



Institute for Korean Studies presents

What's the History Lesson? 4.3 Incident Imagined, Memorialized (and Repeated?)

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

4:00-5:15pm

Derby Hall 080

154 N Oval Mall

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Abstract: People around the world watched as the Berlin Wall fell, effectively ending the Cold War in 1989. But is the Cold War really over when Korea remains the last vestige of such divided nations? Investigating Korean War beginnings is tantamount to understanding divisional conflicts today. Some have referred to the Korean War as a forgotten war. What is lesser known are the purges that occurred south of the 38th parallel in the years leading up to this war. This talk will discuss Hyŏn Ki-yŏng's novel, *Sun-i samch'on* as the first literary work to explore a US-backed "communist" purge on Cheju Island, prior to the Korean War. We will explore how Hyŏn's novel acted as a catalyst for uncovering a silenced history of Cold War genocide; the work done by local anthropologists, shamans, and surviving families to erect public memorials; and lastly what the post-memorial designation of Cheju as a "Peace Island" means in the face of future military aggression.

Bio: Merosé Hwang is an Assistant Professor of History and the Program Coordinator for the Asian Studies Minor at Hiram College. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. She has held positions as a research fellow at the Institute for Korean Studies, Yonsei University and Visiting Scholar at the Institute for the Study of Religion at Sogang University. She has worked as a freelance translator for the Academy of Korean Studies at Seoul National University. She has been the recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Kathryn W. Davis Fellowship for Peace, Korea Foundation's Rising Stars Program, Connaught Fellowship, Samsung Fellowship, and the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies Fellowship. At Hiram, she teaches World History and Asian history. Her recent research areas of interest include post '45 history of human rights and genocide, indigenous rituals and community health.

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