

# Korean Tradition and Culture

International Summer School 2025  
University of Seoul  
(July 3 - July 29, 2025)

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## I. Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a deeper understanding of Korean society and culture. Through a variety of course activities and independent research on topics of personal interest, students will broaden their knowledge and critical perspectives. The course focuses on the value systems and worldviews of Korean society and equips students with key concepts to analyze contemporary issues such as feminism, minority rights, environmental concerns, intercultural conflicts, K-culture industry, Korea's international relations and other current social issues.

## II. Course Materials

- Shim, T. Y., Kim, M. S., & Martin, J. N. (2008). *Changing Korea: Understanding Culture and Communication*. Peter Lang.
- Additional reading materials will be distributed in class.

## III. Evaluation

The weighting of the total grade will be distributed as follows:

Attendance-----	30%
In-class Participation -----	30%
Mid-term Quiz (wk8) -----	20%
Final Presentation (wk15) -----	20%

## IV. Course Schedule

### Day 1 Course introduction

*The Origins of the Korean People, An Overview of Korean History, Characteristics of the Korean Language, and Geographical Characteristics of Korea*

### Day 2 Understanding Korean Religions

*Traditional Korean Thoughts and Religions: Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity*

### Day 3 Confucianism versus Capitalism

*Comprehension of Confucian virtues, Notions of power and authority, Relationship of state, market and Chaebols*

### Day 4 Korean Values and Communications : Old and New

*Value Frameworks, Personal goals vs. Communal goals, Business culture in East Asian countries*

### Day 5 Collectivism vs. Individualism

*Face-work, Communication values, New way of communication in the social networks*

### Day 6 In-Group Membership in Contemporary Korean Society

*Social identity theory, Traditional in-groups, Contemporary in-groups, Cyber in-groups*

### Day 7 Intercultural Conflicts : Critical Incidents

*Inter-cultural communication competence theory, culture-specific vs. culture-general, matrix of (un)consciousness and (in)competence*

### Day 8 Mid-term Quiz

*Interim review*

*(Students will answer 20 multiple-choice questions, focusing on theories learned in the first half.)*

### Day 9 Feminism in Korean society

*Woman's traditional role in the family, Relationship with in-law family, Il-legitimization of abortion and child adoption, Women in the workforce and the glass ceiling in profession, 'Me too' movements in Korea, Misogyny vs. Misandry*

**Day 10 Minority issues in Korean society**

*Ethnic minority group, Foreign labor workers, Sexual minority group, Refugees and North Korean defectors, Religious minorities*

**Day 11 Environmental Issues in Korean society**

*Air pollution, Water pollution, Waste pollution, Wild animal protection, Efforts on the climate change*

**Day 12 K-culture and its industrial development**

*K-drama and films, K-pop music, Entertainment programs, Online game, K-Food, K-Beauty industry, etc.*

**Day 13 Korea's international relations**

*Korea with other East Asian countries, the U.S., the ASEAN countries and the European countries*

**Day 14 Other current popular issues in Korean society**

*Demographic Crisis, Youth Unemployment, Education System and Pressure, Poverty of the Elderly, North-South Korea Tension, etc.*

**Day 15 Final presentations**

*Final review*

*(Students will select a topic they are particularly interested in, create presentation materials, and perform presentations in small groups.)*

(Last updated: April 28, 2025)