KOR331: Korean Music from Gugak to K-Pop

This course will survey the various musical genres in the Korean culturescape with an eye to their historical formations and cultural context. Following a chronological design, it will begin with an examination of traditional genres (gugak, literally “national music”), and their development as Korea modernized over the last century. The growth of gugak and the crystallization of certain genres occurred in relation to the influx of outside forces, most notably Western music, which introduced a pressing need to consciously preserve the Korean; thus we will consider music’s role as a marker of national and cultural identity. A significant part of the course will then look at the rise of popular culture and music in South Korea, specifically through the cultural phenomenon known as the Korean Wave (hallyu).

The unprecedented popularity of Korean TV dramas, and the ensuing surge of K-pop both in the region and around the globe has gained remarkable media attention, and the nation now notably brands its image through popular culture. In addition to the musical genres covered, we will look at the use and portrayal of musics in Korean films, documentaries, and TV dramas to examine the intersection of nationalism, cultural identity, and globalization in contemporary South Korea. The course contributes to knowledge about a contemporary East Asian culture through its music. No prior knowledge of world music or Western music is required. If you have any questions regarding the course, please contact the instructor, Prof. Hae Joo Kim at haejoo.kim@stonybrook.edu

Tuesday & Thursday 11:30-12:50 PM