

**Asian Languages and Literatures/Asian American Studies 3920:  
Cultures of Korean Adoption: The Adoptee Experience  
Spring 2006 Course Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Kim Park Nelson

**Class Meetings:** Wednesdays, 6:15-8:45 pm, Folwell Hall 306

**Email:** [greg0051@umn.edu](mailto:greg0051@umn.edu)

Please feel free to contact me via email any time; I try to check my messages several times a day.

**Office Location:** Scott Hall 303

**Office Hours:** Before and after class and by appointment

**Required Texts:**

- *The Language of Blood* by Jane Jeong Trenka. Graywolf Press, 2005. ISBN: 1555974260
- *Beyond Good Intentions: A Mother Reflects on Raising Internationally Adopted Children* by Cheri Register, Yeong and Yeong, ISBN: 1597430005
- *Single Square Picture: A Korean Adoptee's Search for Her Roots* by Katy Robinson, Penguin Group, 2002. ISBN: 042518496X
- *After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees* edited by Sook Wilkinson, Sunrise Ventures, 2002. ISBN: 0818702869

**Additional chapters and articles are contained in *TWO* course readers available at  
Paradigm Resources in the Dinkydome.**

*Course reader ONE (CR1) contains readings that are only available on paper.*

Course reader TWO (CR2) contains readings that are also available online,  
but are printed in a reader and available for purchase for your convenience.

*Links for online available readings are on the course WebCT site  
if you prefer to print on your own.*

**All readings (books and both course readers) are also available on reserve at Wilson Library.**

I may also assign additional short readings, which I will provide to you in class.

**Course Objectives**

- To understand and explore different experiences of Korean adoption, focusing on the experience of Korean adoptees.
- To investigate the history and practice of Korean adoption within an American and global context.
- To practice and improve critical reading, writing and thinking skills through verbal and written group and individual analysis.

This course examines Korean adoption and the experience of Korean adoptees in America over the past 50 years. It centers on the experience of Korean adoptees focusing largely on the social and cultural production this ever-growing population. It includes an overview of American domestic (in-race and transracial) adoption history and practice, covering legal and policy decisions that have affected the practice of transnational adoption, social welfare research concerning Korean adoption

and changing attitudes about adoption from American mainstream and Asian American perspectives. Using the Korean War as a historical baseline, the course considers the geopolitical and socioeconomic relationships between the United States and South Korea during and since the Cold War that have shaped the history of Korean adoption. The course concludes with an overview of Korean adoptee networking, advocacy and community-building efforts worldwide.

Through reading, writing and discussion, we will focus on the following questions: What does it mean to be Korean adopted for adoptees and others? What are major themes in Korean adoptee cultural production, and what does that convey about Korean adoption as a practice? What can the experience of Korean adoptees tell other transracial and transnational adoptees groups? How does our understanding of Korean adoptees change our understanding of family? Of what it means to American? Of what it means to be Asian American? In addition you will be asked to think, speak and write about how the practice of Korean adoption impacts individuals in the adoption triad, communities, and nations personally, culturally, economically and politically.

In addition to learning about Korean adoption, this course will provide a forum for you to raise questions, express opinions, exchange ideas with your peers, and improve your responses to texts. Because each of us brings a unique perspective to what we read based on the rich differences among us—from our individual experiences, personal histories, and academic backgrounds—working together will help everyone to gain the greatest possible understanding from the assigned texts. It is my hope that **discussions** will be developed in a respectful manner as well as in challenging and productive directions. Our discussion time will likely include both *large group and small group discussions*, and we will focus on developing detail-oriented reading habits, discuss how to approach various genres of literature, how to think critically about literary, journalistic and scholarly texts, and how to write about them in academically productive ways.

