

PLS356

International Politics of the Korean Peninsula

Spring 2021 | TR 12:00-13:15 | Online

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Course Description

The Korean Peninsula is the last place that the politics of the Cold War remains dominant. Korea has remained divided since the end of World War II, and the Korean War is still in ceasefire. Why do the two Koreas remain in the status of Cold War confrontation? Can two Koreas be reunified as Germany did? The inter-Korean relations cannot be explained through a single lens of bilateral relationship or a military confrontation. It entails multiple layers of political issues, including national identity, Cold War history, geopolitical competition between superpowers, nuclear and missile proliferation, and formal military alliances among others. This course is designed to give a general knowledge of inter-Korean issues using both historical and analytic tools of scientific investigation. Students in this course will learn the context of the inter-Korean relations and how to apply existing IR theories to interactions of states on and around the Korean Peninsula.

Course Format and Pre-requisites

This course is redesigned for an asynchronous online course, in which students should complete assigned tasks on their own pace with given deadlines. All lectures videos are pre-recorded and available on the course Moodle. To complete each lecture, students must pass a quiz at the end of each module. Quiz questions cover both assigned readings as well as lecture videos.

I have redesigned this course for PSIR majors with heavy reading and writing. I assume that students have sufficient knowledge in political science research methods and academic writing. Students are expected to digest 3-4 research articles on a weekly basis to complete each week's lecture and quiz. There will be several writing assignments, which are to be aggregated to a final research paper (4,000+ words). If you're not familiar with political science research, you may find this course challenging. Therefore, although there is *no pre-requisite* for this course, it is *highly recommended* that students should complete the following courses: PLS150, PLS210, and PLS211. The best research paper will be given an opportunity to be presented at the Korean Studies Week, an annual academic conference for students in Almaty, usually scheduled for November.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and demonstrate knowledge on the history of inter-Korean relations (PLO1)
- Develop a critical evaluation of ongoing and/or past inter-Korean issues (PLO2)
- Write their own evidence-based arguments (PLO3)
- Apply relevant concepts and theories to explain inter-Korean relations (PLO4)
- Listen to and be tolerant of different ideas (PLO5)
- Use appropriate methods of collecting, organizing and interpreting evidence for their original arguments (PLO 6)

Recommended Books

This course requires serious readings about both theoretical and empirical works on the inter-Korean relations and IR theories. Although there is no single textbook for the course, the following books are recommended if you're interested in foreign policy and the inter-Korean relations. There will be articles from academic journals for each week's recommended and required readings.

- Ku, Yangmo, Inyeop Lee, and Jongseok Woo. (2018) *Politics in North and South Korea: Political Development, Economy, and Foreign Relations*, Routledge (ISBN: 978-1138647503).
- Haggard, Stephen. (2011) *Engaging North Korea: The Role of Economic Statecraft*, East-West Center (ISBN: 978-1932728927).
- Oberdorfer, Don. (2001) *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (revised and updated edition), Basic Books (ISBN: 978-0465051625).

Course Requirements

This course is designed for a self-paced online course. Students should work on their own schedule to complete all modules and required evaluations (i.e. exams, quizzes, and writing assignments) to earn attempted credits.

Module completion (10%) This is the basic requirement of the course and equivalent to class attendance/participation. Since the course is asynchronous, each student should complete all modules to pass the course. To complete a module, all lessons of the module and the end-of-module quiz must be taken by Saturday. Modules completed past Saturday will be marked as 'late completion'. At the end of the semester, a student's overall completion rate will be computed (completed=1; late=0.5; not completed=0). If the overall completion rate is below 80%, your final grade will be penalized by *two letter grade* deduction (e.g. B- will be C).

Quizzes (10%) Each module includes a comprehension quiz (usually 10-15 questions), available at the end of the module. Students must finish all lessons in order to take the quiz. Quiz questions cover both lessons and required readings. The lowest quiz score will be dropped and the rest will be graded.

Online discussion (10%) Students are expected to participate in online discussion. Discussion questions are posted on each module's discussion forum. Participation will be graded for the quantity and quality of participation. You can earn discussion points by (1) posting your own thoughts and answers to proposed questions; (2) asking relevant and thought-provoking questions on the topic of the module; or (3) respond to other postings (e.g. writing comments, giving ratings).

