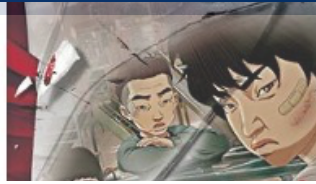
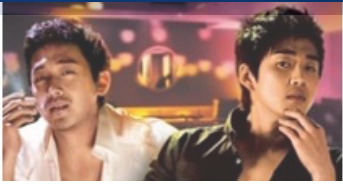


Penn State Institute for Korean Studies Talk Series

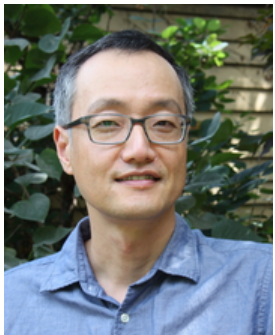


Place Maketh Man: Gangnam as the Locus of Social Evil in South Korean Cinema

April 6, 4:30 pm

Talk Description:

In contemporary South Korea, Gangnam is widely regarded as a breeding ground for 'social evil' (sahoeak). After all, since the early 1980s Gangnam has firmly established itself as the shrine of the unholy trinity of Korean capitalism: real estate speculation, adult entertainment/sex industry, and private education 'fever'. Such a foul 'sense of place' has helped create a series of cinematic villains associated with Gangnam. There are particularly memorable ones in this century, including the atrocious teacher/kidnapper Mr. Paek in *Lady Vengeance* (2005), the obnoxious 'male host' Chaehyön in *Beastie Boys*(2008), and most recently, the enigmatic playboy Ben in *Burning* (2018). While the power of such villain characters is strong and unmistakable, it is Gangnam's sense of place beyond all personality traits that make their villainy compelling by connecting the individual dots to the larger 'social evil'. In so doing, moreover, Gangnam often makes the evil contagious to other characters, who become complicit either in evil acts perpetrated by villains or in corrupt social institutions. I will draw on the concept of 'sense of place' from human geography to construct Gangnam as the locus of social evil in South Korean cinema.



About Dr. Pil Ho Kim:

Pil Ho Kim is an assistant professor of Korean studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at The Ohio State University. He is currently working on a monograph entitled, *Polarizing Dreams: Gangnam and Popular Culture in Globalizing Korea*, which casts a new light on the global rise of South Korean economy and popular culture by focusing on its geographic symbol, Gangnam. His forthcoming publications are "Songs of the Multitude: The April Revolution, the 6.3 Uprising, and South Korea's Protest Music of the 1960s" and "Cheollima, Ten Times Faster? The Gangseon Steel Mill and the Cultural Turn in North Korea's Mass Mobilization Campaign."

APRIL 6, 4:30 - 5: 50 pm (EST)

Zoom link for

registration:<https://psu.zoom.us/j/7668292829>
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