

JOAN E. CHO

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Wesleyan University

Associate Professor (tenured), College of East Asian Studies, July 2024 –
Associate Professor (by courtesy), Department of Government, July 2024 –
Assistant Professor, College of East Asian Studies, 2016–2024
Assistant Professor (by courtesy), Department of Government, 2016–2024

Pacific Affairs

Associate Editor (Northeast Asia), October 2024 –

EDUCATION

Harvard University

Ph.D. in Political Science, 2016
A.M. in Political Science, 2011.

University of Rochester

B.A. in Political Science, 2008.
Cum laude & Departmental Honors

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) Summer Institute
Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Summer 2011

RESEARCH POSITIONS & AFFILIATIONS

Associate-in-Research, Council of East Asian Studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 2018 –

Adjunct Fellow (Non-resident), Korea Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, DC, October 2021-2024

Graduate Student Affiliate, Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS), Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2011-2016

Visiting International Scholar, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Taipei, Republic of China, 2013

ARI Fellow, Asiatic Research Institute, Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 2012

Visiting Fellow, Center for International Studies, Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 2010

Research Assistant, House of Commons (Brian Binley, M.P.), UK Parliament, London, United Kingdom, 2006

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Joan E. Cho. 2024. *Seeds of Mobilization: The Authoritarian Roots of South Korea's Democracy*. University of Michigan Press, Emerging Democracies Series.

- Reviewed in *The Developing Economies*, *Korean Studies*, *CHOICE*, *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*
- Featured in New Books Network, The Korea Society

Journal Articles

Joan E. Cho and Aram Hur. 2025. "The Perils of South Korean Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 36(2): 38-46.

Joan E. Cho, Jae Seung Lee, and B.K. Song. 2019. "Mind the Electoral Gap: The Effect of Investment in Public Infrastructure on Authoritarian Support in South Korea." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 54: 473-500.

Joan E. Cho and Dominika Kruszezwska. 2018. "Escaping Collective Responsibility in Fluid Party System: Evidence from South Korea." *Electoral Studies* 56: 114-123.

Joan E. Cho, Jae Seung Lee, and B.K. Song. 2017. "Media Exposure and Regime Support Under Competitive Authoritarianism: Evidence from South Korea." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 17(2): 145-166.

Book Chapters

Joan E. Cho and Paul Y. Chang. 2017. "Socioeconomic Foundations of South Korea's Democracy Movement" in Youna Kim (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society: A Global Approach*. London: Routledge, pp. 63-75.

Review Essays & Book Reviews

Joan E. Cho. 2025. "Democracy Under Neoliberalism in South Korea." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 85/2 (2025): 323-334.

Review of *Between the Streets and Assembly: Social Movements, Political Parties, and Democracy in Korea* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2022) by Yoonkyung Lee, *Civic Activism in South Korea: The Intertwining of Democracy and Neoliberalism* (Columbia University Press, 2024) by Seungsook Moon, and *Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea* (Duke University Press, 2022) by Namhee Lee.

Joan E. Cho. 2020. "Top-Down Democracy in South Korea. By Erik Mobrand. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019." *Pacific Affairs* 93(1): 191-193.

Other Writings

“Yoon’s life sentence alone will not restore trust in South Korea’s democracy.” East Asia Forum, July 24, 2026.

“How South Korea’s Authoritarian Past Shapes Its Democracy.” *The Diplomat*, Issue 97, December 1, 2022.

“The Goal in Korea Should be Peace and Trade – Not Unification.” *The Conversation*, April 30, 2018 (with Alexis Dudden and Mary Alice Haddad).

MEDIA APPEARANCES

Quoted in Article. “How South Korea’s Ballot Shortage Spurred Turnout of Thousands to Defend Democracy.” *Reuters*, June 12, 2026.

Podcast Interview. “South Korea Elects a New President,” The World and Everything in It daily podcast, June 19, 2025.

Quoted in Article. “South Korea’s Dilemma Over Hosting US Bases Tests Lee’s Diplomacy.” *Nikkei Asia*, June 16, 2025.

Quoted in Article. “The Past 24 Hours in South Korea’s Chaotic Politics, Explained.” *Vox*, January 3, 2025.

Quoted in Article. “South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol Impeached After Martial Law Ploy.” *Washington Post*, December 14, 2024.

Quoted in Article. “South Korea’s First Lady Looms Over Her Husband’s Embattled Presidency.” *Wall Street Journal*, December 6, 2024.

Podcast Interview. “Seeds of Mobilization,” New Books Network podcast, May 17, 2024.