### Assignments

- 1) You will generate between 3 and 5 discussion questions for each week, due **6 pm the day before class (Tuesday)**. Sometimes these questions will be in reaction to the week's readings or the previous week's speaker/film/audio recording and sometimes they will be for speakers who are visiting the class. Your discussion questions will be worth 30% of your grade (30 points total).
- 2) You will write *3 papers*, each 4-6 pages in length. There will be 5 possible writing assignments from which to choose, but you must complete only 3. Assignment descriptions and due dates are located under "Scheduled Topics" in the syllabus. No late papers will be accepted. No additional credit will be assigned for extra papers turned in; if more than 3 assignments are submitted, the highest 3 scores will be used to compile the final grade. Each paper will be worth 20% of your final grade (20 points), for a total of 60% (60 points).
- 3) In addition, you will be graded on *class participation*, which will include attendance and participation (knowledge of readings, active listening and discussion in class), which will be worth 10% of your final grade (10 points).

## Grading

Final grades will be based on all accumulated points in the following manner:

<b>A</b>	93–100	<b>B-</b>	80–82	<b>D+</b>	67–69
<b>A-</b>	90–92	<b>C+</b>	77–79	<b>D</b>	63–66
<b>B+</b>	87–89	<b>C</b>	73–76	<b>D-</b>	60–62
<b>B</b>	83–86	<b>C-</b>	70–72	<b>F</b>	<60

As you can see, the grade breaks depend on the difference of just a few points. You are responsible for making sure that your assignment point totals have been accurately added. Please let me know if you think you have found an error. The awarding of points one way or another does matter, and I will be very conscious of this when I am grading your work. I am happy to talk to you if you disagree with your assignment grade(s) but I will rarely award additional points, unless there has been an error.

### Scheduled Topics:

*Readings are to be completed by the day they are assigned.*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<b>One: 1/18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Course</li> <li>• Review Syllabus</li> <li>• Air: <i>Finding Home: 50 Years of International Adoption</i></li> </ul>
<b>Two: 1/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <i>A Single Square Picture</i> pages 1-199</li> <li>• Screen: <i>Passing Through</i></li> <li>• Discuss: Why does studying adoption (domestic, in-race, transracial, transnational) matter?</li> <li>• <b>Assignment 1, Personal Narrative (due Week 4): Write a personal narrative focusing on how race and/or your experience with adoption has impacted your identity.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Three: 2/1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>A Single Square Picture</i> pages 201-297 *<i>The Language of Blood</i> chapters 1 -3 (through page 75 in paperback, 66 in hardback)</li> <li>• Discuss: <i>A Single Square Picture</i></li> <li>• Screen: <i>Crossing Chasms</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guest: Jennifer Arndt</i></p>
<b>Four: 2/8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>The Language of Blood</i> (finish reading)</li> <li>• Discuss: <i>The Language of Blood</i></li> <li>• <b>Assignment 2, Comparison Paper (due Week 6): Compare/contrast Jeong Trenka and Robinson memoirs: How are these authors different and similar (in writing style, experience, outlook) and how are these differences and similarities significant to our understandings of Korean adoption?</b></li> </ul>
<u>Week</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<b>Five: 2/15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *Introduction and Chapter 4 from <i>Cold War Orientalism</i> by Christina</li> </ul>

