3. KOREAN STUDIES MAJOR – REF F50486

At its meeting of April 2013, the Board of Studies for Bachelor of Arts resolved by R6/13 to advise that the Korean Studies major proposal be revised and resubmitted in line with the Board’s feedback.

Members noted that the proposed Korean Studies major has a 2+3+3 structure and that a number of existing Korean language units proposed as part of the unit sequence within the major have been amended with a view to embedding research skills within the major.

Members had before them a response statement, which outlined the revisions, and amended unit proposals. In considering the revisions, the Board noted the following in the ensuing discussion:

- That the proposer be commended for explicitly and clearly embedding research skills within the major.
- With reference to the proposed widening of prerequisites for KORE3812 Contemporary Korean Society, it was noted that a more explicit mapping and comparison of the stated outcomes of each of the alternative prerequisite units against the expectations of the unit(s) for which it has been indicated as a prerequisite was required.
- The following issues were raised with reference to KORE2801 Korean Study Abroad 1 and KORE3802 Korean Study abroad 2:
  - It was noted that the assessment statements for both units included the following: “An enquiry-based research portfolio / project topic will be graded on pass / fail basis on the student’s return to UWA”. The Board expressed concerns with this requirement particularly, in an event where a student, on return to UWA, fails the research portfolio. It was not clear how this would be operationalised. Further, it was pointed out that this might discourage students to go abroad as part of an approved student exchange program.
  - The Board agreed that Study Abroad units, which have been proposed as substitute units, be created as 6-credit points (rather than 12-credit points) units.
- The Board noted the request that the unit code for Korean 3 and Korean 4 be amended from KORE2401 to KORE2403 and from KORE2402 to KORE2404 respectively. It was agreed that the unit codes should not be amended.

RESOLVED – 10/13

to recommend to the Board of Coursework Studies that the Korean Studies major proposal be approved for offering as a degree-specific major in the Bachelor of Arts from 2014, subject to addressing the feedback as minuted above.
Korean Semester Abroad KORE2081

The Semester Abroad assessment consists of two elements: 1) successful completion of assessment criteria set by the host institution and 2) a research project, undertaken while in Korea, which is assessed at UWA upon the student’s return.

The rationale for this is simple and grounded in accepted pedagogical literature on the topic where learning experiences at partner institutions are expected to complement, enhance and enrich the student’s major, whilst anchoring this experience within the learning objectives of the home institution. Year Abroad is often considered a pleasure cruise or ‘a bit of time away from serious study’ by most students (See: Martin Forsey, Susan Broomhall and Jane Davis (2012), “Broadening the Mind? Australian Students’ Reflections on the Experience of Studying Overseas”, *Journal of Studies in International Education* 16(2) 128–139), mostly because there is no need for students to engage with or think critically about how the Year Abroad related to their majors at the home institution. As a result, the learning experience may become superficial, despite there being other benefits – enjoyment being one such, as reported in the above UWA study. This unit, however, is embedded within BA Korean Studies course structure within which developing solid research and EBL skills are considered as central to the students development as autonomous learners. Within this context the Semester Abroad unit KORE2801 is not intended to provide students with some vague ‘life-enriching’ experience, but a serious learning experience where students have the opportunity to gain learning experiences at a Korean Higher Education institution, whilst at the same time upholding UWA’s rigorous demands for developing graduates who are critical thinkers, Asia-literate, self-reflective and globally minded. To achieve these qualities, it is critical that there is a mechanism whereby the convenor of Korean Studies at UWA can ensure that the learning objectives set out in the unit proposal are adequately met. This is a particular concern when sending students to institutions where learning and teaching approaches may lean more toward memorisation of fact and regurgitation (highlighting the difference between Socratic and Confucian learning models), and one that should play no small part in BOS’s decision on this proposal that argues for the necessity to assess students at UWA in addition to expecting them to pass all the required assessment at the partner institution.

It is perhaps useful to note that this assessment structure follows an established pattern used by Korean Studies at the Australian National University for a similar Semester Abroad Unit. At ANU failure of any of the required components (in-country study, passing all assessment set by host institution, Korean-language blog, an English-language research essay with at least 50% of bibliography in Korean, viva voce examination upon return) results in the failure of the entire unit (see https://studyat.anu.edu.au/courses/KORE6550;details.html). Dr Roald Maliangkay, who convenes the Korean Year Abroad at ANU, reports that ANU has only had one failure since the programme was launched. As with any other unit that ANU offers, students who fail their first attempt are always given the opportunity resubmit their essay. Contrary to putting students off, Dr Maliangkay noted that the research project has proved to be motivational because it enhances students’ interdisciplinary understanding and requires them to think critically about such global issues such as ethnicity and global diversity, economic development, human ecological sustainability,
and war and peace whilst having a ready access to primary materials in the country of their study programme.