Research paper (70%, 6 segments) This course requires an original research paper (4,000 words). To facilitate students' writing, the research paper assignment is broken down to several segments as follows. Each segment will be peer-reviewed as well as graded by the instructor. See the *Guideline to Research Paper Assignment*.

- 1) Introduction (10%, 300+ words)
- 2) Literature review (10%, 1500+ words);
- 3) Theory and argument (10%, 1000+ words);
- 4) Research design (10%, 1000+ words);
- 5) Analysis and Conclusion (10%, 700+ words); and
- 6) Presentation and final draft (20%, 4000+ words)

For all the segments of the paper assignment, students are expected to demonstrate basic understanding of political science research (argument building, research hypothesis, testing strategies, empirical analysis) and academic writing (proofread before submission).

Evaluation and Grading

Final grade The final grade is determined by the student's overall performance of all course requirements. The final score is a weighted sum of each requirement score and will be rounded to the first decimal point (not to ones). All assessments should be completed before the final grade due. No extra assignments are allowed after the submission of the final assignment (i.e. final draft of your research paper). Your final grade is non-negotiable. Unless there is a mechanical error, changes to the final grade will not be made. Only under exceptional circumstances (e.g. a long-term hospitalization) a grade of incomplete (I) may be requested. Following the NU grade policy, the final letter grade will be given as follows:

Composition		Scale		
Module completion	10%		A 95.0 - 100.0	A- 90.0 - 94.9
Quizzes	10%	B+ 85.0 - 89.9	B 80.0 - 84.9	B- 75.0 - 79.9
Discussion	10%	C+ 70.0 - 74.9	C 65.0 - 69.9	C- 60.0 - 64.9
Paper segments (1 thru 5)	50%	D+ 55.0 - 59.9	D 50.0 - 54.9	
Research paper (final draft)	20%	F < 50.0		

Late submission I do *not* accept late submissions under any circumstances. Missing a deadline is equally treated as a missed assessment (see below).

Plagiarism/cheating This will never be tolerated. Students must be familiarized with the NU Student Code of Conduct and the university regulations about academic misconduct.

Re-grading Students can request re-grading of their assignments and quizzes within one week after it is graded. Such a request must be made by a written form and submitted to the professor's email with a full description of reasons for request. Note that the entire of the requested assignment, not a specific part(s), will be re-graded and that the new grade may be lower than the original one. There will be no re-grading of once re-graded assignments.

Missed assessments Students are responsible for all course assignments and assessments outlined in the syllabus, even if they have a legitimate excuse (i.e. medical emergency). Students who know they will miss a deadline for an assignment or an assessment, even if it is a School or University activity, must contact the professor before the deadline. If this is not possible, the professor must be contacted within 24 hours. Students must provide documentation for their missing deadlines. If a student fails to do so, the student may receive a zero for the assessment. If circumstances are so dire as to keep the student from making contact during this twenty-four-hour-window, then the student must provide substantial documentation corroborating the situation (a simple spravka will not suffice). If an assessment (e.g. a quiz or an exam) is missed, instructors can give a zero.

Course Topics

Module 1. Introduction

In this module, students will be introduced to the course (important policies, deadlines, and structure) and historical backgrounds of inter-Korean relations.

- Armstrong, C.K. 2005. Inter-Korean relations in historical perspective, *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, 14(2): 1-20.
- Ku, Y, Lee, I, and Woo, J. 2018. *Politics in North and South Korea: Political Development, Economy, and Foreign Relations* (chapter 1), Routledge.
- Oberdorfer, D. 2001. *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (chapter 1), Basic Books.
- *Course syllabus*

Module 2. The Korean War and the Panmunjom Regime

The Korean War is what the inter-Korean relations has evolved from. This module will address questions about the war, including causes, varying historical accounts, consequences and political implications.

- 1) What are the causes of the Korean War?
 - 2) What are the consequences of the Korean War at the regional and global levels?
 - 3) What does the Korean War imply to international relations and its theories?
- Cho, BJ. 2015. "Panmunjom regime: A global historical exploration for peace as social solidarity (review essay)," *S/N Korean Humanities*, 1(2): 129-138.
 - Clemens, W. 2014. "GRIT at Panmunjom? How to cope with conflict in Northeast Asia?" *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 12(2): 305-322.
 - Cummings, B. 2010. *The Korean War: A History* (chapter 8).
 - Jervis, R. 1980. "The impact of the Korean War on the Cold War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 24(4): 563-592.

