



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

Summer Semester 2026, Wednesdays 18:00 c.t., Wilhelmstraße 133, R. 30

"Listening to K-Dramas in the Streaming Era: The Musical Shaping of Female Characters and Their Relationships in Contemporary Storytelling"

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Biography: Julin Lee is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the University of Music and Theatre Munich. Her award-winning dissertation on music and sound in American streaming-era television series is under contract with Palgrave Macmillan. Her current research focuses on K-drama soundtracks, streaming interfaces, and synthesizers in film music.

Abstract: K-dramas' growing global audience has reshaped storytelling agendas. Even K-romance, one of the genre's most formula-bound forms, has evolved to reflect the values of its predominantly female international viewership. Yet despite the genre's popularity, scholarship on K-dramas' textual and aesthetic dimensions remains comparatively thin, and the role of music in their narratives is particularly underexplored.

My project addresses this gap at the intersection of K-pop studies, which has largely overlooked K-drama ballads, and K-drama studies, which has in turn neglected the soundtrack. Drawing on popular music studies, screen music studies, and post-feminist sensibility, I examine how music participates in constructing complex female characters and interpersonal relationships in K-dramas since 2019. I develop the concept of the "post-feminist musical poetics of the swoon," arguing that music helps negotiate shifting ideas around consent, marriage, family, and workplace agency in emotionally resonant and accessible ways.