

# Korean Culture and Society through Films

J. Won Han

Rice University

June 2007

# Goal:

- To generate interests in Korean Language program.
- To help the students better understand *self and them*.

# Distribution Requirement: (Rice University)

- “Broad based, accessible to nonmajors, and representative of the knowledge, intellectual skills, and habits of thought that are most characteristic of a discipline or of inquiry across disciplines.”

# The students will develop:

- A critical eye for the cultural points in the movies
- Ability to compare and contrast between the old and the new, intra-Asia, and the East and the West.
- A skill to read the subtle symbolic manifestations in various forms for better interpretation and understanding.

# Demography :

- 19 female, 19 male students (38)
- 12 non-Asian, 26 Asian-heritage (8 Korean-heritage)

# Format: 19 Movies, lecture in English

- Participation (Discussion)
- Term papers
- Team project

LANGUAGE  
Korean

TITLE  
Friend

TYPE  
Quiz

[Return to Exam List](#)

Friend [e](#) [d](#)

[ADD\\_SECTION](#)

[ADD\\_PAGE](#)



Friend

**Section Instructions:** Listen to the dialog carefully.

Friend (0 point) [Edit](#) [Delete](#)

**Instructions**

Listen to the dialog carefully. Why do you think he mentioned about the anniversary of his father's death? Think in terms of the cultural implication.



Friend

ED 1

LANGUAGE	TITLE	TYPE
Korean	Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring Again	Quiz

[Return to Exam List](#)

SSAW e d

[ADD\\_SECTION](#)[ADD\\_PAGE](#)

## SSAW

**Section Instructions:** Please explain the differences between the two scenes.SSAW (0 point) [Edit](#) [Delete](#)**Instructions** Compare the two scenes and explain how different they are and provide your interpretation.**Sitting on the statue**

ED 1





## Language Exchange BBS

Foreign Language Forums for Rice Students

[FAQ](#)
[Search](#)
[Memberlist](#)
[Usergroups](#)  
[Profile](#)
[You have no new messages](#)
[Log out \[ JWonHan \]](#)

### Division of Korea

Goto page [Previous](#) [1, 2, 3](#)

WIKI

BLOGS

LRC Home

[new topic](#)

[postreply](#)

[Language Exchange BBS Forum Index -> KORE 346](#)

[View previous topic](#) :: [View next topic](#)

Author	Message
<b>ChristineHwong</b>  Joined: 17 Jan 2007 Posts: 3	<p>Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 2:52 pm Post subject:</p> <p>I think this movie is a good representation of not only the Korean War, but wars in general. Wars, initially, seem to be started for just causes but then after awhile the focus is lost. The Taeguikgi does a good job of portraying war as not a "good" side fighting a "bad" side, rather the realities of it. The movie focuses on the lives of friends and families that are separated to fight for something they might or might not even believe in.</p> <p><a href="#">quote</a> <a href="#">edit</a> <a href="#">IP</a></p> <p><a href="#">Back to top</a> <a href="#">profile</a> <a href="#">pm</a> <a href="#">email</a></p>
<b>GeunSeok</b>  Joined: 17 Jan 2007 Posts: 2	<p>Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 3:02 pm Post subject: taeguki</p> <p>The movie <i>Taegukgi</i>, depicts the people who fought during the Korean War but tries to show a somewhat detached view of the war itself. Not only the civilians but also the soldiers do not seem to have a clear idea of different political beliefs of the North and South but try to draw a line in between so it'll be easier for them to figure out who they are supposed to kill and not to. However as we follow one of the main character, Jintae, who at first fights for the South then takes the North side but changes his mind as soon as he finds out that his brother is alive, it seems impossible to determine ally and foe. My grandfather who lost his leg during the Korean War and had to have my grandmother look after him all his life, used to tell me the only way he could keep on shooting was by considering the North Koreans as Par-geng-i(A red, literally translated, meaning communist in a negative way) but not as same Koreans who shared the same blood lineage.</p> <p><a href="#">quote</a> <a href="#">edit</a> <a href="#">IP</a></p> <p><a href="#">Back to top</a> <a href="#">profile</a> <a href="#">pm</a> <a href="#">email</a></p>
<b>ThienHoang</b>  Joined: 17 Jan 2007 Posts: 9	<p>Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 3:36 pm Post subject:</p> <p>One point of the story that really jumped out at me was the scene when the "Anti Communist Federation" flatly executed those suspected of being communists. In the beginning when Young-Shin signed up on some list for barley, she did not even know what she was signing up for. Furthermore, this was before the war even broke out. You have to wonder whether there were really Communist spies in the group or if they were innocent and just fighting to live.</p> <p><a href="#">quote</a> <a href="#">edit</a> <a href="#">IP</a></p>

**TashaChemplavi**

Joined: 17 Jan 2007  
Posts: 2

Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 1:26 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

**JamieLee wrote:**

I feel that *Taegukgi* did a phenomenal job in not only depicting the Korean War as an event in history but also exposing the impact and ramifications of the war to Korea and its people. To many of us the Korean War is merely one of the many wars that took place - "the one before Vietnam." To the peninsula, however, it was a catastrophic event that left penetrating damages (socioeconomic as well as political) that persists even to this day, after half a century.

