

AEAK/AHIS 389: North Korea—History, Culture, Politics (3 Credits)¹

***Make sure to check Blackboard for the most up-to-date version of the syllabus**

Dates of course: February 1, 2021- May 11, 2021

Instructor: Charmaine N. Willis

Contact: cwillis@albany.edu

Email hours: You will generally receive a reply from me within a few hours, but any e-mail correspondence after 7 pm may not receive a response until the next day.

Office hours: 4-5 pm Thursdays via Zoom and by appointment



As one of the few truly isolated countries remaining in the world, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) is constantly making American and international news headlines. This course is designed to provide an overview of North Korea’s history, culture, politics, and international relations from its inception to the present day. We will explore the cult of the Kim family, North Korea’s brand of communist ideology, how the nation was shaped by imperialism and Cold War, and why it continues to pursue nuclear weapons programs despite internal crisis. The course will also investigate questions such as:

- Why has the Kim regime endured while so many other authoritarian regimes have fallen?
- Why does a humanitarian crisis persist in North Korea and what role has the international community played in mitigating this crisis?
- How have North Korea’s interactions with the US, Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea influenced and shaped its diplomacy?
- What are the prospects for the Korean unification and peace on the Korean peninsula?

¹ This course is influenced by and benefits from syllabi and materials from Youngshik Bong, Cheng Chen, Peter B, Kwon, Keith Preble, and Keon Weigold.

Learning Objectives

This course endeavors not only to help students learn about North Korea, but also skills critical to success in college such as conducting an original research project. To that end, the learning objectives for this course include:

- **Evaluate the rationale for North Korean political behavior beyond the narratives reported in mainstream media.**
- **Construct a semester-long research project.**
- **Practice making an argument supported by evidence.**
- **Distill key ideas from academic articles and discuss them with others.**

University Policies:

- **Absence due to religious observance:**

New York State Education Law (Section 224-a) - Campuses are required to excuse, without penalty, individual students absent because of religious beliefs, and to provide equivalent opportunities for make-up examinations, study, or work requirements missed because of such absences. Faculty should work directly with students to accommodate religious observances. Students should notify the instructor of record in a timely manner.

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide me with verification of your disability and will recommend appropriate accommodations. Please also contact me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements that facilitate your success in this course. More information can be found here: <https://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml>.

- **Academic Integrity:**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me before submitting graded assignments. See http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html for UAlbany specific guidelines.

- **Mental Health Syllabus Recommendations:**

As a student there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily life. The University at Albany Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential services including individual and group psychological counseling and evaluation for emotional, social and academic concerns. Given the COVID pandemic, students may consult with CAPS staff remotely by telephone, email or Zoom appointments regarding issues that impact them or someone they care about. For questions or to make an appointment, call (518) 442-5800 or

email consultation@albany.edu. Visit www.albany.edu/caps/ for hours of operation and additional information

If your life or someone else's life is in danger, please call 911. If you are in a crisis and need help right away, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, increased anxiety, or thoughts of suicide may also text "GOT5" to 741741 (Crisis Text Line).

- **Title IX Resources:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities.

The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies prohibit offenses defined as sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), sexual exploitation, and stalking. The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies apply to the entire University at Albany community, including students, faculty, and staff of all gender identities. The University at Albany provides a variety of resources for support and advocacy to assist individuals who have experienced sexual offenses.

Confidential support and guidance can be found through the Counseling Center (518-442-5800, https://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/), the University Health Center (518-442-5454, https://www.albany.edu/health_center/), and the Interfaith Center (518-489-8573, <https://www.albany.edu/spirituality/onCampus.shtml>). Individuals at these locations will not report crimes to law enforcement or university officials without permission, except for in extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency. Additionally, the Advocates at the University at Albany's Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence are available to assist students without sharing information that could identify them (518-442-CARE, <https://www.albany.edu/advocacycenter/>).

