North Korean Government and Foreign Policy
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I. Course Description

This course is designed to enable students to better understand North Korean politics and foreign policy. Toward such ends, students will acquire knowledge about (1) Historical development of North Korean politics under Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il regime (2) Kim Jong Il’s death and power succession to Kim Jong Un; (3) North Korea’s foreign relations with major powers; and (4) prospects for the future of North Korea.

Understanding North Korea is critical for students of international relations with a focus on East Asia and the Korean Peninsula. It became more so due to Kim Jong Il’s sudden death in December 2011. While the course is going to cover the rise to power of Kim Il Sung and his son and 3rd hereditary power transition to Kim Jong Un, we will also analyze the inter-Korean relations and North Korea’s foreign relations with key regional powers such as the United States, China, Japan and Russia. Given the reclusive nature of North Korea, however, discerning change is always a challenge. It is hoped that students who take this class will be able to have a better grasp of the nature of the North Korean regime, its foreign policy, and contrasting future scenarios.

The course is mainly divided into three parts. The first part put focus on the politics of North Korea. The Japanese colonial period is first traced to have background knowledge of state-build up and power struggle in North Korea since National Liberation in 1945. Against this backdrop, this class overviews historical evolution of Kim Il Sung’s power consolidation, Kim Jong Il’s politics and the political succession of Kim Jong Un. In doing so, consolidation of political leadership, control over power elites and society and political institutions and ideology are closely examined.
The second part of the class is devoted to North Korea’s foreign policy. Diplomacy has played an important role for political regime resilience and economic survival. It seems that North Korea attempts to achieve core national interests by nuclear diplomacy. The second part consists of overview of North Korea’s foreign policy, investigation into the five pairs of bilateral relations (inter-Korean, North Korea-the United States, China, Japan, Russia), and in-depth analysis of North Korea’s nuclear diplomacy.

Last part of the class is preoccupied with forecasting politics and foreign policy of North Korea in the future. The part discusses expected policies and the political stability of the Kim Jong-un regime as a starting point of forecasting.

II. Grading and Assignments

Students are strongly urged to read the required reading materials before class. The final grade is determined by (1) class participation (attendance and participation in class discussion: 10%, presentation and participation: 10%); (2) mid-term exam (40%); and (3) final essay (40%).

III. Required Readings

Ken E. Gause, *North Korean Leadership Dynamics and Decision-making under Kim Jong-un: A Second Year Assessment* (CNA, March 2014)

IV. Weekly Topics and Readings

Week 1:

*Topic: Struggle for Power in North Korea (1945-1960)*

Required

Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1998), PART I, II, III

*Required*

*Required*

**Week 2**

**Topic: Governance of Kim Jong Il**
*Required*

**Topic: Juche Ideology**
*Required*

**Topic: Military First Politics of Kim Jong Il**
*Required*

**Topic: State-Society Relations under Kim Jong Il Regime**
*Required*

**Week 3:**
**Topic: Kim Jong Un’s Power Succession Process**

**Required**


**Topic: Kim Jong Un Regime’s Political Stability**

**Required**


**Topic: Kim Jong Un Regime’s Grand National Strategy**

**Required**


**MID-TERM**

**Week 4:**

**Topic: Understanding North Korean Foreign Policy**

**Required**


**Topic: South-North Korean Relations**

**Required**

“An Overview of Inter-Korean Relations,” The National Committee on North Korea (NCNK) Issue Brief

**Topic: North Korea-the United States Relations (I)**

Required


**Topic: North Korea-the United States Relations (II)**

Required


**Week 5:**

**Topic: Video presentation and Discussion**

**Topic: North Korea-China Relations**

Required


**Topic: North Korea-Japan Relations**

Required


*DPRK-Japan Joint Statement* in September 2002

**Topic: North Korea-Russia Relations**

Required


Alexander Vorontsov, “Is Russia-North Korea Cooperation at a New Stage?” [http://38north.org/2014/05/avorontsov050814/print/](http://38north.org/2014/05/avorontsov050814/print/)

**Week 6:**

**Topic: Forecasting North Korean in the Future**

Required

**Topic: Shifting Northeast Asia Security Dynamics and North Korea’s New Foreign Relations**

**Required**


**Topic: Korean Reunification**

**Required**


**FINAL**