Finally, whilst it could be argued that this may appear as double-assessment and therefore potentially put students off from taking part in the programme, the Board should consider that it is no different to, say, Archaeology field work where it is not enough to visit the field, but to make sense of the experience and what is learned on the field upon their return (see for example: http://units.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/units/arcy/arcy5108) or http://units.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/units/arcy/arcy5101). Whilst this kind of ‘anchoring’ may not currently be practiced at UWA in the context of area studies, or indeed any other discipline, the Board should take into consideration the findings in a UWA study by Forsey, Broomhall and Davies (2012) who found that beyond making grand generalisations and superficial comments about the local culture, Year Abroad students “found it difficult to explain what they learnt,” and that “there was little insight or deeper understanding of the differences or similarities between ‘home’ and ‘away.’” (134-5). Forsey et. al. conclude by asking what kinds of “questions need to be asked about the level at which they [the students] really engage with their host culture.” The shared assessment structure proposed for KORE2081 aims to give tools to students to enable this kind of intercultural and interdisciplinary questioning to take place without assuming that mere ‘immersion’ allows for intercultural communication and a ‘global outlook’ to develop in any meaningful way. It is within this context that Board of Studies is asked to consider that the learning outcomes of this unit differ quite fundamentally from those of a Study Abroad/Exchange programme because the objective is to locate and anchor the learning from this unit within the learning outcomes the BA Korean Studies Major, and for that reason additional assessment is absolutely crucial in order to achieve the learning outcomes suggested in the unit proposal.

**PREREQUISITES FOR KORE3812 Contemporary Korean Society**

In response to points raised about prerequisites for KORE3812 Contemporary Korean Society, please see below:

**ASIA1001:** *It is requested that this unit be struck off the list of prerequisites.*

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**ASIA2001:** The outcomes of this unit focus on broad understanding of sociocultural, political and economic transformations and interactions in post-colonial Asia. With a particular focus on “developing the ability to describe and evaluate the multiple ways in which culture, society and the state interact in Asia ; (3) explain and critique the important role of culture in holding the societies and nation states of the Asian region together; (4) critically analyse the way in which culture is a contested arena between the state and other elements of contemporary societies in Asia; (5) understand a range of relevant social and political theories”, ASIA2001 prepares students for country-specific analyses and further introduction to key social sciences theories undertaken in KORE3812.
ASIA2002: It is requested that this unit be struck off the list of prerequisites.

ASIA2004: The following learning outcomes of this unit: “(2) demonstrate an understanding of the significance of global, transnational, and intra-regional flows of people, capital, knowledge, ideas, and images mediated through popular culture; (3) apply this understanding of the relationship between popular culture and sociocultural, economic, and political processes to any sociocultural context, including Australia; (4) critically analyse popular culture texts and practices found in advertising, film and television, popular music, architecture and cyberspace” are relevant to KORE3812 because ASIA2004 introduces students to interdisciplinary methods of analysis in the context of non-Western cultures, as well as how transcultural flows of cultural artefacts affect notions of national identity, which is also one of the key concerns of KORE3812 and prepare students for a successful undertaking of KORE3812.

GEND1901: It is requested that this unit be struck off the list of prerequisites.

GEND2901 Sex Bodies Spaces: Gender in Pop Culture: The following learning outcomes of this unit are deemed directly preparing students for successful completion of KORE3812: “(2) summarise and critically engage with a range of current theoretical positions interested in the representation and reproduction of gender as a critical social category; (3) apply theoretical concepts to examples of everyday practices and cultural texts; (4) analyse and evaluate the construction of gender, race and class in a range of cultural media; (5) explain and employ pivotal terms and concepts to do with embodiment, subjectivity, agency, normativity and institutional authority in readings of a range of media and events”. This unit has also a significant Asia-content, particularly in relation to work and pop culture which will sufficiently establish enough crossover interdisciplinary knowledge to take the KORE3812, yet allowing for a specific contextualisation of the learnt material in the context of a country-specific unit.

GEND2902 The learning outcomes of GEND2902 unit state that a successful completion of the unit enables students to (1) demonstrate an enhanced capacity to understand masculinities as social gender relations in past and present societies, including the historical change in masculinity ideologies and practices and the intersectionality of gender and power with race, sexuality and class; (2) demonstrate an enhanced capacity to analyse historical texts, media productions, social policies and literary documents in view of representations of masculinity, the relationship between masculinities and power and hierarchies within masculinities”. KORE3812 also focuses on gender as one instance of power and on discursive mediation of social practices, but contextualises it within Korean society. One of the key learning outcomes of KORE3812 is to “(2) Describe key events and ideologies that informed the development of the two Koreas in the post-war period, identify and explain how gendered discourses of power and class interpellate individuals within society, as well as apply relevant theoretical frameworks to analyse these”. Within this context GEND2902 is considered as suitable prerequisite for this unit because their thematic and theoretical focus on cultural diversity,
masculinity, power, ethnicity and class, which are also explored in greater detail and in the context of Korean society in this unit. Finally, Gender Studies - like Asian Studies - is also a discipline that challenges students to think beyond accepted and normative ways of knowing and perceiving the world. Students who have successfully completed GEND2901 will therefore be able to apply these learning outcomes in the context of Korean society, as well as to gain understanding of other contemporary theories of regulation, power and representations relevant to analysing various social and cultural phenomena in Korea. Students without previous knowledge of Asian Studies topics will be provided additional preliminary readings to ground their understanding of the topic in order to ensure sufficient preparation of the unit.

Finally, KORE3812 has already been passed as part of the Gender Studies major as one of 3 option units, of which they must take 2 (see extract from the Gender Studies pathway below). Not inserting these two units into the prerequisites will effectively null that option in the Gender Studies major. Assoc/Prof Jo Elfving-Hwang will also be co-teaching the GEND3093 Screening Gender unit for the Gender Studies major so that collaborative teaching arrangements and shared synergies between Korean Studies and Gender Studies already exist.