Module 3. Theoretical Perspectives of IR and the Korean Peninsula

What does the IR literature tell us about the inter-Korean relations? We will read and discuss applications and limitations of major IR perspectives in the context of the Korean Peninsula.

- 1) What does the IR literature say about the ongoing politics between two Koreas?
 - 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of major IR perspectives in explaining the international politics of the Korean Peninsula?
- Suh, BH. 2016. "Resolving the Korean conflict through a combination of human rights and human security." *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 14(1): 53-75.
 - Choi, JK. 2008. "Theorizing of East Asian international relations in Korea." *Asian Perspective*, 32(1): 193-216.
 - Kim, YH. 2000. "Neorealism, neoliberalism, constructivism and peace on the Korean Peninsula." *Asian Perspective*, 24(2): 199-217.

Module 4. Explaining North Korean Provocations

In this module, we will apply IR theories on the use of force to historical and recent provocations of North Korea. It will also engage in critical explanations of North Korean provocations by focusing on the domestic politics of North Korea as well as system level variables.

- 1) Why does North Korea keep provoking South Korea, if it's not willing to initiate a war?
 - 2) Are there any reasons behind military provocations of North Korea? What does explain such seemingly reckless behavior of North Korea?
 - 3) What would be possible measures to deter North Korea from taking further belligerent and provocative actions?
- You, SB and Kim SJ. 2017. "The pattern of North Korea's local military provocations." *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 15(1): 71-84.
 - Kim, HC. 2012. "How to deter North Korea's military provocations." *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 10(1): 63-93.
 - Sarantakes, N.E. 2000. "The quiet war: Combat operations along the Korean DMZ, 1966-1969." *The Journal of Military History*, 64(2): 439-458.
 - Park, TG. 2009. "Beyond the myth: Reassessing the security crisis on the Korean Peninsula during the mid-1960s," *Pacific Affairs*, 82(1): 93-110.

Module 5. Domestic Politics and Inter-Korean Relations

South Korea's policy toward North Korea is often discussed in the context of domestic politics. We will read and discuss how domestic politics of South Korea have been influencing the inter-Korean relations over time.

- 1) How did the inter-Korean relations change over time as the domestic political structure changes in both Koreas?
 - 2) What would be most important factors of domestic politics of South Korea in explaining its changing policies toward North Korea?
 - 3) How does the domestic political changes in other countries impact the inter-Korean relations?
- Pratamasari, A. 2019. "Kim Jong-Un's change of stance: North Korea's rapprochement for peace in 2018," *North Korean Review*, 15(2): 23-37.
 - Shin, S. 2013. "Engagement? Containment? The role of identity in the formation of South Korea's policy toward Pyongyang," *North Korean Review*, 9(1): 83-99.
 - Bae, JY. 2010. "South Korean strategic thinking toward North Korea: The evolution of the engagement policy and its impact upon US-ROK relations," *Asian Survey*, 50(2): 335-355.
 - Chung, C. 2003. "Democratization in South Korea and inter-Korean relations," *Pacific Affairs*, 76(1): 9-35.

Module 6. The Engagement Controversies

South Korea's engagement policy toward North Korea (i.e. Sunshine Policy) is still under debate regarding its effects and legitimization. We will read and discuss what major issues of the debate are and how we can understand the debate per se.

- 1) Can economic engagement change North Korea? What could be said about the application of the 'Vietnam model' or the 'Kazakhstan model'?
- 2) Was the Sunshine policy successful? What should be critically assessed in evaluating the Sunshine policy?
- 3) What have (not) been changed after the engagement policy toward North Korea? Why?

- Cho, YC. 2010. "Collective identity formation on the Korean Peninsula: United States' different North Korea policies, Kim Dae-Jung's Sunshine Policy, and US-South Korea-North Korea relations," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 10(3):93-127.
- Lee, SY. 2010. "Engaging North Korea: The Clouded legacy of South Korea's Sunshine Policy," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*
- Kwon, E. and Lim, J.C. 2006. "Crossing the river that divides the Korean Peninsula: an evaluation of the Sunshine Policy," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 6(2):129-156.
- Kim, CN. 2004. "The Sunshine Policy and its impact on South Korea's relations with major powers," *Korea Observer*, 35(4):581-616.

Module 7. Alliance Politics and Inter-Korean relations

One key characteristic of the inter-Korean relations is the involvement of external powers as major allies of two Koreas. This module will examine the complex interactions within and between alliances.

