

Call for Applications

# "FROM PORTS TO WAVES"

## Korean Studies Summer School 2026

August 18<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> / Seoul & Incheon, South Korea

The application deadline is March 23<sup>rd</sup>

The Institute for Korean Studies FU Berlin, Germany, is pleased to invite prospective participants to the 2026 Korean Studies Summer School. Scheduled for August 18<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 in South Korea, this program aims to convene students enrolled in BA, MA, or PhD programs in Korean Studies or related fields from Freie Universität Berlin as well as other European universities.

Supported by the *KDI School* and the *National Institute for Unification Education*, and in cooperation with *History D - Asia Peace and History Institute*, this program takes students to field trips as an integral part of the curriculum.

The primary objective of the Summer School is to offer students expert-lead, on-sited training in Korean politics, history, and culture. Participants will have an excellent opportunity to broaden their understanding across various domains within Korean Studies.

The theme of the 2026 program is "**From Open Ports to Korean Waves [개항에서 한류까지: 강화도조약 150주년]**". The program is conducted primarily in English, with Korean used as a supplementary language.

## 1. The description of the associated summer semester course :::

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Ganghwa (1876). Signed on Ganghwa Island between Joseon and Meiji Japan, this “open port” agreement is widely regarded as a historic threshold marking Korea’s transition from the “Hermit Kingdom” to a “modern nation.”

But what is modernity? What makes a particular moment a historical threshold? The German historian Reinhart Koselleck coined the term *Schwelienzeit* (threshold period), a concept that Korean historians have frequently applied to mid- and late-nineteenth-century Korea. Is this application persuasive? How should we evaluate this historical juncture 150 years later?

Commemorating the treaty’s 150th anniversary, the first part of this course examines three major approaches to Korean modernity: *evolutionism*, *universalism*, and *relativism*. The second part explores three major developments of the “open port period” that have become focal points in debates on modernity: *revolts from below*, *reforms from above*, and the *commercialization of agriculture*.

In a brief concluding turn, the course features special lectures on the contemporary Korean Wave (*Hallyu*), asking what Korea has become long after opening its ports. By the end of the course, students will develop their own interpretations of Korean modernity and reflect on what defines its threshold.

This course is mandatory for all Summer School 2026 participants. Summer School 2026 will include visits to field sites on Ganghwa Island and in the Incheon and Seoul areas. Students will engage with the historical landscapes that shaped debates about Korea’s path into the modern international order.

## 2. The field trip consists of four parts :::

- 1) **Global Unification Education**
  - Lectures at the National Institute for Unification Education (Seoul)
  - Visit to the North-South border area (Paju or Gimpo)
- 2) **Ganghwa / Incheon: The Open Port Period**
  - Core component of the program
  - May include a temple stay experience (subject to confirmation)
- 3) **Digital Media City (Seoul): The Korea Wave**
  - One-day visit to broadcasting stations and related sites
- 4) **Academic Exchange with Korean students**
  - Group presentations and discussions with local peers

Programs are subject to change due to operational requirements.

### 3. Each participant receives :::

- Subsidy for flight ticket: € 500
- Accommodation and meals free for the whole duration of the summer school
- Travel expenses and entrance fees (museum etc.) during the field trip in Korea (participants can be asked to pay small fees for some cultural experiences: appr. € 30 in total)

### 4. Qualifications for complete participation :::

If you are a BA or MA student from Freie Universität Berlin, the Institute grants 10 Credit Points (Korean Studies, *Vertiefungsmodul*) for participation in Summer School activities, contingent upon full engagement in all listed activities:

1) **Summer School preparatory course in SS2026 (April 15 - July 15, every Wednesday 2-4 pm)**

The course includes seminars and special lectures

Participants are required to read the recommended materials and make presentations

2) **Group presentation** at the end of the field trip

Power-point slide or video presentation (appr. 30 min for each group)

3) **Final Paper**

Academic paper on a theme from the Summer School (5.000 words, APA Style)

If you are an external student, your participation in the following activities is required to receive subsidy:

1) **Online special lectures (Occasionally on Wednesday 2-4 pm, Apr - Jul)**

The preparatory course itself will be held offline and open for FU students only, but there will be occasional special lectures, which external students are expected to join

2) **Group presentation** at the end of the field trip

Power-point slide or video presentation (appr. 30 min for each group)

3) **Final Report**

Report on the summer school activities (3 pages)

Additionally, credit may be granted upon submission of an academic paper and with approval from your university

### 5. Number of Participants :::

The total number of students will be limited to between ten and fifteen.

## 6. Note on Video Recording :::

Field trips during Summer School will be recorded on video, and these recordings will be uploaded to the Institute's YouTube and/or SNS Channels. You can view videos from previous years (<https://www.youtube.com/@instituteofkoreanstudiesat2300>). By participating, you consent to being included in the recording. Please take this into account when applying.

## 7. Eligibility :::

Korean studies majors at FU Berlin, as well as from other German and European universities, can apply. Students from FU Berlin should either have a TOPIK certificate or have completed the "*Aufbaumodul*" and passed the language course "*Koreanisch I*". Similar criteria apply to external students.

## 8. Application :::

Applicants are asked to submit the following documents to **Mr. Suhon Lee (s.lee2@fu-berlin.de)** no later than **March 23, 2026**. Please use the following subject line: Application for Korean Studies Summer School 2026.

- Certificate of Enrollment for the Summer 2026 Semester
- CV
- Motivation letter (one page) in English outlining the reasons for interest in attending the Summer School
- The latest transcript of records (Campus Office)
- Grade of Korean language course or TOPIK Certificate (or an equivalent)
- **Please submit the above documents combined into a single pdf file. Application language is English.**

For further details or inquiry, please contact Mr. Suhon Lee (s.lee2@fu-berlin.de).