

Diplomacy and North Korea
POL 594-02 CRN 3345
Fall 2023
University of San Diego
Ambassador (retired) Leslie Bassett
5:30 p.m. – 8:20 p.m. (Wednesday, August 30-December 6, 2023)
Office hours: Room 254B
Wednesdays – 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (in person by appt)
or at a mutually convenient time via zoom (by appointment)
Email: lbassett@sandiego.edu Phone: 407-335-8075
KIPJ Rm 253

Zoom link for class: <https://sandiego.zoom.us/j/97001173830>

Zoom link for office hours: <https://sandiego.zoom.us/j/3103750919>

Course description:

Since the division of the Korean peninsula into two separate entities after WWII, North Korea has evolved into a uniquely problematic player on the global stage. Its cult-like government based on mandatory adoration of three generations of Kim leaders has largely dismissed the diplomatic norms of world order in favor of a unique posture of defiance mingled with expectations of deference and support. North Korea's key diplomatic counterparts (China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and the U.S.) have, separately and together, pursued differing tactics to try and encourage North Korea to abandon nuclear aspirations and moderate aggressive rhetoric and extra-territorial criminal acts. However, each of these counterparts has a different national agenda when it comes to North Korea, and they align only rarely and often with contradictory aims. This class will review key diplomatic episodes involving North Korea's engagements and exercise various scenarios for possible future diplomatic strategies as North Korea moves ever closer to obtaining a nuclear weapons capability.

This will be an in-person synchronous course that relies on continuous student assignments, collaboration and presentations. It is therefore extremely important that students plan to attend all class sessions. If you must miss a session for an excused absence, please alert the instructor before class to receive a make-up assignment. There will be no make-up options for unexcused absences or no-shows to class.

All course directions, assignments, and updates will be posted on blackboard. Please check there regularly. If you have problems accessing blackboard, please contact the instructor.

Please offer constructive comments and suggestions at any time to make the experience better for you and your colleagues. All suggestions will be carefully considered, and adjustments made whenever possible. For that reason, the syllabus

will likely change as we go through the course together, please be alert to notices in blackboard.

Office hours are here for you! You will need to meet with the instructor outside of class as part of the participation grade process but please feel free to reach out anytime. Zoom meetings are available on almost any day of the week. In-person meetings can be scheduled during office hours or at a mutually convenient time.

Pro tip: To get the most out of this course, keep up with the workload and come to class prepared.

Learning objectives:

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will become familiar with the full range of foreign policy actors and influences on the evolving situation with North Korea and assess diplomatic tools for possible future engagement strategies.
- **Operational Assessment:** Students will be able to identify current challenges, opportunities or imperatives for action related to North Korea and East Asia and be able to identify and prioritize key issues that must be addressed. They will also develop skills for effective team collaboration.
- **Social Responsibility:** Students will understand the roles non-governmental entities and/or individuals have played in influencing diplomacy with North Korea.
- **Personal Responsibility:** Students will form their own research agendas in foreign policy analysis; will participate in a constructive and respectful fashion in class; and will practice academic integrity in their assignments.
- **Communication:** Students will build their skills in effective communication to inform, engage with, and elicit information from, others. They will also learn to be persuasive and effective in a hostile negotiation situation.

Course Texts: All readings/reference materials will be available on-line or through the instructor.

Required readings/activities are listed for each class session and should be completed *prior* to the relevant session. Links are provided. **It is essential that you come to class having completed all preparatory materials.**

Please do keep up with the news as well, as current events will be discussed at every session and an understanding of current dynamics will be essential to your success in the course.

Helpful web resources:

[NK News](#)

[38 North](#)

[North Korea International Documentation Project](#) (Wilson Center)

[UCSD GPS Korea-Pacific Program](#)

[Yonhap News Agency](#)

[Daily NK](#)

Grading and Assignments:

Late Assignment Policy: Out of respect to those who meet deadlines, extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. Late submissions will lose 1/2 a letter grade per day, unless accompanied by a dean's excuse for incapacitating illness, the death of a family member or a comparable emergency.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Please familiarize yourself with the [University's policy on cheating, plagiarism and documentation](#). Any cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported directly to the appropriate dean.