Quoted in Article. “South Korea’s Opposition Party Lands Major Legislative Victory.” *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 2024.

Podcast Interview. “Trouble in the Blue House,” Behind Closed Doors: Corruption in Democracies (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) podcast, July 31, 2023.

CURRENT RESEARCH

“Not All Threats United: Hate Crimes, State Surveillance, and Minority Group Solidarity” (with Jae Yeon Kim, D.G. Kim, and Taeku Lee)

“The Curious Case of the Opposition in East Asia” (with Aram Hur)

“How Authoritarian Ideologies Survive: The Conservative-Protestant Alliance and Anti-Communism in South Korea” (book project)

GRANTS & AWARDS

2023 Data and Democracy Project Fund, Wesleyan University (\$4,000)

2022-2023	Grants in Support of Scholarship Collaborative Project Grant, Wesleyan University (\$10,000 with Jae Yeon Kim, D.G. Kim, and Taeku Lee)
2021-2024	Washington Research Consortium on Korea, Korea Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies
2021-2024	Laboratory Program for Korean Studies Grant, Academy of Korean Studies (300 million KRW; with Victor Cha and Ramon Pacheco Pardo)
2017, 2020, 2022	Creative Campus Initiative Grant, Wesleyan University (with Katja Kolcio in 2017; with Ellen Gerdes in 2020 & 2022)
2018-2019	U.S.-Korea NextGen Scholars Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies & University of Southern California Korean Studies Institute
2016	Collaborative Project Grant, Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, Wesleyan University (with Dominika Kruszewska)
2015, 2016	Travel Grant, Institute of Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University
2015, 2016	Department Travel Grant, Department of Government, Harvard University
2014-2015	Sanhak Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University
2014	Graduate Research Grant, Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University
2013	Dissertation Fellowship, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
2012	Asiatic Research Institute Fellowship Program for Northeast Asian Studies, Korea University
2012	Ezra F. Vogel Fund, Harvard University Asia Center
2011	Graduate Dissertation Research Fellowship, The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University
2008-2013	Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship

INVITED TALKS & PANELS

2027	University of Notre Dame, Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, Book talk on <i>Seeds of Mobilization</i> (scheduled)
2025	University of Pennsylvania, James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, Korean Studies Colloquium, Book talk on <i>Seeds of Mobilization</i> The Korea Society (co-hosted by the Center for Korean Research at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University), Book talk on <i>Seeds of Mobilization</i>

- 2024 University of Michigan, Nam Center for Korean Studies, Democratic Crisis in South Korea & Its International Implications Roundtable (virtual)
- Harvard University, Weatherhead Program on U.S.-Japan Relations, New Party Politics of East Asian Democracies
- George Washington University, GW Institute for Korean Studies, Soh Jaepil Lecture Series, Book talk on *Seeds of Mobilization*
- University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs, Asia Policy Program, Book talk on *Seeds of Mobilization*
- Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, KFAS-Stanford 2nd Sustainable Democracy Roundtable
- 2023 Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs, East Asia Program at the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, Challenges to Citizenship in East Asia (virtual)
- Stanford University, The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, KFAS-Stanford Sustainable Democracy Roundtable
- Smith College, Five College Center for East Asian Studies, Exploring the Two Koreas II (K-12 educator professional development program) (virtual)
- 2022 University of British Columbia, Centre for Korean Research
- Council for a Livable World, Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Center Hill Staff Briefing: North Korea Updates (virtual)
- 2021 University of Toronto, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, Dr. David Chu Program in Asia-Pacific Studies (virtual)
- George Washington University, GWIKS Soh Jaepil Lecture Series (virtual)
- 2020 Yale University, Yale Korea Colloquium (virtual)
- University of Michigan, Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies Colloquium
- University of Michigan, Nam Center for Korean Studies Colloquium Series
- 2018 Wesleyan University, Division II Faculty Luncheon
- 2016 Harvard University, Ash Center for Democratic Governance & Innovation
- Wesleyan University, College of East Asian Studies
- Wheaton College, Department of Politics and International Relations
- 2013 Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy Seminar

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

(P)resenter, (C)hair, (D)iscussant, Panel (O)rganizer

- 2026 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P)

