BETWEEN TRUMP’S AMERICA AND XI’S CHINA

LIFTING THE VEIL ON NORTH KOREA

Description

As an isolated hermit-like kingdom caught up in a dramatic struggle between two global superpowers, the U.S. and China, North Korea remains a mystery to the world. This course, designed to explore the history and politics of North Korea from its inception until today, will attempt to lift the veil and dispel the mystery. We will focus on the lineage of the Kim family: the patriarch Kim Il-sung’s brand of communist ideology, how the nation was shaped by the Cold War, how its ideology and politics have been affected by the succession of three generations within the Kim family, and why its current politics perplex us so. We will pay special attention to the cultural distinctiveness of this far-away nation and provide the necessary context to make sense of its current actions. Weekly readings will complement lecture and discussion as we try to shine a light on one of the most enigmatic yet influential countries in our contemporary nation state system.

Instructor

Peter Banseok Kwon is 2017-2018 Soon Young Kim Postdoctoral Fellow in Korean Studies at the Korea Institute, Harvard University. He received his Ph.D. in History and East Asian Languages (HEAL) in 2016 from the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. He is currently preparing a book on the history of the Korean defense industry, the first of its kind in the English language. In the Fall of 2018 Peter will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor of Korean Studies at the State University of New York in Albany.

Complimentary for BOLLI Members.

To RSVP, see the BOLLI Bulletin.