Participation: Students are expected to have completed the preparatory assignments and actively contribute to class discussions. **Every student is expected to meet with the instructor at least once during (in person or virtual) office hours as part of the participation score.**

Grading:

Points will be awarded for assignments as follows:

Participation	50 points
Class Briefing	100 points
Team Exercises:	400 points total (100 points/eachx4)
Team Case Study:	400 points total (200 points/eachx2)
Simulations:	600 points total (300 points eachX2)
Final Paper:	450 points (50 points for outline; 400 points for paper)

Total points possible: 2000 points

A=1800 points and above

B=1600 points and above

Assignments:

Students can find formats for all assignments as well as grading rubrics in the "Assignments" content folder on Blackboard. **All assignments should be submitted to the instructor via email in Word format.**

News Brief/Reading Brief: Each student will present one 5-minute update to the class, reflecting either key North Korea developments for the previous week OR highlights of the assigned materials (the instructor will indicate which). This assignment is worth 50 points.

(Team) In-class exercises: Student teams will participate in 4 exercises during the course, each worth 100 points. All background info will be provided in assigned materials or by the instructor. Students will work in class in their teams to develop a policy recommendation to the stipulated scenario, and brief back to the full class.

(Team) Case study: Each team will independently research and present two case studies on an assigned topic related to diplomacy and North Korea. Case study presentations will include a power point presentation and associated notes, including sources. Presentations will last no more than 10 minutes, with additional time for questions. Each case study is worth 200 points.

Simulations: Students will participate in two simulations, each worth 300 points (150 points for a 1000-word position paper; 150 points for participation in the actual role play).

Final paper: The president has requested that the NSC prepare recommendations for bold moves in US policy with the DPRK to lower the risk of military confrontation in the region. Each student will prepare a final policy paper with their suggestions, defining attainable goals over the near term (18 months); at least three specific actions; domestic considerations; regional reactions (Russia, Japan, China, South Korea and DPRK), and risks and rewards. The paper may not exceed 8 pages. While students do not have to cite sources, their recommendations do have to be linked to the stated objectives and should be both well-reasoned and well-defended. Students will submit an outline by November 8 and receive feedback from the instructor by November 15. The final paper stands in place of the final exam and will be due on December 13, 2023. The final paper outline will be worth 50 points, and the complete paper an additional 400 points.

Session 1: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“A dragon rises up from a small stream*”

In this session we will cover course logistics and the syllabus, then assign teams. Readings and discussion will focus on pre-WWII history of the region as it relates to current developments.

Prior to class please sign up for 1 briefing (either news or reading) on the google spreadsheet provided by email

Assigned materials:

Syllabus (blackboard)

Map of region (blackboard)

[“A Brief History of Korea,”](#) Young Ick Lew, The Korea Society, 2000, pp 1–25.

[“Timeline,”](#) Old Korean Legation in Washington D.C.

[“Too Much History: American Policy and East Asia in the Shadow of the Past,”](#) James Steinberg, Texas National Security Review, November, 2017.

[“Kim Jong-Un, Chinese and Russian Delegations Enjoy Grand V-Day Performance,”](#) DPRK Daily, July 27, 2023.

Session 2: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“The crayfish sides with the crab*”

(C) Guest speaker: Dr. Patrick McEachern, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, on “The Cult of the Kims.” Dr. McEachern is the State Department’s best analyst on North Korea, and is the author of, “[Inside the Red Box](#),” and “[North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know](#),” co-author of “[North Korea, Iran, and the Challenge to International Order](#)”, and the upcoming, “[Survivor: North Korea from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Un](#).”

In this session we will discuss WWII impacts on the region, the division of the Korean peninsula, and the development of two Koreas.

Reading Brief: Lauren Fettes

News Brief: Erik Christensen

Team Exercise: DMZ incident

Please watch: “[A Look Inside Korea’s Demilitarized Zone](#).”

Assigned materials:

“[A Brief History of Korea](#),” Young Ick Lew, The Korea Society, 2000, pp 26-31.

“[Korea Under the Rising Sun](#),” by Allyn Vanoy, Warfare History Network, February, 2013.

“[Kim Il Sung Biography](#),” The Wilson Center, excerpted from *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, by James E. Hoare, published by RLP Books.

“[Notes of the Conversation between Comrade I.V. Stalin and a Governmental Delegation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea headed by Kim Il Sung](#),” March 5, 1949, The Wilson Center.

“[Syngman Rhee Biography](#),” The Wilson Center.

“[An Unpromising Recovery: South Korea’s Post-Korean War Economic Development](#),” by Michael J. Seth, Association for Asian Studies, Winter 2013.

Session 3: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“When whales fight a shrimp’s back breaks*”

This session will explore the onset of the Korean War, the UN-supervised armistice, and the current situation of the demilitarized zone.

Simulation One: The Korean War

Position papers are due to the instructor by 5 pm!

Session 4: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“The cornered rat will bite the cat*”

This session will briefly consider the issue of nuclear arms and the Korean peninsula from the Korean War to the present.