- 1) What are practical and theoretical concerns of each alliance with regard to the security issues of the Korean Peninsula?
 - 2) Does South Korea and North Korea play an independent policy toward each other without troubling their respective patronage allies? What would be a possible policy for South [North] Korea in pursuing the balanced independence in its policy toward its rival?
 - 3) What would be the future of US-ROK and China-DPRK alliances in the age of the US-China competition? Or in the context of peaceful co-existence of two Koreas?
- Sukin, L. 2020. "Credible nuclear security commitments can backfire: Explaining domestic support for nuclear weapons acquisition in South Korea," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(6). 1011-1042.
 - Shin, D. 2019. "A cautionary report: Resilience of the US-ROK alliance during the pro-North Korea engagement era of progressive rule in South Korea," *North Korean Review*, 15(2): 59-89.
 - Chung, JH and Choi, MH. 2013. "Uncertain allies or uncomfortable neighbors? Making sense of China-North Korea relations, 1949-2010," *The Pacific Review*, 26(3): 243-264.
 - Park, JJ. 2011. "The US-led alliances in the Asia-Pacific: Hedge against potential threats or an undesirable multilateral security order?" *The Pacific Review*, 24(2): 137-158.

Module 8. Origins and History of the North Korean Nuclear Problem

In this module, we will survey the history of the nuclear issue and discuss what could have been done differently to change, if possible, the trajectory of North Korean nuclear program.

- 1) What is the rationale of North Korea's nuclear program? Why did North Korea choose to nuclear armament despite its costs?
 - 2) How did the relevant actors and neighboring countries respond to North Korea's nuclear weapons? Was it successful? How could it have been done for better outcomes? Was it possible to stop North Korean nuclear program in the first place?
- Ku, Y, Lee, I, and Woo, J. 2018. *Politics in North and South Korea: Political Development, Economy, and Foreign Relations* (chapter 8).
 - Nah, L.T. 2013. "Explaining North Korean nuclear weapons motivations: constructivism, liberalism, and realism," *North Korean Review*, 9(1): 61-82.
 - Koo, BH. 2006. "The six-party talks: A critical assessment and implications for South Korea's policy toward North Korea," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 18(1): 85-110.
 - Sagan, S.D. 1997. "Why do states build nuclear weapons?: Three models in search of a bomb," *International Security*, 21(3): 54-86.

Module 9. Seeking Solutions for the North Korean Nuclear Problem

In this module, we will survey the ongoing debates on the possible solutions to the problem of nuclear nonproliferation.

- 1) What should be considered in dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons? How could it be deterred or even denuclearized? What are possibilities and obstacles for the nuclear free of the Korean Peninsula?
 - 2) From the theories of denuclearization and previous cases of nuclear reversal, what could be said about the likelihood and strategies of North Korea's denuclearization?
 - 3) What are domestic responses to North Korea's nuclear weapons? Will it be negatively influencing the inter-Korean relations?
- Connolly, D. and Hund, A.M. 2019. "Learning to share? A Cold War solution for denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula," *North Korean Review*, 15(2): 5-22.
 - Fearon, J. 2019. "Nuclear weapons and nuclear risk on the Korean Peninsula: Two game theoretic takes," in *Game Theory and Nuclear Stability in Northeast Asia* (Johns Hopkins University)
 - Bell, M. and Fattig, G. 2018. "Socializing a nuclear North Korea: Human security in Northeast Asia," *North Korean Review*, 14(1): 30-48.
 - Ballbach, E.J. 2016. "North Korea's emerging nuclear state identity: Discursive construction and performative enactment," *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, 14(3): 391-414.
 - Levite, A.E. 2002/2003. "Never say never again: Nuclear reversal revisited," *International Security*, 27(3): 59-88.

Module 10. The US and Inter-Korean Relations

The United States has been an active and crucial actor in East Asia. How did the presence of the US influence the inter-Korean politics and the regional order? The growing power of China is not only challenging the US-led regional order, but also affecting the inter-Korean relations.

