Korea
Fall 2021**

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Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Department of Anthropology
Yenching Library 214 (FAS), Tuesday 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
Instructor Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00 – 4:00 or by appointment (location TBD)

Course Description

In this course, we will explore key themes in Korean Studies through the lens of landscape. While Pyongyang is commonly imagined as a stage for socialist propaganda, Seoul's urban space functions as a set for South Korean films and television series. Meanwhile, North Korea has been observed by much of the world through stolen "glimpses" and through powerful technologies of seeing such as the satellite. How are power relations embedded in the organization of space and in different ways of seeing and representing space? We will address the themes of socialist/capitalist space, colonization, decolonization, peninsular division, urbanism, militarism, heritage, nature, and religion. Students will learn basic theoretical approaches in the interpretation of cultural landscapes, and they will learn to work with geographical concepts such as space, place, scale, and perspective.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to identify and mobilize a variety of critical approaches in the study of landscape. They will also be able to apply a spatial/geographical perspective to key themes in Korean Studies, highlighting key areas of debate and tension. This course has a special focus on the question of knowledge production and it is designed to encourage original, independent, and creative thought that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Required Texts

There are no texts required for purchase. All readings will be made available on the Canvas site under the Modules tab. Note: Please come to class prepared with a journal dedicated exclusively to in-class freewriting exercises. Students may also elect to use a laptop, tablet, or similar device for these exercises.

Assessment

Please refer to the course Canvas site for full assessment details. There are no exams or quizzes in this course.

20% Participation

10% Keywords Part I assignment (due October 12)

10% Keywords Part II assignment (due November 23)

10% Capstone prospectus and in-class presentation (prospectus due November 3)

50% Portfolio (due December 2)

Attendance

In almost all cases, more than one absence will result in a loss of points regardless of reason. In case of extenuating circumstances such as a family or medical emergency, please communicate with the instructor as far in advance as possible in order to work out alternative arrangements to keep up with the course.

Academic Integrity

Any written work you submit for this course is presumed to be your own original work. It should not be the work of others nor should it be work submitted, in whole or in part, for another course. You must properly cite your written work, including both direct quotations and ideas and arguments taken from other sources. Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. Academic misconduct will result on a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported to the university. Review university policy first and then consult with the instructor if you have any questions regarding what constitutes academic misconduct.

Access and Accommodations

The instructor will work to ensure that full participation in this course is possible for every enrolled student. Please consult with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Please also refer to University Disability Resources website and schedule a consultation appointment with the [Harvard College Accessible Education Office](#) if you have any concerns or questions related to course accessibility.

Class Schedule

9/7 - Week One - Introduction

In-class activity and discussion: How does one begin to construct knowledge about landscape? What do we know (or think we know) about Korean landscapes?

9/14 - Week Two - Power Geometries and the Work of Landscape

Landscapes take work to produce. As physical forms, they can sometimes cover up the conditions of their own existence—for example, displacement and struggle. Landscapes also work back upon social life, opening up possibilities for new systems of power and for transformative social relations. How should students of landscape begin to conceptualize or to produce knowledge about landscape? This week, we read three key North Atlantic (western) geographical thinkers who provide different starting points for thinking about place and power. We will engage these thinkers throughout the semester, asking both what they help to illuminate and how they might be limited when it comes to the interpretation of Korean landscapes.

- Massey, Doreen (1994) “A Global Sense of Place,” in *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (pp. 146 -156)
- Mitchell, Don (2000) “The Work of Landscape: Producing and Representing the Cultural Scene,” in *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing. (pp. 91 – 119)
- Lefebvre, Henri (1992) *The Production of Space* (selection, pp. 9 – 11)

Keyword triad: landscape, place, power geometry

9/21 - Week Three – Spaces of Colonization and Decolonization*

The management of space was vital to the Japanese colonial project in Korea. What strategies did the colonial government use to produce Seoul and all of Korea as a coherent-seeming space within the imperial order? How did global processes of imperialism and nationalism link to shifts in everyday Korean mobility, consumption, and nationhood? Should the destruction of Japanese buildings in the post-colonial era be considered a form of decolonization?

