

Syllabus (2025-Winter)

Course Title	Special Topics in Korean Politics	Course No.	
Credit	2 credits	Hours	30 Hours
Class Time Classroom	Monday to Friday 09:00-11:30 AM Classroom TBA		
Instructor	Name Moohyung Cho	Department	Political Science and International Relations
	E-Mail moohyungcho@ewha.ac.kr	Phone	02-3277-4141
Office Hours Office Location	By appointment (Please e-mail me to schedule the meeting.) Ewha-POSCO Hall, Room 324		

I. Course Overview

1. Course Description

This course is designed to give international students interested in Korea the chance to explore various topics in Korean politics. Specifically, it traces the history of Korean politics after Korea gained independence in 1945 and examines key issues in Korean politics. The topics include the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, democratic consolidation and backsliding, political economy, foreign policy, and inter-Korean relations. In doing so, this course emphasizes both the unique features and common aspects of Korean politics.

2. Prerequisites

None. Interests in South Korea and its politics are sufficient.

3. Course Format

Lecture	Discussion/Presentation	Assignments	Activities	Other
70%	30%	%	%	%

4. Course Objectives

- To learn the historical development of Korean politics since the country's independence in 1945
- To analyze the characteristics of Korean politics, including democracy, economic development, inter-Korean relations, and foreign policy
- To understand the achievements and limitations of Korean politics and explore ways to advance it

5. Evaluation Systems

☐ Relative evaluation ☒ Absolute evaluation (for Ewha International Summer/Winter College students only) ☐ Others

Midterm	Final	Quizzes	Presentation	Projects	Assignments	Participation	Others
%	70%	%	%	%	%	30%	%

II. Course Materials and Additional Readings

1. Required Materials

This course is based on the following textbook. You do not have to purchase this book. The instructor will organize the lecture by incorporating the materials in this book.

- Choi, Ji Young. 2025. *The Politics of South Korea: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

2. Supplementary Materials

There are various English-language handbooks on South Korean politics. For those wanting an in-depth study, the following books are recommended.

- Han, JeongHun, Ramon Pacheco Pardo, and Youngho Cho, eds. 2023. *The Oxford Handbook of South Korean Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Moon, Chung-in, and M. Jae Moon, eds. 2020. *Routledge Handbook of Korean Politics and Public Administration*. Routledge.

3. Optional Additional Readings

The instructor will provide additional reading materials tailored to the students' interests and needs.

III. Course Schedule

Day	Date	Topics & Class Materials, Assignments
Day 1	(12/26)	Course introduction: Why studying South Korean politics? Choi (2025), Chapter 1. Why Study South Korea?
Day 2	(12/29)	Historical overview of modern South Korean politics Choi (2025), Chapter 2. The Impact of History
Day 3	(12/30)	From dictatorship to democracy Choi (2025), Chapter 3. The Long Road from Dictatorship to Democracy
Day 4	(12/31)	Democratic transition, consolidation, and backsliding? Choi (2025), Chapter 4. The Challenges of Democratic Transition and Consolidation
Day 5	(1/2)	Political economy in South Korea Choi (2025), Chapter 5. Economic Development and Financial Crisis
Day 6	(1/5)	South Korean foreign policy Choi (2025), Chapter 7. The Evolving Dynamics of Foreign Relations
Day 7	(1/6)	The politics of two Koreas Choi (2025), Chapter 8. Grappling with North Korea
Day 8	(1/7)	Wrap-up session: Current and future issues of South Korean politics Choi (2025), Chapter 9. South Korea at a Crossroads
Day 9	(1/8)	Final exam In-class, open book exam
Day 10	(1/9)	Field trip to the National Assembly of South Korea

Day	Date	Topics & Class Materials, Assignments
Makeup Classes 1	(mm/dd)	
Makeup Classes 2	(mm/dd)	

IV. Special Accommodations

* According to the University regulation section #57-3, students with disabilities can request for special accommodations related to attendance, lectures, assignments, or tests by contacting the course professor at the beginning of semester. Based on the nature of the students' request, students can receive support for such accommodations from the course professor or from the Support Center for Students with Disabilities (SCSD). Please refer to the below examples of the types of support available in the lectures, assignments, and evaluations.

Lecture	Assignments	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Visual impairment: braille, enlarged reading materials . Hearing impairment: note-taking assistant . Physical impairment : access to classroom, note-taking assistant 	Extra days for submission, alternative assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Visual impairment: braille examination paper, examination with voice support, longer examination hours, note-taking assistant . Hearing impairment: written examination instead of oral examination . Physical impairment: longer examination hours, note-taking assistant

- Actual support may vary depending on the course.

* The contents of this syllabus are not final—they may be updated.