Reading Brief: Sultan Alomari

News Brief: Jack Kamps

Team A Case Study: Is the Korean Armistice a Good Model for Russia-Ukraine?

Team C Case Study: Is the US a Reliable Nuclear Umbrella for South Korea and Japan?

Assigned materials:

“[The Evolution of South Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Policy Debate](#),” Jennifer Ahn, Council on Foreign Relations, August, 2022.

“[Nuclear Negotiations with North Korea](#)”, Congressional Research Service, May 4, 2021.

“[What Russia Thinks About North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons](#),” by Anastasia Barinnikova, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, April 24, 2019.

“[Debating North Korea: US and Chinese Perspectives](#),” Susan Thornton, Li Nan, and Juliet Lee, The Brookings Institute, August 27, 2021.

“[How It Got This Way: Korea’s War, Armistice and Legacy](#),” by Haruki Wada, Global Asia, September. 2013.

Session 5: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“Birds hear the words spoken in the day, and mice hear the words spoken at night*”

(C) Guest speaker: [Ambassador Kathleen Stephens](#), CEO, Korea Economic Institute

This session will focus on both aggressions and concessions in the context of DPRK relations with the U.S., South Korea, and Japan.

Reading Brief: Khalid Alkhudair

News Brief: Daniella Clark

Team D Case Study: POWs, USS Pueblo crew, and Travis King: How has the DPRK used foreign prisoners to advance its policy goals?

Assigned materials:

[“What I Learned as a Prisoner in North Korea,”](#) Euna Lee, TedX, October 20, 2017.

[“Korea and the World – the USS Pueblo Incident,”](#) episode 81, September 18, 2017 (podcast).

[DPRK video on USS Pueblo incident](#)

[“Kidnapping as Foreign Policy: North Korea’s History of State-Sponsored Abductions,”](#) by Go Myung-Hyun and Ben Forney, Asan Institute, April 2018.

[“DPRK Diplomatic Relations”](#), by Daniel Wertz, JJ Oh and Kim Insung, National Committee on North Korea, August 2016.

[“An Overview of North Korea-Japan Relations,”](#) Rachel Bloomquist and Daniel Wertz, with updates by Dr. Naoko Aoki, National Committee on North Korea, October 2022.

[Session 6: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm](#)

“Mountains after mountains*”

In this session we will discuss DPRK leadership transitions, looking at the deaths of Kim Il Sung (8 July 1994) and Kim Jong-Il (17 December 2011) and the succession processes that ensued.

(C)Guest speaker: Syd Seiler, Korea Chair, CSIS (former White House point person on North Korea).

Reading Brief: Taylor Silva

News Brief: Ricardo Thompson

Team Exercise: Pros and cons of US-Korean-Allied military exercises

Assigned materials:

[“Unanswered Questions About North Korean Leadership,”](#) Victor Cha and Katrin Fraser Katz, CSIS, March 2023.

[“When Kim Il Sung Died in 1986,”](#) Fyodor Tertitsky, NK News, August 28, 2017

[Death of Kim Il Sung,](#) NBC News, July 9, 1994.

[The Rise of Kim Jong Il: Evidence from East German Archives,](#) The Wilson Center (only the summaries are required)

[“Scenes of Mass Grief as Mourners Line the Streets for Funeral of Kim Jong-Il,”](#) AP, 28 December 2011.

[10 Years Since the Death of Kim Jong Il,](#) AP News.

[North Korea’s Power Structure,](#) by Eleanor Albert, Council on Foreign Relations, June 17, 2020.

Session 7: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“It takes two hands to clap*”

The 1994 Agreed Framework was an elaborate effort to persuade North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons production capabilities and agree to international verification in exchange for significant contributions by Japan, South Korea and the U.S. to non-weapons capable nuclear power plant construction. In this session we will review the framework, identify failings on all sides that contributed to its collapse, and consider lessons learned for the future.

Reading Brief: Nouralen Zainal

News Brief: Ian Ross

Team B Case Study: What Might Have Been Achieved if President Clinton had Visited DPRK in 2000 as Tentatively Planned?

Assigned materials:

“[The US-North Korea Agreed Framework At a Glance](#),” by Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association, February 2022.

“[Review of U.S. Policy Towards North Korea: Findings and Recommendations](#),” by Dr. William J. Perry, Department of State, October 12, 1999.

[Kim Dae Jung, The Nobel Lecture](#), December 10, 2000.

“[Engaging North Korea II: Evidence from the Clinton Administration](#)”, Dr. Robert Wampler, The National Security Archive, December 8, 2017. P 7-14

Optional: [Interview with Stephen Bosworth](#), Frontline.