Sexual offenses can be reported non-confidentially to the Title IX Coordinator within The Office for Equity and Compliance (518-442-3800, <https://www.albany.edu/equity-compliance/>, Building 25, Room 117) and/or the University Police Department (518-442-3131, <http://police.albany.edu/>).

Please note, faculty members are considered "responsible employees" at the University at Albany, meaning that they are required to report all known relevant details about a complaint of sexual violence to the University's Title IX Coordinator, including names of anyone involved or present, date, time, and location.

In case of an emergency, please call 911.

Course Policies

- **Discussion Etiquette:** Some of the topics that we will cover are controversial. Learning from and attempting to understand other opinions is a crucial part of the learning experience. I expect there to be varying opinions and great debates. However, I also expect civility and respectfulness in our discussions. This means no personal attacks or obscene language. I reserve the right to remove any questionable or offensive material from public areas of this course.

- **Late Penalties and Missed Assignments:** It is imperative that you do not fall behind on assignments. Assignments should be submitted by 11:59 pm the day that they are due via Blackboard. After that, 10% will be deducted from the maximum possible score for each day that the assignment is late (including weekends). Missed assignments will receive '0' points.

In the case of a catastrophic event or medical issue that may prevent you from submitting an assignment on time, please see the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education http://bit.ly/UAlbany_AbsenceNote and the University's Medical Excuse Policy https://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexexcuse.shtml.

- **Questions?** There is a section on Slack entitled "Course-related Questions"; please feel free to ask anything related to the course here, especially as your classmates may have similar questions. Additionally, please do not hesitate to contact me at cwillis@albany.edu with any questions or concerns.

Course materials, grading, course structure and assignments (the fun stuff)

- **Texts:** All texts for this course can be found on Blackboard.
 - *Crisis in North Korea ICONS simulation: \$13/student.*
- **Recommended:** follow <https://www.38north.org/> for analysis on North Korea
- **Grading:** the course will be graded on a 1000-point scale. Each assignment and portion of the course is worth a set number of points and will be graded accordingly. At the end of the class your final grade will be based on your total number of points earned throughout the class.
 - **Rubric:**
 - 930- 1000 points: A
 - 900- 920 points: A-
 - 870- 890 points: B+
 - 830- 860 points: B
 - 800- 820 points: B-
 - 770- 790 points: C+
 - 730- 760 points: C
 - 700- 720 points: C-
 - 670- 690 points: D+
 - 630- 660 points: D
 - 600- 620 points: D-
 - 590 points and below: E
- **Structure:** the course will be conducted asynchronously through Blackboard and Slack.
 - **Blackboard:** All course materials (besides the ICONS simulation) will be available through Blackboard.
 - **Slack:** Our discussions will be conducted via Slack. Please be sure that you have access to Slack. The link to our Slack page can be found on Brightspace and here: https://join.slack.com/t/aeakahis389no-fnw1488/shared_invite/zt-l647dlnk-3F338e7cnaj0YOHunponDQ

- **Assignments:** this course will be reading and writing intensive. **All writing assignments should be in a 12-pt standard font (ex. Times New Roman, Calibri, Garamond) with normal (1") margins. Writing assignments should have proper citations as necessary using a recognized citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago).** You are expected to complete all the reading assignments by their due dates and be prepared to discuss those readings with your classmates and with myself.

The primary course learning activities will be reading the required readings for each week, actively participating in discussions about those readings, quizzes, a simulation, and a semester-long research project:

- **Introduction (25 points for completion):** During Week 1, I ask everyone to give us an introduction about themselves so that we can get to know each other a little before diving into studying North Korea. More information about this assignment will be provided on Slack under Week 1- Introduction. Due by **February 7 at 11:59 pm**.
- **Completion of plagiarism tutorial (25 points for completion):** as part of Week 1, you will complete the UAlbany plagiarism tutorial, found [here](#). We will be completing several small writing assignments and it is important to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Please send the completion report to me, cwillis@albany.edu. **If you have completed this assignment for another course in the previous year, you can email me confirmation of completion in lieu of the tutorial.** Due by the end of the Week 1, **February 7 at 11:59 pm**.
- **Quizzes on Lecture Videos (20 points each; 200 points total):** for most weeks there will be a quiz associated with the video lectures. There are 12 quizzes in total, **only your top ten quiz scores will count towards your quiz grade.**
- **Discussion Board Participation (40 points for each week except Weeks 1, 8, 10 and 11; 400 points total):** At the beginning of each week, I will post a question about the topic and the readings in the discussion thread for that week. The purpose of the discussion board is for us to begin a conversation about the topics discussed in the readings. You will be divided into smaller discussion groups using Slack to discuss these questions. You are expected to participate by posting **at least two posts** to your group's discussion board. **The initial post should be at least 200 words and must be made by Friday at 11:59 pm of that week; the other post should be in response to one of your group member's posts and approximately 100 words.**

Most of the initial post should be your own words and ideas, but make sure to cite (informally) where you refer to the readings. For example, "Shin said that Kim Il Sung..."

I am more interested in thoughtful responses that demonstrate that you have done the reading than "correct" answers to the questions I pose. You must post an answer to this question **and** a substantive response to a classmate's post (i.e. **not** simply "I agree", "I disagree", "yes", "no", etc.). Ways to respond to a classmate's post may include (but are not limited to) asking a follow-up question or bringing in a real-world example to support your agreement or disagreement with their post.

Points will be lost in the following ways: (1) failure to participate in the week's discussion; (2) making posts that plagiarizes others' ideas or (3) by failing to maintain the civility and decorum expected of in academic discussion. Points will not be lost for making statements, comments, or critiques that the instructor disagrees with or for disagreeing with posts or responses that the instructor has made. Rather, you are encouraged to be

willing to engage in an active academic discourse with your fellow students and the instructor.

- **Simulation (50 points for position paper, 50 points for debriefing paper; 100 points total):** in Week 10 you will participate in an asynchronous simulation about a crisis in North Korea. The class will be split up into six teams and assigned specific roles. **Each person is responsible for writing a short paper at the beginning (position paper) and end (debriefing paper) of the simulation as well as actively participating in the simulation.**
- **Research Project (250 points):** over the course of the semester, you will complete an original research project on a topic related to North Korea. You may choose to elaborate on a topic we cover in class or choose something related to the class that we did not discuss. The project will be broken down into several parts throughout the semester to give you an opportunity to get feedback at various stages in the writing process.
 - **Paper Topic and Annotated Bibliography (50 points):** the topic and annotated bibliography is the first stage in the research process and allows you to receive feedback from me at an early stage to ensure the project is on the right track. This assignment should include a **topic, a background to the topic, and an annotated bibliography with three peer-reviewed sources.** It should be about 1-2 typed pages, double spaced and is due on Blackboard by **Sunday, February 28 at 11:59 pm.**
 - **Research Proposal (100 points):** the proposal will provide another opportunity to get feedback on your projects before you submit your final drafts. **The proposal should include a research question, preliminary argument and findings, and a list of primary/secondary sources and evidence (bibliography) to support your argument, proving the viability of your project.** It should be about 1-2 typed pages, double spaced and is due on Blackboard **by Sunday, April 4 at 11:59 pm.**
 - **Final Paper (100 points):** your project will culminate in a final paper of about 8-10 pages typed, double spaced. It is due on Blackboard by **Friday, May 14 at 11:59 pm.** Further instructions about the specific components of the paper will be given in March.