- 1) What is the role of the US in the inter-Korean relations? Given the significant role and historical involvement, will the US isolationism change its policy toward the peninsula?
 - 2) To what extent is the inter-Korean relations affected by the US alliances in the region, such as the US-Japan and the US-ROK alliance?
 - 3) How could the South Korean government find a leeway to survive and promote its own agenda in the context of global competition between China and the US? What's the US strategy on the Korean Peninsula under the growing challenges from China?
- Beal, T. 2020. "US imperialism, the Korean Peninsula and Trumpian disruption," *International Critical Thought*, 10(1): 89-112.
 - Jervis, R. and Rapp-Hooper, M. 2018. "Perception and misperception on the Korean Peninsula: How unwanted wars begin," *Foreign Affairs*, 97(3): 103-117.
 - Choi, JK. 2015. "The perils of strategic patience with North Korea," *The Washington Quarterly*, 38(4): 57-72.
 - Cossa, R.A. 2005. "US security strategy in Asia and the prospects for an Asian regional security regime," *Asia Pacific Review*, 12(1): 64-86.

Module 11. China and Inter-Korean Relations

The growing power of China is not only challenging the US-led regional order, but also affecting the inter-Korean relations. This module will discuss cases that the Chinese influence becomes a determining factor on the Korean Peninsula.

- 1) Will China be effectively leveraging North Korea? What would be China's major interests in maintaining [changing] its relationship with North Korea?
 - 2) How does the domestic political changes of China affect the inter-Korean relations? Given the growing tension between the US and China, will China continue to engage with North Korea?
 - 3) What would be South Korea's strategic choice vis-à-vis China as it deals with North Korea and the US?
- Kim, I. 2020. "Trump power: Maximum pressure and China's sanctions enforcement against North Korea," *The Pacific Review*, 33(1): 96-124.
 - Shin, J. 2018. "China's great power identity and its policy on the Korean Peninsula in the Xi Jinping era," *Pacific Focus*, 13(2): 284-307.
 - Easley, E. and Park, IY. 2016. "China's norms in its near abroad: Understanding Beijing's North Korea policy," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25(101): 651-668.
 - Scobell, A. and Cozad, M. 2014. "China's North Korea policy: Rethink or recharge?" *Parameters*, 44(1): 51-63.

Module 12. The Sanction Controversies

Are international sanctions on North Korea effective? How can we assess such measures and what should be (re)examined to make meaningful progress in so-called the North Korean problem? We will survey theories of international sanctions and look for shortcomings and alternative approaches.

- 1) How did North Korea survive several international sanctions? Was it a failure of the sanction? Or was it singularity of the North Korean regime?
 - 2) Do you think the US-led sanctions (including those imposed by the UN) have failed? If so, what's the major obstacles? If not, what are outcomes of sanction success?
 - 3) How can we evaluate sanction efficacy/effectiveness? What are possible conditions and requirements for sanctions to succeed?
- Renfro, R.S. 2018. "Why expanded North Korean sanctions fail," *North Korean Review*, 14(1): 102-114.
 - Kwon, BR. 2016. "The conditions for sanctions success: A comparison of the Iranian and North Korean cases," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 28(1): 139-161.
 - Weissmann, M. and Hagstrom, L. 2016. "Sanctions reconsidered: the path forward with North Korea," *The Washington Quarterly*, 39(3): 61-76.
 - Haggard, S. and Noland, M. 2010. "Sanctioning North Korea: The political economy of denuclearization and proliferation," *Asian Survey*, 50(3): 539-568.

Course Schedule (self-paced with deadlines)

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Jan. 11 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Jan. 15 Quiz 1
Jan. 18 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Jan. 22 Quiz 2
Jan. 25 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Jan. 29 Quiz 3 Introduction
Feb. 1 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Feb. 5 Quiz 4
Feb. 8 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Feb. 12 Quiz 5
Feb. 15 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Feb. 19 Quiz 6 Literature review
Feb. 22 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Feb. 26 Quiz 7
Mar. 1 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Mar. 5 Quiz 8 Theory & argument
Mar. 8 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Mar. 12 Quiz 9
Mar. 15 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Mar. 19 Quiz 10 Research design
Mar. 22 Spring Break				
Mar. 29 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Live session	Apr. 2 Quiz 11 Analysis and conclusion
Apr. 5 Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Self-paced module	Apr. 9 Quiz 12
Apr. 12 Writing consultation	Writing consultation	Writing consultation	Writing consultation	Apr. 16 Writing consultation
Apr. 19 Self-paced writing	Presentations (abstract upload to Moodle)	Self-paced writing	Live session	Apr. 23 Final draft