- Henry, Todd (2014) “Material Assimilation: Colonial Expositions on the Kyōngbok Palace Grounds,” in *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910 – 1945*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 92 – 129)
- Jin, Jong-Heon (2008) “Demolishing Colony: The Demolition of the Old Government-General Building of Chosŏn,” in *Sitings: Critical Approaches in Korean Geography*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. (pp. 39 – 60)
- In-class viewing: short news report on the demolition of Japanese buildings in Seoul

Keyword triad: colonization, decolonization, spectacle

9/28 - Week Four – Heritage, Knowledge, and Development**

How do ideas about “original” or “traditional” Korean culture and nature shape contemporary ways of seeing landscape, from the tourist’s gaze to the planner’s authoritative vision? Are post-colonial efforts to recover historical landscapes in South Korea inevitably shaped by dominant spatial logics of capitalism in the city--including a neoliberal consumptive orientation toward space? This week, we discuss how *tapsa* and the democratization of knowledge production lends itself both to new hegemonic spatial practices and to a set of transformative alternatives. Special guest Dr. Eunseon Park, director of Listen to the City in Seoul, will visit us from Korea via a short, pre-recorded video discussion. She will address questions submitted by students on the topic of Cheonggye stream restoration, urban displacement, and artist praxis in the city.

- Oppenheim, Robert (2008) “Object Orientations,” in *Kyongju Things: Assembling Place*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (pp. 83 – 112)
- Hong, Kal (2011) “Flowing Back to the Future: The Cheongye Stream Restoration and the Remaking of Seoul,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 9(27). (17 pages)
- In class viewing: short film by the Listen to the City artist collective

Keyword triad: heritage, recovery/restoration, progress

10/5 - Week Five – Religion and Displacement*

Religious landscapes in South Korea are continually re-shaped by – and re-shaping – urban development. At the same time, religious actors seek to retain and to transform their tangible and intangible inheritances. How are hierarchies of religion and of religious spaces enmeshed in urban environments? Have spaces of religious practice been subsumed under violent forces of development? Special guest Dr. Ju Hui Judy Han will visit the class to discuss their article and to share their thoughts on Korean Studies, knowledge production, and spatial politics. Special guest Dr. Ju Hui Judy Han will join us over Zoom to discuss their research.

- Kendall, Laurel (2008) “Auspicious Places in a Mobile Landscape: Of Shamans, Shrines, and Dreams,” in *Sitings: Critical Approaches in Korean Geography*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. (pp. 101 – 120)
- Han, Ju Hui Judy (2015) “Urban Megachurches and Contentious Religious Politics in Seoul,” in *Handbook of Religion and the Asian City: Aspiration and Urbanization in the Twenty-First Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 133 – 151)

Keyword triad: mobile landscape, urban dispossession, inheritance

10/12 - Week Six – Seoul’s Conceived Space and Lefebvre’s Triad

How does the spectacle of modern city planning obscure the work of it takes to produce space? What is the relationship between the planners of space and those who occupy space—and where does nature fit in? We will study master planning and “conceived space” in authoritarian-era Seoul alongside Henri Lefebvre’s famous spatial triad to further investigate the relationship between space and ideology.

- **Keywords Part I due (weeks 2 - 6)**
- Oh, Se-mi (2018) Alluvium of Dreams: The 1969 Master Plan and the Development of Youido,” in *Cultures of Yusin: South Korea in the 1970s*, edited by Youngju Ryu. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 193 – 215.
- Lefebvre, Henri (1991 [1974]) *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell (selection, pp. 36 – 46)
- Merrifield, Andy (2006) “Space” in *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (selection, pp. 108 – 120)

Keyword triad: spatial practice (perceived space, mediates between conceived and live space), representations of space (conceptions of space, conceived space), representational space (lived space)

10/19 - Week Seven – Cracks in the Edifice? Space, Ideology, and the City

This week, we deepen our exploration of the relationship between ideology and space. How does ideology, or “discourse,” take on a concrete body in space, and how powerful is it, really? This week will feature a longer-than-usual instructor lecture that traces lineages of Marxian influence on critical geographical thought and understandings of space and power. Critical geographical theory mainly critiques spaces of capitalism—but what can it say about the socialist north? And what can it say about decolonization and de-imperialization in a Korean context?

- Goonewardena, Kanishka (2005) “The Urban Sensorium: Space, Ideology, and the Aestheticization of Politics,” *Antipode* 37(1), pp. 46 – 71.
- In-class viewing: short clips of *Little Buddha* (referenced in Goonewardena)

Keyword triad: space, ideology, the concrete (or mediation, in Goonewardena’s sense)

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