This course inquires into North Korea’s past and current relationship with the neighboring countries including China, Russia, Japan, the U.S. and South Korea, while paying additional attention to some of the prominent issues associated with North Korea such as the development of WMD, refugees, human rights and humanitarian assistance. It reviews diverse scholastic approaches to explaining and understanding the international politics surrounding North Korea. No prior knowledge in the field of North Korean studies or political science is required, though any of it would help students better grasp the contents of the materials covered in the course.

The requirements of the course are a midterm exam, a final exam, a 5-6 page paper, and participation in the class discussion. The paper is expected to identify the key questions for the subject of the week that a student freely chooses, to show how the reading materials answer those questions, and to outline the presenter’s own view on the questions as well as the readings. The paper should be submitted in two weeks after the presentation. The guideline for drawing the final course grade is as follows: 25% for a midterm exam, 50% for a final exam, 15% for a paper, and 10% for class participation. But I reserve the right to make adjustments to the grade weightings if necessary.

The following schedule is a guideline to help you plan your reading. The planned reading schedule may be modified as the course proceeds, and extra materials will be introduced during class if needed. You should complete the required readings before class in order to be prepared for the discussion. Required readings are marked with an asterisk.

Primary Literature:

Class Schedule

I. Introduction

Class 1: Course Description and Class Organization


Class 2: Making of North Korea: Past and Present


*Ralph Hassig & Kongdan Oh, The Hidden People of North Korea* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), Chs. 3-4 (pp. 65-132).


II. Politics of Northeast Asia

Class 3: Power Shift in Northeast Asia


Class 4: Multipolarity and Regionalism in Northeast Asia


III. North Korean Foreign Policy

Class 5: Analysis of Foreign Policymaking I


Class 6: Analysis of Foreign Policymaking II


IV. North Korea’s Relationship with Neighboring Countries

Class 7: North Korea and the United States


Class 8: Mid-term Exam

Class 9: North Korea and China


**Class 10: North Korea’s Relationship with Russia & Japan**


**Class 11: North Korea and South Korea**


V. Current Issues on North Korea

Class 12: Weapons of Mass Destruction


Class 13: Weapons of Mass Destruction (Continued)

Class 14: Refugees, Human Rights and Assistance to North Korea


Mark Manyin, “Food Crisis and North Korea’s Aid Diplomacy,” in Kyung-Ae Park, ed., *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), Ch. 3.


IV. Concluding the Course

Class 15: Review and Discussion: Prospects for the North Korea Issues

Class 16: Final Exam