

ASIAN STUDIES AND IKS LECTURE SERIES

DR. HYAEWEOL CHOI

“A Gender History of Korea: Finding the Global in the Local”

Friday, September 16 | Noon–1:15 p.m. EDT | 101 Old Botany Building



PennState
College of the Liberal Arts



Register to attend virtually



This talk explores the gender history of modern Korea from a transnational perspective. The basic premise is that national histories are inherently transnational due to the dynamic flow of ideas, images, discourses, material cultures, and people across national boundaries. It is that transnational flow that has triggered new gender norms, reformed domestic practices, fostered a sense of locality in contrast to global features, and helped women claim new space in the public sphere. As a way to illustrate the transnational nature of modern womanhood in Korea, the talk specifically discusses the life politics of domesticity, which shows the dynamic interplay between the intimate and the structural, between the domestic and the public, and between the local and the global. It concludes with a brief contemplation of the future directions of everyday gender politics in the current age of excess, inequality, and ecological crises.

Hyaeweol Choi is a professor of Korean studies, gender history, and religious studies. She holds the C. Maxwell and Elizabeth M. Stanley Family and Korea Foundation Chair in Korean Studies at The University of Iowa. She is also the founding director of the Korean Studies Research Network (KoRN) and currently serves as chair of the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies. Her research interests are in the areas of gender, empire, modernity, religion, food and body, and transnational history. She has published books and articles on such topics as the genealogy of modern womanhood in Korea, the historical development of the "New Woman" in colonial-era Korea, the evolution of the concept of "domesticity" within the context of encounters between Christian missionaries and women in Asia and the Pacific, and the impact of transnational mobility on gender norms and bodily practices. Her current research project, titled "Food and the Life Politics of Domesticity in Global Korea," examines the domestic as the confluence of the local, public, global, and environmental structures, aiming to shed new light on everyday gender politics and performance through food ethics and practices in the current age of excess, inequality, and ecological crises.