I agree with Jamie. I don't think Americans really understand the devastation that foreign wars create. Even though we may see war footage on television, the whole situation is so removed from our own existence in the U.S. that we can't really grasp war's effects on the countries where the wars are fought. History books are written by the "winners." *Taegukgi* provides a compelling look at the other side of the war.

[Back to top](#)

[profile](#) [pm](#) [email](#)

**AyaKurihara**

Joined: 17 Jan 2007  
Posts: 2

Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 1:39 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

I think the movie was a good representation of what happened during the Korean War. It shows how the war can greatly impact so many innocent lives, and also it's sad that it's going on right now. I think some people already commented on this, but I agree that there wasn't a good or bad side in this war. If both sides were trying to win by killing off the people on the other side, you can't really point fingers to one side and say that one was worse than the other.

[Back to top](#)

[profile](#) [pm](#) [email](#)

**LanceLuedeker**

Joined: 31 Jan 2007  
Posts: 2

Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 2:04 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

As far as understanding the movie is concerned it seemed as though South Korea was shocked into action. Everyone was leading normal happy lives and Bang! The next day there's a war. I thought it also showed how even though the South wasn't communist, it's government could also be almost tyrannical. ex: The brothers being forced on the train

[Back to top](#)

[profile](#) [pm](#) [email](#)

**GarrettDornon**

Joined: 17 Jan 2007  
Posts: 3

Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 2:06 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

I believe the movie showed the true side of the war in Korea. Much like the Civil War, the war was between the country. Many of the soldiers knew and were friends each other. The movie I believe focused a bit too much on the story of the brothers and not quite enough on the war. Neither the Northern or the Southern Koreans can be depicted as "good" or "bad". They were both equally vicious and violent

[Back to top](#)

[profile](#) [pm](#) [email](#)

**DavidKim**

Joined: 17 Jan 2007  
Posts: 2

Posted: Mon Feb 12, 2007 2:13 pm Post subject:

[quote](#) [edit](#) [IP](#)

Just seeing people forced into the draft created a somber and accurate portrayal of the harshness of the Korean War. There were family members and friends that were forced to fight one another. It might not have even been your beliefs, but merely where you lived which decided which side your loyalties lied.

# Survey Result:

End of the semester

1. This course was a good way to learn about the Korean culture and society. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		31.2%	10
4		25%	8
3		37.5%	12
2		3.1%	1
1		3.1%	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

2. I now understand myself/themselves better with this course ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		21.9%	7
4		21.9%	7
3		28.1%	9
2		15.6%	5
1		12.5%	4
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

3. This course helped me with not only learning about the Korean culture but also expanding my world view/perspectives in terms of understanding Asian culture

3. This course helped me with not only learning about the Korean culture but also expanding my world view/perspectives in terms of understanding Asian culture in general. (5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		25%	8
4		25%	8
3		34.4%	11
2		9.4%	3
1		6.2%	2
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

4. Considering that the movies were the 'text' for this course, the number of the movies was adequate for the course. (5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		50%	16
4		18.8%	6
3		18.8%	6
2		9.4%	3
1		3.1%	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

5. The number of the movies to watch were one too many for a semester. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		28.1%	9
4		34.4%	11
3		15.6%	5
2		6.2%	2
1		15.6%	5
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

6. The volume of the supplementary reading material was enough to support my understanding of the movies. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		15.6%	5
4		18.8%	6
3		34.4%	11
2		28.1%	9
1		3.1%	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

(skipped this question) 0

7. There was an occasion (s) that I wished we had more time for discussion. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		15.6%	5
4		21.9%	7
3		31.2%	10
2		28.1%	9
1		3.1%	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

8. If the class was smaller, the discussion could have been more in depth. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		25%	8
4		25%	8
3		15.6%	5
2		21.9%	7
1		12.5%	4
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0





(skipped this question)

11. Learning about the Korean culture and society inspired me to learn Korean language. ( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		9.4%	3
4		21.9%	7
3		28.1%	9
2		28.1%	9
1		12.5%	4
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0

12. Learning about the culture and the society inspired me to want to go to Korea, if given an opportunity.( 5- Strongly agree, 1-strongly disagree)

		Response Percent	Response Total
5		31.2%	10
4		34.4%	11
3		15.6%	5
2		9.4%	3
1		9.4%	3
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>32</b>
(skipped this question)			0