

## Understanding Anglophone Culture(s), Spring 2011 Instructor: Gord Sellar

### Course Objectives:

- Helping Korean students to get a strong sense of the "internal logic" upon which Anglophone cultures operate, as distinct from the "internal logic" of their own society, as well as specific cultural minutiae.
- Familiarizing students with a theoretical understanding of (and theoretical tools for the discussion of) culture as developmental and constructed, provisional and in constant flux, rather than stable or fixed (let alone inevitable).
- Development of presentation and discussion-related skills, and handling traditionally non-academic subjects in both an academic- and mainstream-styled discursive context.
- Achievement of a degree of functional mastery in negotiating cultural difference, both in navigating apparent cultural differences, as well as in presenting them to non-Koreans and particular native English speakers.

### Course Overview:

It is common for people of most cultures to consider culture as a fixed entity: monolithic, inherited from the past, unchanging, and fundamental in its importance to the individual identity. In this course, we will move beyond such simplistic conceptions of culture, in order to deepen our understanding of how cultures work, and how they develop differently from one another; specifically, we will work by comparing and contrasting the "culture" (or, rather, cultures) of English-speaking countries with the culture (or rather, cultures) of Korea.

We will begin with several theories or models of culture, then proceeding to specific instances of cultural difference between Korea and the English-speaking world. Discussions will consist not only of comparison and contrast, but also in the application of theoretical models to these forms of cultural difference, in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of these differences on their own terms.

It is important to consider comparisons and contrasts with an open mind: when discussing culture, it will become rapidly apparent that culture is distinct from society: the difference can be best understood as society being the social and material reality, while culture tends to be a mixture of expectations, ideals, and fantasies societies insist on having about themselves. For the purposes of an intellectual understanding, we need to be able to separate *reality* from *fantasy*, so that we can better understand both.

### Teaching Method:

We will approach our content through various means, including lectures, readings, media, and student research and presentations. However, regular discussions will be held in class, and led by students who are responsible for preparing these discussions. It is imperative, whether or not you are a leader of any particular discussion, to come to class ready to talk, informed, and interested. ***Participation is extremely important, regardless of your level of English.***

### Homework:

Homework for this class falls into the following categories:

- Basic preparations for classes should be performed by students regularly, not only for their own benefit but for the benefit of classmates who are depending on you to do your part. When assignments involve collaborative work, your contribution will nonetheless be assessed individually.

- **Written work:** The regular written work assigned in this class must be typed (double-spaced) and include your name, student number, my name, and the course name and number. Submissions consisting of multiple pages should be numbered and stapled or paperclipped, but not submitted in plastic folders or binders to submit their work. Any work failing to meet these criteria will be returned to the student immediately for resubmission within 3 days. If your work is late, a penalty of half a grade point will accrue for each day it is late. (ie. 1 day late makes an A+ become A0; two days late makes A+ become B+; 3 days late makes A+ become B0.) It is therefore crucial that you hand all of your work in one time.
- **Presentations or Panel Discussions** (depending on the size of the class) as well as informal group discussions will be a regular part of your work in this class, and you will make at least two presentations or participate in two panel discussions during the semester. For each such discussion, a typed summary of your presentation including major points must be submitted; you may also distribute a handout to classmates, but this is not required. Presentations using Powerpoint or similar software are allowed, but please take care to ensure that the Powerpoint actually improves the quality of your presentation. If it does not, I may turn the computer off and ask you to proceed without it. Your peers will provide the evaluation for the panel discussion or presentations via an online polling system, and all participants will write up a reaction to each discussion after it has been completed.

***Please note that any form of plagiarism will bring extremely harsh consequences.*** Consult the handout provided in class, or on the class website, for more information on this.

#### **Textbook:**

Instead of using a textbook, we work with handouts, lectures, and materials available online. However, I expect that you will also make the effort to perform independent research in preparation for group discussions. This may mean seeking out reputable sources in libraries other than the CUK library, depending on the topic.

Should you wish to explore texts or other media not encompassed in this course, or require help in finding materials pertinent to your presentations, please feel free to ask me for recommendations. I will be more than happy to help you find materials that are suited to your needs and worth exploring.

#### **Assessment:**

- General Participation: 30%
- In-Class Presentations or Panel Discussions (depending on class size): 10%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Research Paper/Project/Exam (TBA): 20%
- Homework: 20%
- Department Events: 5%

Receiving a 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least attempt all work in this course in order to complete the course.

Since students seem to feel that asking for higher grades for personal reasons is especially permissible with foreign teachers, please be advised that your final grade will remain final unless by some chance I have made a mistake in calculating it. Requests for the "gift" of a higher grade will be considered an invitation to coldly, carefully reconsider the grade, and to lower one's final grade if it seems appropriate to do so.

**My contact information:****Office:** IH306**Office Phone:** 02-2164-4459**Email:** mistergord@gmail.com**Class Website:** <http://gordsclass.com>**Course Outline:**

The following is extremely tentative and subject to change at any time, but it should give you an idea of what's planned. Student presentations will probably begin in Week 2, and will mostly occur on the days in which our class meetings are one hour and not on the days when we meet for two hours.

**Part 1: Starting Out****Week 1:** Introductions, Paperwork, etc.**Week 2:** Theories of Culture, Part 1**Week 3:** Theories of Culture, Part 2**Week 3:** The Body**Week 4:** Love and Sex and Sexuality**Week 5:** Marriage**Week 6:** Childhood**Week 7:** Education**Week 8:** *Midterm Exams***Week 9:** Language**Week 10:** Womanhood**Week 11:** Manhood**Week 12:** Work**Week 13:** Play**Week 14:** Retirement**Week 15:** Order, Power, and Resistance**Week 16:** *Final Exams***Selected Resources for Use With This Class**

Some of the following resources will be dropped from the list, and others will definitely be added. The following is only a rough guide. While most of these books will be excerpted, one or two of them will be read in full (generally, texts for which Korean-language translations are available).

- "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift
- *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift
- *Utopia* by Thomas More
- *The Invention of Tradition* by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger
- *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory* by Helen Spencer-Oatey
- *The Great War and Modern Memory* by Paul Fussell
- *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick
- "A Few Words About Breasts" by Nora Ephron
- *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan* by Christopher Benfry
- "Killing an Elephant" by George Orwell
- *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910-1945* by E. Taylor Atkins

- *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin
- *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France* by Georges Duby
- *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* by Mary Frances Wack
- *The Language Instinct* by Steven Pinker
- *The Third Chimpanzee* by Jared Diamond