	<p>Klein, CR1 pages 3-39.  * Selections from <i>The Unforgotten War</i>, by Thomas Park Clement  CR1 pages 41-56.  * Selections from <i>Comforting an Orphaned Nation</i>, by Tobias Hübinette in  CR1 pages 59-69 or online  * “Moved by War” by Ji-Yeon Yuh, CR2 or online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: Korean War and the Cold War</li> <li>• Air: <i>Korea: The Unfinished War</i></li> </ul>
<b>Six: 2/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: * “Introduction: A Historical Overview of American Adoption in Adoption in America” by E. Wayne Carp, in CR1 pages 73-86  * “Reconstructing ‘Free Woman’” by Karin Zipf, in CR2 or online  * The Adoption History Project Timeline:  <a href="http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adoption/timeline.html">http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adoption/timeline.html</a></li> <li>• Discuss: American (in-race and transracial) adoption history and practice</li> <li>• Screen: <i>First Person Plural</i></li> </ul>
<b>Seven: 3/1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: U.S. and international Korean adoptee organization webpages  <a href="http://www.akconnection.com">http://www.akconnection.com</a>  <a href="http://www.adopteesolidarity.org">http://www.adopteesolidarity.org</a>  <a href="http://www.aaawashington.org">http://www.aaawashington.org</a>  <a href="http://www.alsoknownas.org/">http://www.alsoknownas.org/</a>  <a href="http://goal.or.kr/new/">http://goal.or.kr/new/</a>  <a href="http://www.ikaa.info/">http://www.ikaa.info/</a></li> <li>• Discuss Korean adoptee activism: Networking, advocacy and community-building efforts worldwide  <i>Special Guests: Ami Nafzgar, and members of AK Connection leadership</i></li> </ul>
<b>Eight: 3/8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: * “Regulating the American Family” by Steven Mintz in CR1, pages 89-102  * “Adoption Agencies and the Search for the Ideal Family, 1918-1965” by Brian Gill in CR1, pages 105-115  * UNICEF Innocenti Digest, “Intercountry Adoption,” in CR2 or online  * “International Law and Identity Rights for Adopted Children,” by Nancy Heimerle in CR2 or online  * “‘Sensitive’ to ‘Race’ and Ethnicity?” by Ann Phoenix pages in CR1, pages 117- 128  * “Outcomes of Transracial Adoption” by Arnold Silverman in CR1, pages 129-136  * “Intercountry Adopted Children as Young Adults—A Swedish Cohort Study,” by Lindblad <i>et al.</i> in CR2 or online</li> <li>• Discuss: State and agency in transnational adoption</li> <li>• <b>Assignment 3, Legislative Review (Due Week 10): Historically, what is the major federal and state (in Minnesota, or if you are adopted, in the state you were adopted) transnational adoption legislation? How did these laws change transnational adoption policy and practice?</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guest: Jill Taylor from Children’s Home Society</i></p>
<u>Week</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<b>Spring Break</b>	No Class

<p><b>Nine: 3/22</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>“The Role of Race, Culture, and National Origin in International Adoption”</i> by Madelyn Freundlich in CR1 pages 139-156</li> <li>*<i>“Brown-skinned White Girls,”</i> pages 214-243 by Frances Winddance-Twine CR1 pages 159-173</li> <li>*National Association of Black Social Workers position paper <i>“Preserving Families”</i> <a href="http://www.nabsw.org/mserver/PreservingFamilies.aspx?menuContext=757">http://www.nabsw.org/mserver/PreservingFamilies.aspx?menuContext=757</a></li> <li>* <i>“The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans”</i> by Claire Kim pages 105-138 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“‘FOB’ and ‘Whitewashed: Identity and Internalized Racism among Second Generation Asian Americans”</i> by Karen Pyke and Tran Dang pages 147-172 in CR2 or online</li> <li>• Discuss race and adoption in America: How is race and inequity central to experiences of adoption? Korean adoption and Asian American perspectives</li> <li>• Screen <i>Daughter from Danang</i></li> <li>• <b>Assignment 4, Response Paper (Due week 11): In whose best interests? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Korean adoption. Who potentially benefits, and how? Who is potentially hurt, and how?</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Ten: 3/29</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *Sections 2 and 3, <i>“The Adoption Decision”</i> and <i>“A Variety of Voices,”</i> from <i>I Wish for You a Beautiful Life</i>” edited by Sara Dorow, CR1 pages 175-196</li> <li>* <i>Beyond Good Intentions</i> by Cheri Register</li> <li>• Discuss: Perspectives of birth and adoptive parents.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guest: Cheri Register</i></p>
<p><b>Eleven: 4/5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>“Coming to Terms with Adoption,”</i> by Harold Grotevandt pages 3-27 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“Self and Alma Mater,”</i> by Sandra Kryder page 355-373 in CR2 online</li> <li>*<i>“Cultural Identity and Place in Adult Korean- American Intercountry Adoptees,”</i> by Dani Meier pages 15-48 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“Intercountry, Transnational Adoption and Ethnic Identity,”</i> pages 75-87 by Nam Soon Huh and William Reid in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“The Transracial Adoption Paradox: History, research, and counseling implications of cultural socialization”</i> by Richard M. Lee pages 711-744 in CR2 or online</li> <li>• Discuss: Korean adoptee identity in research and experience</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guest: Richard M. Lee</i></p>

