

Imagining the Possible: Literatures and Cultures of Dissidence in Korea and Beyond



The Longest Night: Namtaeryeong (dir. Kim Hyunji, 2026)

The Committee on Korean Studies is now accepting proposals for the preconference, to be held on Wednesday, **March 17, 2027**, at Boston University in Boston, MA.

The culture of dissidence in Korea is entering a new phase. Whereas the democratization movement that secured the direct presidential election system in June 1987 was led by male-centered militant resistance, young women in their twenties and thirties emerged as the driving force of the latest dissident movements, including the light-stick protests to impeach former president Yun Sukyeol after his illegal declaration of martial law on December 3, 2024. The documentary *The Longest Night: Namtaeryeong* (dir. Kim Hyunji, 2026) details how predominantly middle-aged or older male farmers formed an unexpected alliance with young women when the pro-impeachment tractor protest was blocked by the police at Namtaeryeong Pass in Southern Seoul on December 21, 2024. The female grassroots protestors not only protected the farmers from police brutality but also shared their own stories on various issues at an open-mic event, from job insecurity to discrimination against sexual and gender minorities, from rental deposit fraud to anti-Chinese sentiment.

This watershed moment demands a revisit to the long history and evolution of the cultures of dissidence (and, vice versa, conformity and sycophancy) in Korea, from earliest recorded times to the present. This will offer fresh, interdisciplinary angles to raise new, controversial questions, to excavate underexplored sources, archives, and themes, **to bring together scholars of premodern, modern, and contemporary Korea**, and to revise and enrich our understanding of broadly defined Korean literature and culture. We welcome proposals that examine the literatures and cultures of dissidence in Korea and comparative contexts, across any historical era.

The proposal and presentation must be in English. We accept proposals for **individual papers** as well as **organized panels** of three to four authors with closely interconnected papers.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

Exiles, Outcasts, and Nonconformists in Korea, Old and New
Conformists, Tag-Alongs, and Sycophants in Korea, Old and New
Proletarian Literature in Korea and Beyond
Revisiting Minjung Literature
Dissidence in Korean Popular Music
Labor and Literature
Literary Disability Studies
Avant-Garde Literature
Speculative fiction/ Science Fiction
Detective Fiction/ Crime Fiction
Environmental Literature/ Climate Fiction
Translation as a Form of Resistance
Feminism and Gender Politics in Korean Literature
Politics in Korean Webtoon and Digital Literature
Contemporary South Korean Women Writers
Dissidence in Popular Culture
LGBTQIA+ Literature
Rewriting the Jeju 4.3
Ethnic Korean Writers/ Border Fiction
Rethinking Cold War Culture in Korea and Beyond
Postcolonialism and Decolonization
Transnational & Transpacific Literature
Literary Dissidence in North Korea
Dissidence in Premodern Korea and the Sinographic Cosmopolis
Culture of Remonstrance (*kan* 諫) in Premodern Korea and Beyond
(Righteous) Dissidence in Korean Buddhism, Daoism, and (Neo) Confucianism

Please submit your proposal as a single PDF to koreanstudiesbu@gmail.com

Submission deadline for all proposals: August 20, 2026.

Notification of Acceptance: October 1, 2026

Individual Papers: Proposals should include (1) Presenter's name, affiliation, and contact information, including email address, (2) Paper title and abstract (250-word maximum)

Organized Panels: Proposals should include (1) a list of participants, their paper titles, their affiliations, their positions, and their contact information, including email addresses, and (2) A panel title and summary (maximum 250 words) detailing the overarching connection between the papers and providing a brief overview of each presentation (3) A 150-200-word abstract for each presentation within the panel.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the conference organizers:

Yoon Sun Yang yyoonsun@bu.edu & Dennis Wuerthner dwuerth@bu.edu