

History 2641G
Korea since 1800
Winter 2026

Instructor: **Dr. Carl Young**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2225**

Office Hours: **Tuesdays & Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 PM**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

A survey of Korean history from 1800 to the present. Topics include Korea's progressive loss of independence in the 19th and early 20th century, Japanese colonial occupation, the development of North and South Korea, and the role of the Korean peninsula in the international system in East Asia.

Antirequisite(s): History 2611 E

Course Syllabus

Korea has a long and rich history. Located at the crossroads of Northeast Asia, it has often been at the centre of developments in the region, often as a prize of larger powers. Korea also has a long tradition of autonomy, however, and developed a unique culture and political structure that gave it a distinct identity and allowed it to make distinguished contributions to the East Asian cultural sphere.

This course aims to provide an overview of Korean history from 1800 to the present. It will present developments in the political, cultural, social, and philosophical spheres and assess the impacts of these processes on the peninsula. This period includes the decline of the Chosŏn kingdom during the 19th century, the period of Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945, and the development of North and South Korea after 1945.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Provide accurate information about the processes, people, and events on the Korean peninsula from 1800 to the present
- Describe the importance and role of the Korean peninsula in the international system in East Asia
- Describe the background and formation of North and South Korea and their evolution as two distinct states on the peninsula

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- Analyze primary sources and reveal what they show about the events, people, values, and society they come from
- Synthesise primary and secondary sources to produce a research paper

Methods of Evaluation

2 source document reading assignments	30%
(around 3-6 pages each;15% each)	
Term Paper (around 10 pages)	30%
Quizzes	10%
Final Exam	<u>30%</u>
	100%

The source document assignments will be based on documents from the two volumes of *Sources of Korean Tradition*. Questions based on the documents will be handed out in class and students will choose **one** question and write a 4-6 page analysis of the documents relating to the question. The first source document assignment on themes from the last years of the Chosŏn kingdom will be due on **Feb. 3**. The second source document assignment on themes from the colonial period will be due on **March 3**.

The term paper will be a research paper on topics of your choice in the history of Korea. Suggested topics will be handed out early in the beginning of the second semester. The suggested length of the paper will be approximately 10-15 pages. The paper will be due on **March 24**.

There are three scheduled quizzes throughout the course. These will be composed of around 10-20 multiple-choice questions each and will be held in the first 10 minutes of class for which they are scheduled.

If you should have any questions pertaining to the structure or content of the course, please do not hesitate to contact me during my office hours, or by phone or e-mail to make an appointment.

The final exam will take place during the April exam period covering topics from the whole course. The exam will be made up of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Absences and Late Assignments:

The source document assignments and the term paper will be accepted late. However, there will be a penalty of 2% a day that will be applied for every day the assignments are late, including weekends and holidays. I normally request both an electronic copy of your assignment, submitted on OWL, and a paper copy submitted to myself in class, during my office hours, or through the History department office (please see below). Penalties stop on receipt of the first version (either electronic or paper) that has been received. However, I will normally only start marking your assignment when I have both versions of your assignment. If you have missed class, try and get notes from another member of the class. The Powerpoints for the lectures will also be posted after they have been presented.

If you do hand in your assignment late, please hand in your paper copy to the wooden drop-off box outside the History Department office at Lawson Hall. The staff will pick up the assignment and stamp it with a date and time and put it in my mailbox. This provides greater security and clarity for the handing in of the assignment. Please avoid shoving the paper under my office door if at all possible, because it could get lost.

In case of family emergency, illness, or other circumstances, penalties can be removed from assignments after approval from academic advising. In these circumstances, please get in contact with your home faculty or college's academic advising office and submit the required forms and documentation. The office will then get in touch with me and give me recommendations for accommodation.

Students have the right to file **one assignment per course per semester** with academic advising without supporting documentation. In this case, normally an extension will be given for 2-3 days, after which lateness penalties will begin.

Some students have access to flexibility in assignment deadlines through Accessible Education. This allows for extensions on assignments for a few days without having to go through academic advising. Please come and consult with me to work out a new assignment deadline if you have this accommodation and you are exercising this option. Flexibility in assignment deadlines does not mean extending assignment submission over weeks or months. This is to avoid stress in the end of the semester with an accumulation of assignments for submission. If more time is needed than a few days, academic advising will need to be consulted.

All written work (regardless of accommodations) must be submitted by the end of classes for winter semester, which is **April 9, 2026**. Any petition for extension beyond this date will require approval from the academic advising office with supporting documentation.

Please consult the following for more in-depth information on department, faculty, and university policies on absences and late submissions.

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- Social Science Academic Advising on [Absence & Academic Consideration](#)
- the university's policies on [Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#) and
- the Department of History's own [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#)

Course Materials

Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (4th edition), (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2024)(approximately \$48.00)

Yŏngho Ch'oe, Peter H. Lee, & Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000)(approximately \$60.00)

The first reading of the course will be available on the course OWL site

Course Schedule and Readings

Seth: Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea* (3rd edition)

SKT 2: Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume II

Jan. 6—Introduction

Jan 13, 20, and 27—Into the Twilight: The Last Years of the Chosŏn Kingdom, 1800-1910

Michael Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, p. 201-241 (available on OWL); Seth, p. 9-50; *SKT 2*, p. 216-244, 245-260, 261-267, 272-314

*****1st Source Document Assignment due—Feb. 3*****

Feb. 3 & 10--Korea as Japanese Colony, 1910-1945

Seth, p. 51-94; *SKT 2*, p. 331-346, 315-322, 346-349, 352-365

Feb. 14-22—Winter Reading Week—No class

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Feb. 24 and March 3---Liberation, Division, and the Korean War, 1945-1953

Seth, p. 95-130; *SKT 2*, p. 350-351, 365-366, 382-393

*******2nd Source Document Assignment due—March 3*******

March 10, 17, and 24 —Post-War North Korea and South Korea to the 1990’s

Seth, p. 131-236, *SKT 2*, p. 419-425, 393-400, 439-445

*******Term Paper due---March 24*******

March 31 & April 7--The Korean Peninsula since the 1990’s and Prospects for the 21st Century

Seth, p. 237-312; *SKT 2*, p. 445-451

*******Final Exam in the April Examination Period*******

Additional Statements

Communication policies: E-mail is generally the easiest way to contact me for short questions. I will endeavour to answer within the day, although there may be delays on weekends and holidays in particular. You can also ask short questions during the class lecture breaks. For longer enquiries, please drop by during my office hours at my office. If you are unable to come to my normal office hours, please contact me to set up an alternative appointment, either in person or through Zoom. For general class announcements, I use the “Announcements” feature on OWL, so please check frequently on OWL to keep track of latest class developments.

Use of electronic devices: No electronic devices will be allowed for quizzes or examinations. A paper English-second language dictionary will be permitted for the final examination. These dictionaries will be inspected when signing in to the examination.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI):

You may use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course for activities such as researching and refining your ideas, or drafting an outline to organize your thoughts—but not for generating prose. All writing submitted in this course must be your own. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification and advice.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.