<u>Week</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Twelve: 4/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>“Wedding Citizenship and Culture: Korean Adoptees and the Global Family of Korea”</i> by Eleana Kim in course reader pages 438-450 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“Intercountry Adoption as a Migratory Practice”</i> by Kristen Lovelock pages 907-949 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“The Movement of Children for Intercountry Adoption”</i> pages 1-20 by Peter Selman CR1 pages 197-208</li> <li>*<i>“Exploring the Impact of Birth Country Travel on Korean Adoptees”</i>, by Kathleen Bergquist pages 45-61 in CR2 or online</li> <li>• Discuss the Korean adoptee diaspora: Adoptees in Europe, the Americas, Australia and Korea</li> <li>• Screen: Gathering 2004 film</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guest: Eleana Kim</i></p>
Thirteen: 4/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>“The Korean Adoption Issue”</i> from <i>Comforting an Orphaned Nation</i> by Tobias Hübinette pages 81-118 in CR1 pages 209-228 or online</li> <li>*<i>“Transracial Adoptees in the Media: 1986-1996,”</i> by Leslie Hollingsworth pages 289-293 in CR2 or online</li> <li>*<i>“Mother, Child, Race, Nation”</i> by Laura Briggs pages 179-200 in CR2 or online.</li> <li>*<i>“Available Childhood: Race, Culture and the Transnational Adoptee”</i> pages 83-109 from <i>Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds</i> by Claudia Casteñeda in CR1 pages 229-243</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.dalrosdesign.com/about/here.asp?page=intro">http://www.dalrosdesign.com/about/here.asp?page=intro</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: Depictions of transracial adoptees in popular culture</li> <li>• <b>Assignment 5 (Due week 15): Develop report, presentation, or other activity for a Korean adoptee networking or activist group or an adoption agency that handles Korean adoptions.</b> <i>If you choose to complete Assignment 5, you will be awarded up to 5 extra credit points if you present your project on the last day of class</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guests: Kim Dalros and Holly Coughlin, of the HERE Project</i></p>
Fourteen: 4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: *<i>After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees</i>, edited by Wilkinson and Fox</li> <li>*<i>“Living in Half Tones”</i> by Me-K Ando (Ahn), CR1 pages 247-252</li> <li>• Discuss: Korean adoptee artists</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Special Guests: Sun Yung Shin, Me-K Ahn, Katie Leo</i></p>
Fifteen: 5/3	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Student presentations of Assignment 5 for Korean adoption groups</i></p>

*Readings are to be completed by the day they are assigned.*

**Course Reader ONE References**  
**ALL/AAS 3920: Cultures of Korean American Adoption**

**Week 5:**

- Klein, Christina. *Cold War Orientalism: Musicals, Travel Narratives, and Middlebrow Culture in Postwar America*. Berkeley, University of California Press., 1998. Introduction (1-17) and Chapter 4 (143-190).
- Clement, Thomas Park. *The Unforgotten War: Dust of the Streets*. 1st ed. [United States]: T.P. Clement, 1998. Pages 1-27.
- Hübinette, Tobias. *Comforting an Orphaned Nation*. Stockholm, Stockholm University Department of Oriental Languages, 2005. Pages 52-72.

**Week 6:**

- Carp, E. Wayne. "Introduction: A Historical Overview of American Adoption" in *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*. Edited by E. Wayne Carp, 1-26. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002.

**Week 8:**

- Mintz, Steven. "Regulating the American Family" in *Family and Society in American History*. Edited by Joseph M. Hawes and Elizabeth I. Nybakken, 9-36 Urbana [Ill.]: University of Illinois Press, 2001.
- Gill, Brian. "Adoption Agencies and the Search for the Ideal Family, 1918-1965" in *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*. Edited by E. Wayne Carp, 160-180. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Phoenix, Ann. "'Sensitive' to 'Race' and Ethnicity?" pages 34-80 in *Psychology and Social Care*. Edited by David Messer and Fiona Jones. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- Silverman, Arnold. "Outcomes of Transracial Adoption." *The Future of Children* 3(1), 104-118. 1993.

