

CENTRE FOR KOREAN RESEARCH

Friday 9 April

3:30 – 5:00pm

C.K. Choi Building Conference Room #120  
1855 West Mall

**Title**

By Steven Lee (University of British Columbia)

In June 1987, in the context of a massive mobilization of Koreans against the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan regime, South Korea's military leadership agreed to guarantee basic political freedoms and a direct election for the President in December 1987. Focusing on the policies of the Korean government under the Fifth Republic (1980-1987), this paper will explore the history of South Korean democratization, especially the means by which Korea's military leadership sought to control and direct the process of political liberalization, and the ways in which the division of the Korean peninsula shaped the rhetoric and ideologies linked to democratization. South Korea's democratization was part of a global trend towards the establishment of "free" electoral systems, and a large secondary literature has emerged around this theme. The paper will discuss some of the dominant frameworks for understanding democratization and will situate the Korean case within the wider global context of political revolutions in the late twentieth century.

Steven Lee is Associate Professor in the Department of History, UBC. He is author of *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam and the Origins of the Cold War, 1949-1954* (McGill-Queen's Press, 1995) and *The Korean War* (Longman, 2001). He is currently writing a book on twentieth century global history for Blackwell Press, UK.