- 2026 Cambridge Elements in the Politics of Development Series Workshop (P)
- 2025 Perspectives on Contemporary Korea Conference 2025, “One Year after Martial Law: Democratic Backsliding and Resilience in Korea and Beyond,” Nam Center for Korean Studies, University of Michigan (P)
- Greater Philadelphia Area Korean Studies Conference, James Joo-Jim Kim Center for Korean Studies, University of Pennsylvania (P)
- 2024 Authoritarian Political Systems Group Workshop (D)
- Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P, C)
- Annual Conference of Association for Asian Studies (P)
- 2023 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P, D)
- Annual Meeting of International Studies Association (D)
- Veritas Scholars Summit
- 2022 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P)
- Autocracy and Asia Workshop, Yale University (P)
- 2020 Stanford Korea Program Democracy Conference, The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University (D) (virtual)
- 2019 Korean Studies Pedagogy Workshop for Junior Faculty, Nam Center for Korean Studies, University of Michigan (P)
- International Conference of NextGen Korean Studies Conference, Nam Center for Korean Studies, University of Michigan (D)
- 2018 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P)
- Annual Conference of Association for Asian Studies (O, P)
- 2017 Catalyst Workshop on Policymaking in East Asia, Wesleyan University (P)
- Annual Conference of Association of Asian Studies (O, P)
- NTU-Harvard Conference on Issues and Methodological Challenges in the Study of Contemporary Chinese Politics, Harvard University (P)
- 2016 Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association (O, P)
- 2015 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (P)
- Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association (O, P)
- The Second Annual Politics and History Conference, Harvard University (P)
- APSA-USKI Graduate Publication Seminar, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University (P)
- 2014 Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association (O, P)
- The 6th SNU-Harvard-UCLA Graduate Student Workshop, Seoul National University (P)

Rising Stars of Korean Studies VI, Korean Studies Institute, University of Southern California (invited participant)

2012 Young Scholars and Experts Visiting Group to Taiwan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China

TEACHING

Courses

Wesleyan University

Social and Political Changes in Korea

Democracy and Social Movements in East Asia

Korean Politics Through Film

Legacies of Authoritarian Politics

Challenges to Democracy in East Asia

Harvard University

Introduction to Political Science Research Methods (Teaching Fellow)

Foundations of Comparative Politics (Teaching Fellow)

International Relations of East Asia (Teaching Fellow)

Harvard Extension School

Is Democracy Possible Everywhere? (Course Assistant)

Student Advising

Banri Saito, “Domestic Protests Away from the Locale: The Emergence and Evolvement of Diasporic Okinawa Anti-US Base Protests in Japan” (CEAS & Government senior honors thesis, 2025-2026)

Brian Kim, “Assessing the Role of Soft Power in South Korea’s Bilateral Relations” (CSS senior honors thesis, 2021-2022)

John S. Lee, “COVID-19 Success Isn’t Due to Illiberal Norms: An Analysis Based on Legal Precedents and Game Theory” (CSS senior essay, 2020)

Asa Mazor-Freeman, “Status *Guo*: US Role in Democratization in Taiwan, 1986-2000” (CEAS & CSS senior honors thesis, 2018-2019)

Rosanne Ng, “The Politics of Hong Kong’s Housing Crisis” (CSS senior honors thesis, 2018-2019)

Matthew Chun, “Searching for DaeHan: The Intellectual Construction of Nation through Historiography” (CSS senior essay, 2018)

Won Joon Ki Choi, “The End of an Alliance: A Historical Analysis of ROK-ROC Diplomatic Relations, 1972-92” (CEAS senior honors thesis, 2016-2017)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewer for *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *De Gruyter Brill*, *Electoral Studies*, *Government and Opposition*, *Issues & Studies*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *Journal of Politics*, *Korea Observer*, *Oxford University Press*, *World Politics*

American Political Science Association (APSA) Committee on the Status of Asian Pacific Americans in the Profession, 2024-2027 (Chair, 2026-2027)

Association of Korean Political Studies (Vice President 2002-2024, Governing Board Member 2021-2024, Executive Secretary 2019-2022)

Faculty Co-convener, Korean Political Studies Colloquium, 2022-2024

New England Association of Asian Studies (NEAAS) Program Committee (social science sub-committee), Harvard University, 2021

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Fries Center for Global Studies Advisory Board (2026-2027)

Human Rights Advocacy Minor Steering Committee (2025-)

Modern Korean Studies Search Committee (2024)

Fellowships Committee (2023-2024)

Allbritton Faculty Advisory Board (2021-2023)

Center for Pedagogical Innovation external review (2023)

University Major Committee (2021-2022)

Modern Korean Humanities Search Committee (2019, 2023)

Faculty Advisor, Asia Rising Cooperative (2018-2019)

Korean Language Search Committee (2018)

Faculty Advisor, Veritas Forum (2018)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association

Association for Asian Studies

Association of Korean Political Studies

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages: English (native), Korean (native fluency), Japanese (basic), Chinese (basic)

Computing Skills: R, LaTeX, Microsoft Office