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| **Faculty Information** | **Name** |  |
| **E-mail** |  |
| **Home University** |  |
| **Department** |  |
| **Homepage** |  |
| **Course Information** | **Class No.** |  | **Course Code** |  | **Credits** | 3 |
| **Course Name** | ***K-Drama and Korean Society*** |
| **Lecture Schedule** | **Total Contact Hours** | 45 hours |
| **Lecture Hour** | 12:30-15:30, Mon-Fri |
| **Course Description** | This graduate-level course examines K-drama as a socio-cultural text reflecting and shaping Korean societal values, power dynamics, and collective identity. Using critical theories from sociology (Bourdieu), gender studies (Butler), and media anthropology, students will analyze how K-dramas negotiate issues of class, gender, family, and generational conflict—from historical sagas (sageuk) to contemporary rom-coms and thrillers. The curriculum emphasizes K-drama’s role as both a mirror and a catalyst for social change, avoiding superficial fandom analysis to prioritize rigorous academic inquiry into its ideological frameworks and global impact. |
| **Course Objective** | • Theorize K-drama’s cultural capital using Bourdieu’s field theory, analyzing how TV networks (e.g., tvN, JTBC) produce symbolic power.• Critique gender representations in K-drama through Butler’s performativity lens, examining shifts from patriarchal narratives to feminist counterdiscourses (e.g., My Liberation Notes).• Trace the historical evolution of K-drama as a site of national identity, from 1980s minbak (commoner) dramas to post-1997 IMF crisis neoliberal critiques (SKY Castle).• Evaluate K-drama’s global fandom (e.g., Viki, Netflix) through Appadurai’s mediascapes framework, assessing its role in soft power and cultural diplomacy.• Produce a publishable-quality research paper on K-drama’ s social critique, suitable for Television & New Media or Journal of Korean Studies. |
| **Prerequisite** | Coursework in cultural studies, media theory, sociology, or Asian Studies. |
| **Materials/Textbooks** | **Core Readings:**• Park, J., & Lee, A.-G. (2019). *The rise of K-dramas: essays on Korean television and its global consumption*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.**ISBN: 978-1476677477**• Kim, Y. (2022). *Soft power of the Korean wave: Parasite, BTS and drama*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. **ISBN:978-0367609122****Supplementary Materials:**• Academic analyses from Korean Journal of Communication on “K-Drama as Social Critique”• Scripts and storyboards from award-winning dramas (Parasite the Series, DP) |
| **Daily****Lecture Plan** | **Week 1** | **Day** | **Topic** | **Learning Objectives** | **Assignment** |
| Day 1 | Bourdieu and the Cultural Field of Korean Television | Map the power dynamics between K-drama writers, producers, and government regulators (e.g., KOFIC). | Activity: Compare ratings data of JTBC’s The World of the Married with its sociopolitical subtext. |
| Day 2 | Feminist Interventions: From Kim’s Convenience to Nevertheless | Analyze how #MeToo movements influenced scriptwriting in Law School. | Seminar: Debate the sexualization of male leads in What’s Wrong with Secretary Kim. |
| Day 3 | SKY Castle and the Critique of Education Hierarchy | Use Bourdieu’s distinction theory to interpret cram school (hagwon) narratives. | Case Study: Interview with a real-life hagwon instructor on K-drama accuracy. |
| Day 4 | Colonial Legacies in Mr. Sunshine and Arthdal Chronicles | Evaluate how historical dramas negotiate Korea’s contested past. | Workshop: Rewrite a sageuk scene to emphasize marginalized voices (e.g., women, peasants). |
| Day 5 | Netflix’s Role in Decentering Korean Narratives: Squid Game and Hellbound | Quantify the 200% increase in Korean tourism post-Squid Game using KTO data. | Lab: Analyze fan translations on Viki using corpus linguistics tools. |
| **Week 2** | Day 1 | Aging Society in Hi Bye, Mama! and Live | Relate drama depictions of single-person households to KOSIS statistics (2023). | Policy Link: Compare drama narratives with government campaigns on “aging in place.” |
| Day 2 | Subtextual Queerness in Melo Is My Nature and Where Your Eyes Linger | Critique Korea’s media censorship system through Butler’s queer performativity. | Assignment: Storyboard a queer K-drama plot within broadcast regulations. |
| Day 3 | TVING’s Yumi’s Cells: Webtoon Adaptations and Interactive Viewing | Assess how mobile-first dramas reshape audience engagement. | Tech Demo: Analyze viewer analytics from TVING’s Yumi’ s Cells 2. |
| Day 4 | Depression in It’s Okay to Not Be Okay: Stigma and Representation | Compare drama portrayals with Korea’s mental health policy reforms (2018–2025). | Guest Lecture: Psychologist on K-drama’s impact on public perception of therapy. |
| Day 5 | Innovative Studies on K-Drama’s Social Impact | Draft a 3-page proposal for research like “K-Drama’s Role in Diasporic Identity Formation. | Peer Review: Use a rubric focusing on “theoretical originality” and “social relevance.” |
| **Week 3** | Day 1 | Ethnography and Content Analysis: Studying K-Drama Fans in Brazil | Design a survey to measure emotional attachment to Crash Landing on You. | Activity: Code fan essays on Tumblr using NVivo for thematic analysis. |
| Day 2 | Partnering with JTBC to Enhance Social Representation | Develop a diversity and inclusion scriptwriting guide for Korean broadcasters. | Deliverable: Policy memo with case studies from Extraordinary Attorney Woo. |
| Day 3 | Polishing Arguments on K-Drama’s Critical Potential | Revise thesis introductions to emphasize K-drama as a site of social resistance. | Instructor Feedback: Ensure alignment with critical media theory and empirical data. |
| Day 4 | Showcasing K-Drama’s Sociological Insights | Present research at a simulated conference, focusing on K-drama’s capacity to challenge hegemony. | Rubric: Evaluate presentations on “theoretical depth,” “empirical rigor,” and “public impact.” |
| Day 5 | Final Assessments |  |  |
| **Grading Policy** | **Assessment Component** | Final Research Report | 50% |
| Strategic Policy Project | 40% |
| Class Participation | 10% |
| **Total** | **100%** |
| **Assessment** **Details** | **• Final Research Report**4,000–4,500 words, analyzing K-drama as a social critique (e.g., class, gender, or globalization).**• Strategic Analysis Project**15-20 page report + 12-minute pitch, such as a media literacy curriculum for K-drama’s global audiences.**• Class Participation**Active engagement in discussions, case analyses, and peer feedback sessions, with a focus on applying critical theories to K-drama texts. |