An examination of North Korea—the world’s last major hermit society. Since the division of the Korean peninsula in 1945, South Korea has developed into one of the largest trading nations in the world with a democratic polity, while North Korea has descended into a perpetually aid-dependent state that maintains domestic control through extreme repression. Isolated, destitute, totalitarian, and ruled by a communist hereditary dictatorship, North Korea remains, in spite of various attempts at engagement by its neighbors, “the most perfected totalitarian state” the world has ever known. Despite more than 25 years of severe food shortage, the priorities of the regime remain military build-up through “military-first politics,” deification of the ruling family through extravagant propaganda campaigns, and control through the operation of extensive political prisoner concentration camps. What does the future hold for North Korea under Kim Jong Un? What is the role of First Sister Kim Yo Jong? Emphasis on the Kim Il Sung-Kim Jong Il-Kim Jong Un continuum, strategy of brinkmanship, human rights problems, nuclear politics, and the implications of regime preservation or collapse.

General requirements:

1. Take-home final examination (30% of the final grade), due 11:59 PM, April 28
2. Final paper, 10 double-spaced pages (40%), due 11:59 PM, May 5
3. Oral presentation, class attendance, and participation (30%). Students have the option of writing a 20 page final paper in lieu of the oral presentation.

Books recommended for the course:

DHP P275: North Korean State and Society

Spring 2021

Class Schedule

January 20   Introduction: North Korean Exceptionalism
January 27   The Emergence of the Two Koreas
February 3  The North Korean Communist Experiment
February 10 The Korean War
February 17 Kim Il Sung Ideology and the North Korean Mindset
February 24 Leaning on Two Sides: Diplomacy during the Cold War
March 3 The North Korean Economy: Between Crisis and Catastrophe
March 10 Deterring the Engager: Strategies of Brinkmanship
March 17 The North Korean Nuclear Threat
March 24 Spring Break begins. No classes.
March 31 The North Korean Famine: A Catastrophe Non-Pareil

Student oral presentations begin March 31

April 7 Human Rights and Crimes against Humanity
April 14 The Comprehensive North Korea Problem in the Post-9/11 Era
April 21 Theory of Victory or the Long Goodbye? (last class)

DHP P275 Spring 2021

Reading Assignments
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To be completed by:

**January 20: Introduction to the Course**

No reading assignment.

Read 1-95 by February 17; 96-211 by March 17; 212-330 by end of class, April 21.


Read 1-102 by February 17; 103-210 by March 17; 211-294 by end of class, April 21.

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**January 27: The Emergence of the Two Koreas**


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**February 3: The North Korean Communist Experiment**


Bertrand Russell, “Why I am Not a Communist,” in Robert E. Egner and Lester E. Dennon, eds., *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell* (New York: George Allen and

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**February 10: The Korean War**

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[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/LG02Dg01.html (Links to an external site.)](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/LG02Dg01.html)

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**February 17: Kim Il Sung Ideology and the North Korean Mindset**


**Andrei Lankov, *North of the DMZ*, 1-95.**

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**February 24: Leaning on Two Sides: Diplomacy during the Cold War**


**March 3: The North Korean Economy: Between Crisis and Catastrophe**


http://www.piie.com/publications/pb/pb10-01.pdf (Links to an external site.)

**March 10: Deterring the Engager: Strategies of Brinkmanship**

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**March 17: The North Korean Nuclear Threat**


Andrei Lankov, *North of the DMZ*, 96-211. Read 212-330 by end of class, April 21.


March 31: The North Korean Famine: A Catastrophe Non-Pareil


**Student Oral Presentations begin on this day**
April 7: Human Rights and Crimes Against Humanity

Sandra Fahy, *Dying for Rights*. Read at your discretion. It is the best book on the subject.


http://www.hrnk.org/failureToProtect-Report.pdf (Links to an external site.)

Begin reading (read as much as you can):

UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea (2014), full draft:  
April 14: The Comprehensive North Korea Problem in the Post-9/11 Era


http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0592Asher.html (Links to an external site.)


http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/01/09/dont_engage_kim_jong_un_bankrupt_him?page=full (Links to an external site.)


http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/23/magazine/23counterfeit.html (Links to an external site.)


http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1642898,00.html (Links to an external site.)

April 21: Theory of Victory or the Long Goodbye?


http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/02/16/life_after_kim (Links to an external site.)


Andrei Lankov, North of the DMZ, 212-330.

Barbara Demick, Nothing To Envy, 211-294.

Academic Support at the StAAR Center:

The StAAR Center (formerly the Academic Resource Center and Student Accessibility Services) offers a variety of resources to all students (both undergraduate and graduate) in the Schools of Arts and Science, Engineering, the SMFA and Fletcher; services are free to all enrolled students. Students may make an academic coaching appointment to hone fundamental academic skills and/or attend academic skills
workshops. Students can visit our website (https://students.tufts.edu/staar-center) or email Mary Ellen Vigeant (mary_ellen.vigeant@tufts.edu) for additional information.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

The Fletcher School at Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty; recognizing the important contribution each student makes to our unique community. The Fletcher School is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Fletcher experience. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the StAAR Center at staarcenter@tufts.edu to make an appointment with Mary Ellen Vigeant to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.