

NEKST 2026

Organizing Committee:

Graduate Students:

Yuyao Cheng (Asian Languages and Cultures)
Elizabeth Jeffery (Microbiology and Immunology)
Jace Jung (English Language and Literature)
Seohyung Kim (Anthropology)
James Kiselik (English Language and Literature)
Kunwoo Kwon (International and Regional Studies)
Hanna Lee (Political Science)
Remi Lee (Comparative Literature)
Subin Min (Social Work and Sociology)
Sonia Singh (Asian Languages and Cultures)
Gerald Sutton (Asian Languages and Cultures)

Faculty and Staff Advisors:

Juhn Ahn (Director of the Nam Center for Korean Studies, Asian Languages and Cultures)
Jean Hong (Political Science, Nam Center)
John Grisafi (Korea Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, Nam Center)
Suyun Lee (Nam Center)
Hyewon Nam (Nam Center)
Minyoung Song (Nam Center)

NEKST 2026

MAY 8-9, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ANN ARBOR

The 13th International Conference of NextGen Korean Studies Scholars (NEKST) is sponsored by the Nam Center for Korean Studies at the University of Michigan with support from the Academy of Korean Studies.

Friday, May 8

- 8:30–9:00 | Breakfast
9:00–9:15 | Welcoming remarks by Juhn Ahn

Panel 1: Imbalancing acts

- 9:15–10:45 | **Jihyun Jeon (Freie Universität Berlin)** “Far-Right Discourse and Democratic Crisis in South Korea: A Text-Mining Analysis of the 2024–2025 Martial Law–Impeachment Period”
Ji-won Lee (Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University) “Varieties of Educational Equalization: School Access Reform in South Korea, 1945–1968”
Hyuk Lim (Korea University) “Division Does Not Imply Predictability, but It Increasingly Does: Compressed Social Sorting and Rising Political Predictability in South Korea (2003–2023)”
Discussants: Jean Hong (University of Michigan) and Tyler Simko (University of Michigan)

Panel 2: Control. Alter. Delete.

- 11:00–12:30 | **Yejin Cho (Seoul National University)** “Conflicting Imaginaries of the Border: Military Control and Everyday Life in South Korea’s Civilian Control Zone”
Seungjin (SJ) Han (University of Southern California) “Who Politicizes the Past? Subnational Actors and Diversionary Motives in Interstate Historical Disputes”
Youngho (Young) Shin (Sogang University) “The Effects of the Characteristics and Spatial Arrangement of Coercive Apparatuses on Protest Escalation: The March First Movement under Japanese Colonial Rule”
Discussant: Chungjae Lee (Bucknell University)
- 12:30–14:00 | Lunch

Panel 3: History in a sense

- 14:00–15:30 | **Seo-eun Choi (Columbia University)** “From Patients to Villains: Perceptions of the Blind in Chosŏn Society in the Fifteenth Century”
Seon Shim (University of British Columbia) “Olfactory Relief: Numbing Sensation, *Han*, and Disability Stigma in Contemporary Korea”
Jieon Yoo (University of Wisconsin–Madison) “Sensing Empire from Below: Smuggling, PX Economies, and Shadow Sovereignty in Postwar Korea”
Discussant: Juhn Ahn (University of Michigan)

Chapter workshop 1

- 15:45–16:35 | **Eunchong Cho (University of California, San Diego)** “Making Youth Housing: How a Movement Incorporated Housing into Youth”
Discussant: Jean Hong (University of Michigan)

Chapter workshop 2

- 16:45–17:35 | **Minah Kang (Johns Hopkins University)** “No Blank Slate: Region, Infrastructure, and the Making of U.S. Hegemony”
Discussant: Yumi Moon (Stanford University)

Saturday, May 9

- 9:30–10:15 | Breakfast
10:15–12:30 | Research flashtalks by Nam Center Graduate Fellows
Chair: John Grisafi (University of Michigan)
12:30–14:00 | Lunch

Panel 4: Mistaken-identity politics

- 14:00–15:30 | **Jennifer Gayoung Lee (Stanford University)** “Diasporic Relations: Zainichi Korean and Korean American Imagining Beyond Citizenship”
Yubeen Lim (Duke University) “Image, Evidence, and Body”
Raymond Kyooyung Ra (University of Southern California) “Reimagining the Minor in the Transpacific, a Perspective Through Queer Dance”
Discussant: Hayana Kim (Ohio State University)

Chapter workshop 3

- 15:45–16:35 | **Yee Rem Kim (University of California, Los Angeles)** “Performing Discipline: *Koryŏ kūkchang* and Its Disciplinary Culture in the Soviet Union, 1930s–1940s”
Discussant: Emily Wilcox (College of William and Mary)

Chapter workshop 4

- 16:45–17:35 | **Jiyeon Auo (University of Pittsburgh)** “Sonic Imperial Democracy: *Enka*, *T’ūrot’ū*, and the Postwar Recasting of Colonial Circulation”
Discussant: Namhee Lee (University of California, Los Angeles)
- 18:00 | *Closing Dinner*