Optional: [Interview with Madeleine Albright](#), Frontline, March 27, 2003.

Session 8: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“Dawn will come even if the rooster is strangled*”

(c) Guest speaker: [Dr. Ken DeKleva](#), “All in the Family: The Leadership Styles of Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Jong-Un.”

During the 1990s North Korea experienced an extraordinary famine exacerbated, if not caused by, state economic policies that favored the capitol over rural areas. North Korea has also been credibly accused of multiple human rights violations directed against its

own citizens. In this session we will review the ethical challenges of engagement and humanitarian assistance under such circumstances.

Exercise: Ethical challenges in humanitarian assistance

Reading Brief: Michaela Zimmerman

News Brief: Grace Stockwell

Assigned materials:

[“My Escape from North Korea,”](#) Hyeonsoo Lee, TED Talk, March 20, 2013.

[“Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DRPK to the Human Rights Council, 2023,”](#) United Nations Human Rights Council, April, 2023 .

[“DPRKorea Needs and Priorities Plan 2020,”](#) United Nations, 8 May 2020.

[Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea Annual Country Report 2021,](#) World Food Programme.

[“North Korea is Facing a Humanitarian and Strategic Challenge,”](#) by Marcus Noland, Peterson Institute for International Economics, June 2022.

Session 9: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“Even monkeys fall from trees*”

(C) Guest speaker: LtCol. Thomas Billingsley, Pol-Mil Officer, U.S. Embassy Seoul

Since April of 1984 the DPRK has been testing missiles and related capabilities, with pauses related to the Agreed Framework and in response to political developments. Consistently successful results were only achieved in 2014, and progress has continued steadily since that time. At the same time, both the US and South Korea have developed new arms capabilities, and South Korea has become a major arms exporter to the world (in addition to the US). We will discuss North Korea’s progress, its intentions, and the possible influence of South Korea’s arms industry on North Korea’s calculations.

Reading Brief: Evelyn Plam

News Brief: Rebecca Shults

Team C Case Study: Do South Korean Weapons Exports Pose a Threat to U.S. Military Industries?

Assigned materials:

[“Insight: Inside South Korea's race to become one of the world’s biggest arms dealers,”](#) by [Joyce Lee](#) and [Josh Smith](#), Reuters, May 29, 2023.

[“Is South Korea Stealing U.S. Military Secrets? Their tanks, missiles, and electronic warfare gear look an awful lot like ours,”](#) by Gordon Lubold, Foreign Policy, October 28, 2013. (blackboard)

[“North Korea’s Military Capabilities,”](#) Council on Foreign Relations, last updated June 2022.

(optional) [“Japan’s New Military Capabilities: Origins and Implications,”](#) by Dr. Jingtong Yuan, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, February 2, 2023.

[2022 China Military Power Report,](#) US Department of Defense (executive summary only!).

[“Russia Deepens Military Cooperation with North Korea”](#), by Boris Bondarev , Jamestown Foundation, August 1, 2023.

[Session 10: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm](#)

“ If you lift together, it’s better – even if it’s a sheet of paper*”

(C) Guest Speaker: Ambassador (retired) James Zumwalt, on Japan and the Koreas

In 2002 President George W. Bush included the DPRK in the “axis of evil” countries, prompting North Korea to admit to a secret nuclear weapons program. Tensions between the US and both North and South Korea prompted the US to take a firmer line against engaging with Pyongyang, and instead attempting a regional approach which evolved into the Six Party Process (including the two Koreas, the US, Japan, China and Russia) and a posture of “strategic patience,” essentially waiting for North Korea to come to the table on US terms (or implode). We will review the relevant policies and developments, with discussion about what kinds of consultations are necessary and appropriate in the region.

Reading Brief: Nicole Perez

News Brief: Liliann Tibbits

Team A Case Study: In the current global dynamic, what are China’s key interests vis-à-vis North Korea?

Assigned materials:

[“The Six Party Talks on North Korea’s Nuclear Program,”](#) by Jayshree Bajoria and Beina Xu, Council on Foreign Relations, September 30, 2013.

“Xi Jinping’s North Korea Policy,” by Yongsoon Kim and Jangho Kim, North Korean Review , FALL 2022, Vol. 18, No. 2 (FALL 2022), pp. 77-95 (blackboard)

[“Japan’s National Security Strategy & the Two Koreas: Views from the Next Generation,”](#) by Yasuyo Sakata, Stimson Center, in Korean Peninsula, February 21, 2023

(optional) [“President Yoon’s “Audacious Plan,”](#)” by Bernhard Seliger, 38 North, October 28, 2022.

[“Is Biden Summoning Strategic Patience with North Korea?”](#) by Christy Lee, Voice of America, September 10, 2021.