Work, work, work, work, work, work (tentative schedule):

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings and Assignments</i>
Week 1: February 1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 1 • Introduction • Plagiarism Tutorial • “North Korea Country Profile” • “North Korea’s Power Structure” • Cha and Kang, “The Debate Over North Korea”
Week 2: February 8	Imperialism, Colonialism, and National Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 2 • Discussion Posts • Oberdorfer and Carlin, “Where the Wild Birds Sing”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shin and Moon, "1919 in Korea: National Resistance and Contending Legacies" • Armstrong, "Korean History and Political Geography"
Week 3: February 15	North Korea Under Kim Il Sung: The Origins of <i>Juche</i> Ideology and the Korean War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 3 • Discussion Posts • Eidlin, "The Method of Problems versus the Method of Topics" • Shin, "The Korean War: Rational but Failed War of Reunification" • Kang, "Historical Changes in North Korean Nationalism" • Beauchamp, "Juche, the state ideology that makes North Koreans revere Kim Jong Un, explained"
Week 4: February 22	North Korea Under Kim Jong Il: The Arduous March and Nuclear Revelations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 4 • Discussion Posts • Paper Topic and Annotated Bibliography Due • Pacheco Pardo, "Pre-nuclear North Korea and the Bush Administration" • Haggard and Noland, "The Origins of the Great Famine" • Goodby, "North Korea: The Problem That Won't Go Away"
Week 5: March 1	North Korea Under Kim Jong Un: From 'Fire and Fury' to the Singapore Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 5 • Discussion Posts • Pak, "A Twenty-First-Century Dictatorship" • Isozaki, "Characteristics of Kim Jong-un's leadership: analyzing the tone of official North Korean media" • Willis, "'Great Deceptions' and Midterms"
Week 6: March 8	North Korea-US Relations <i>Guest Lecturer: Keith Preble</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 6 • Discussion Posts • Armstrong, "The Destruction and Reconstruction of North Korea, 1950 – 1960" • Martin, "Rewarding North Korea" • Fishman et al., "A Blueprint for New Sanctions on North Korea"
Week 7: March 15	North Korea-China Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 7 • Discussion Posts • Snyder, "China's Evolving Economic and Political Relations with North Korea" • Cheng, "The Evolution of Sino-North Korean Relations in the 1960s" • Jun, "Dealing with a Sore Lip: Parsing China's 'Recalculation' of North Korea Policy"

Week 8: March 22	Mini-Break	
Week 9: March 29	Inter-Korean Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 8 • Paper Proposal Due April 4 • Armstrong, "Inter-Korean Relations in Historical Perspective" • Lee, "Is a unified Korea Possible?" • Rich and Einhorn, "South Koreans Rarely Think About North Korea—and Why It Matters"
Week 10: April 5	North Korean Relations with Japan and Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 9 • Discussion Posts <p>Japan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrington, "The Mutual Constitution of the Abductions and North Korean Human Rights Issues in Japan and Internationally" • Lee, "Japan's North Korean Diaspora" <p>Russia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim, "Russian-North Korean relations since the Korean War" • Toloraya, "Changing Lanes: the Russian Alternative"
Week 11: April 12	Simulation: <i>Crisis in North Korea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper Meetings • Simulation Position Paper Due
Week 12: April 19	North Korean Propaganda and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 10 • Discussion Posts • Simulation Debriefing Paper Due • Fifield, "North Korea begins brainwashing children in cult of the Kims as early as kindergarten" • Lee and Bairner, "The Difficult Dialogue: Communism, Nationalism, and Political Propaganda in North Korean Sport" • Video: A State of Mind <p>*Watch until 15:02</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A State of Mind? <p>Bonus: Squirrel and Hedgehog</p>
Week 13: April 26	North Korean Human Rights <i>Guest Lecturer, Myunghee Lee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 11 • Discussion Posts • Lintner, "The Camps and the Refugees" • King, "Abuse of Women Detained in North Korea Given Special Attention by United Nations" • Video clips: <i>Kimjongilia</i> <p><i>Content warning: this video contains graphic content (violence, starvation)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mrs. Kim

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kang Chol-hwan ○ Shin Dong-hyuk <p><i>For further reading, see Aquariums of Pyongyang</i></p>
Week 14: May 3	The Prospects for Reunification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quiz 12 ● Discussion Posts ● Shin, "Ethnic Identity and National Unification" ● Yang, "Why German Unification Is Not a Model for Korean Unification" ● Campbell, "What Would Korean Reunification Look Like? Five Glaring Problems to Overcome"

Final Paper Due Friday, May 14