Korean K-Pop/Film/Drama

Course prefix: KOR

Course number: 3415

Section: OL1 & OL2

CRN (you may add up to five):
32136 34360

Instructor First Name: Jong Hyun

Instructor Last Name: Lee

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This is a 3-credit asynchronous online course about K-pop, film, and drama, which address key features of Korean society from the 1950s to the present day. This course provides a diachronic overview of K-pop songs from the 1950s to the present, examining the background of its emergence and growth both domestically and internationally. It examines some of the representative songs by types and times, their significance for the times they were produced. Some background stories of the social, political, and economic circumstances regarding the K-Pop will be introduced to boost students' understanding. A few movies and episodes of some dramas and commercial video clips will be selected to show how the Korean socio-cultural characteristics of the times were portrayed.

Course learning outcomes:

Clearly identify purposes and goals

- Explore and understand the elements necessary to define K-pop and how they went through changes over time.
- Analyze Korean media in a historical and social context: Analyze how Korean media from the 1950s to the present reflect, critique, and shape the social values, tensions, and issues of each era.
- Critically examine portrayals of Korean society in the media: Critically examine how the Korean media portrays key aspects of society, such as family dynamics, social interests, and cultural identity.
- Investigate cultural and historical forces shaping popular media: Investigate the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape the production and global reception of K-pop, film, and drama.

- Compare Korean culture with one's own to identify what are shared and what are different, fostering intercultural understanding.

Media Research and Cultural Inquiry

- Interrogate Korean entertainment as a vehicle for social commentary: Interrogate how Korean entertainment—such as dramas, films, and variety shows—functions as a platform for social commentary, addressing cultural values, societal changes, and international perceptions of Korea.
- Examine the construction of cultural identity through Korean media: Examine how Korean media—including K-pop, film, and drama—both reflect and shape cultural identity in domestic and global contexts, especially within the Korean Wave (Hallyu).

Critical Thinking, Writing, and Composing

- Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts.
- Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various contexts
- Watch a diverse range of multimedia content, attending especially to relationships between verbal and nonverbal elements (such as music, dances, costumes/fashions, medium), and to how these features function for different audiences and purposes
- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources

Required course materials:

All course materials or links are uploaded on Canvas and open to all the class participants.

Grading policy:

Course Requirements & Grading

Lectures (12%)

Watch 4 video and/or ppt lectures and respond to relevant questions. Each response should be between 100 and 150 words. (4 x 3 points = 12 points)

Movies/Dramas (30%)

Watch 10 movies/dramas and select 2 questions from the list of questions and respond. Each response should be between 100 and 150 words. (10 x 3 points = 30 points)

Articles (6%)

Read two articles and provide your thoughts on the given questions. The word count should be between 100 and 150 words. (2 x 3 points = 6 points)

Discussions (36%)

After watching a given movie/drama, you are expected to join a discussion relevant to the movie/drama and share (1) your opinion and (2) respond to your classmates posts. There are a total of 12 discussions. It's important to share your own ideas, but it's equally important to consider and actively engage with your classmates' perspectives during these discussions. (12 x 3 points = 36 points)

Individual Presentation (6%)

One Individual Presentation (1 x 6 points = 6 points)

Final Project (10%)

One Final Project (1 x 10 points = 10 points)

** Grading Scale **

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A: 90-100%   B: 80-89%   C : 70-79%   D: 60-69%   F: 0-59%

A: 90-100

Superior performance—Exceptional mastery of Korean media content, critical insight, and cultural synthesis expressed in clear and structured work.

B: 80-89

Above-average, high-quality performance--Solid comprehension of course content, thoughtful analysis of K-pop, film, and drama, and clear application of cultural understanding.

C: 70-79

Average (not inferior) performance--Demonstrates basic understanding of Korean media and provides fundamental analysis with limited depth.

D: 60-69

Below-average performance--Limited comprehension of course materials and insufficient analysis of Korean media and culture.

F: 0-59

Unacceptable performance--Insufficient comprehension, minimal effort, and lack of critical analysis of Korean popular culture.

Attendance policy:

Although an online course offers greater flexibility, please remember that your timely participation and online engagement are key to your success in this course.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Writing area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?
- How do I write effectively in different contexts?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.
- Students will communicate effectively in writing, demonstrating clear organization and structure, using appropriate grammar and writing conventions.
- Students will appropriately acknowledge the use of materials from original sources.
- Students will adapt their written communications to purpose and audience.
- Students will analyze and draw informed inferences from written texts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Competence
- Persuasion