Session 11: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“A family of talkers makes bitter sauces*”

Guest speakers: Katelyn Choi (C)(US Department of State) and Karen Klimowski (C)(USAID)(in-person) “North Korea and Winter Olympics 2018” and “Ethical Challenges in Development/Humanitarian Assistance”

Kim Jong-Un has surprised the international community in many ways since he came to power in December, 2011. We will briefly discuss the highlights of his time in leadership, his diverse revenue streams, and possible succession scenarios.

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Outline of final paper

Reading Brief: Kimberly Solis

News Brief: Sydney Bui

Exercise: Dealing with Extraterritorial Attacks

Assigned materials:

(optional) [“North Korea May Send Workers to Russian-Occupied East Ukraine,”](#) By Kim Tong-Hyung, AP News, September 1, 2022

[“How North Korea’s Hackers Bankroll Its Quest for the Bomb: Cybercrime is a windfall for Kim Jong Un’s nuclear ambitions,”](#) by Robbie Gramer and Rishi Iyengar, Foreign Policy, APRIL 17, 2023. (blackboard)

[“How North Korea Got Away with the Murder of Kim Jong-Nam,”](#) by Hannah Ellis-Petersen and Benjamin Haas, The guardian, April 1, 2019.

[“The Untold Story of the Sony Hack: How North Korea’s Battle With Seth Rogen and George Clooney Foreshadowed Russian Election Meddling in 2016,”](#) by Richard Stengel, Vanity Fair, October 6, 2019. (blackboard)

[“Hosting Proms and Selling Cows: North Korean Embassies Scrounge for Cash,”](#) by David Segal, The New York Times, October 7, 2017.

Session 12: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“If it is distant from your eyes, it also becomes distant from your mind and heart*”

(C) Guest speaker: [Dr. Kyoochul Kim](#), Korea-Pacific Program, UCSD “North Korea’s Economy” in person!!!!

North Korea is subject to a stunning array of sanctions, both multilateral (approved by the United Nations) and bilateral (approved by individual nations, primarily the US, the EU, South Korea and Japan). North Korea has responded by excelling in black market operations from selling arms to hacking computers. It exports its people to Russia and other nations as indentured labor. We will review the efficacy of sanctions, their unintended consequences, and the difficulties of lifting sanctions.

Reading Brief:

News Brief: Mateo Miller

Team D Case Study: Did the DPRK Perpetrate the Perfect Crime When It Hacked Sony?

Assigned materials:

[“The Ethics of United Nations Sanctions on North Korea,”](#) UCSD GPS Korea-Pacific Program, March 2023. (webinar)

[“Removing Sanctions on North Korea: Challenges and Potential Pathways”](#), by Troy Stangarone, US Institutes of Peace, December, 2021.

[North Korea: Legislative Basis for US Sanctions,](#) Congressional Research Service, May 31, 2023.

[“North Korean Sanctions Evasion,”](#) RAND Corporation, 2021. (video)

*****NO CLASS Wednesday, November 22 – Happy Thanksgiving!!!*****

Session 13: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“You’ll lose the one in your hand, trying to catch the one on the run.”

(TBC) Guest Speaker: [Allison Hooker](#), Senior Vice President, American Global Strategies

In a remarkable series of events, President Trump crossed into North Korea during a visit to the DMZ and held two summits with Kim Jong Un. The second summit ended without the anticipated progress, souring prospects for further engagement. The Biden administration has not built on these steps but instead reverted to the Obama playbook of strategic patience while the DPRK continues to advance its weapons program. This session will discuss whether and how to engage the DPRK diplomatically.

News brief:

Team B Case Study: Could the Vietnam Summit Have Been Saved?

Assigned materials:

[“Panmunjeom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula,”](#) Apr 27, 2018.

[“Joint Statement of President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea at the Singapore Summit,”](#) The White House, June 12, 2018.

[“The Good, the Bad and the Ugly at the US-North Korea Summit in Hanoi,”](#) by Jung Pak, Brookings Institute, March 4, 2019.

[“The Washington Declaration is a Software Upgrade for the US-South Korea Alliance,”](#) by Ankit Panda, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 1, 2023.

Session 14: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 5:30-8:20 pm

“There is always a way out, look for it.*”

The DPRK appears to be on an inexorable path towards attaining a nuclear capability. We will debate whether the world could/should accept this apparent inevitability; how it might affect regional dynamics; and how the US might react.

Simulation: North Korean Nuclear Threat

Position papers are due to the instructor by 5 pm

FINAL EXAM December 13

Final paper must be submitted by 5 pm

***Korean proverb**