**Week 9:**

- Freundlich, Madelyn. "The Role of Race, Culture, and National Origin in International Adoption" pages 89-123 in *The Role of Race, Culture, and National Origin in Adoption*. Adoption and Ethics, Vol. 1. Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 2000.
- Winddance-Twine, Frances. "Brown-skinned White Girls," pages 214-243 in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Edited by Ruth Frankenberg. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

**Week 10:**

- "The Adoption Decision" and "A Variety of Voices" pages 35-73 in *I Wish for You a Beautiful Life: Letters from the Korean Birth Mothers of Ae Ran Won to Their Children*. Edited by Sara Dorow. St. Paul, MN: Yeong & Yeong Book Company, 1999.

**Week 12:**

- Selman, Peter. "The Movement of Children for Intercountry Adoption" *Population Research and Policy Review* 21, 1-20. 2001.

**Week 13:**

Hübinette, Tobias. "The Korean Adoption Issue" pages 81-118 in *Comforting an Orphaned Nation*. Stockholm, Stockholm University Department of Oriental Languages, 2005.

Casteñeda, Claudia. "Available Childhood: Race, Culture and the Transnational Adoptee," pages 83-109 in *Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2002.

**Week 14:**

Ando, Me-K. "Living in Half Tones" pages 179-189 in *The Adoption Reader: Birth Mothers, Adoptive Mothers, and Adopted Daughters Tell Their Stories*. Edited by Susan Wadia-Ells ; [with Nancy Mairs ... [et al.]. Seattle, Wash.: Seal Press, 1995



**Course Reader TWO References**  
**ALL/AAS 3920: Cultures of Korean American Adoption**

**Week 5:**

Yuh, Ji-Yeon. "Moved by War: Migration, Diaspora and the Korean War." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8(3), 277-291. 2005.

**Week 6:**

Zipf, Karin. "Reconstructing 'Free Woman'" *Journal of Women's History* 12(1), 8-31. 2000.

**Week 8:**

International Child Development Centre. "Intercountry Adoption," *UNICEF Innocenti Digest*, 99 (2), 1-16. 1999.

Heimerle, Nancy. "International Law and Identity Rights for Adopted Children," *Adoption Quarterly* 7(2), 85-96. 2003.

Lindblad, Frank, Anders Hjern and B. Vinnerljung. "Intercountry Adopted Children as Young Adults—A Swedish Cohort Study," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 73(2), 190-202 2003.

**Week 9:**

Kim, Claire Jean. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics and Society* 27(1), 105-138. 1999.

Pyke, Karen and Tran Dang. "'FOB' and 'Whitewashed:' Identity and Internalized Racism among Second Generation Asian Americans." *Qualitative Sociology* 26(2), 147-172. 2003.

**Week 11:**

Grotevandt, Harold. "Coming to Terms with Adoption." *Adoption Quarterly* 1(1), 3-27. 1997.

Kryder, Sandra. "Self and Alma Mater," *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 16(5), 355-373. 1999.

Meier, Dani. "Cultural Identity and Place in Adult Korean-American Intercountry Adoptees." *Adoption Quarterly*. 3(1), 15-48. 1999.

Huh, Nam Soon and William Reid. "Intercountry, Transnational Adoption and Ethnic Identity," *International Social Work* 43(1), 75-87. 2000.

Lee, Richard M. "The Transracial Adoption Paradox: History, research, and counseling implications of cultural socialization" *The Counseling Psychologist* 31(6), 711-744. 2003.

**Week 12:**

Kim, Eleana. "Wedding Citizenship and Culture: Korean Adoptees and the Global Family of Korea." *Social Text* 21(1), 57-81. 2003.

Lovelock, Kristen. "Intercountry Adoption as a Migratory Practice" *International Migration Review* 34(3), 907-949. 2000.

Bergquist, Kathleen. "Exploring the Impact of Birth Country Travel on Korean Adoptees." *Journal of Family Social Work* 7(4), 45-61. 2003.

**Week 13:**

Hollingsworth, Leslie. "Transracial Adoptees in the Media: 1986-1996," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 72(2), 289-293. 2002.

Briggs, Laura. "Mother, Child, Race, Nation." *Gender and History* 15(2), 179-200. 2003.