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***“Everyday Life of North Koreans as Problematic:  
History, Capital, and Becoming Human”***

by

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**Friday, February 20, 2009**

**4:30 – 6:00**

**Arts Building (Room 260)**

**Abstract**

Spectacles stage North Korean refugees as escapees from the draconian North Korean state and permanent outsiders of a North Korean society that is yet to join the free modern world. My talk challenges this divide of North Korean migrants in China (and South Korea) and North Korean society. Instead it discusses the process of primitive capital accumulation that entails the border-crossing migration as its constituent. Primitive capital accumulation in North Korea draws on socialist institutions and unfulfilled ideals of the past, while simultaneously departing from them. I take the everyday lives of North Korean migrants as a site for exploring their practices and ideals of capitalism that are mediated through their historical memories. I especially consider the ways that their labor separates them from NGOs on the issue of how to become human. I will explore historical moments that paradoxically produce labor as a source of capitalist discipline and a source of one's own humanity.

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**Bio**

Hyun Ok Park joined the Department of Sociology at York University in 2007 after receiving Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley and teaching at New York University. As a historical sociologist, her work encompasses interdisciplinary engagement with the philosophy of history, the crisis of capitalism, and the epistemological issues associated with comparative studies. Hyun Ok Park is the author of *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Duke University Press, 2005). She is completing a new book manuscript tentatively entitled, “From National to Market Utopia: History, Democracy, and Transnational Korea,” which concerns transnational migration around the Korean Peninsula and northeast China since the 1990s. Hyun Ok Park has published widely on comparison and comparability, Korean nationalism, colonial migration and diasporic movements, anti-Americanism in South Korea. Park was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton from 2005 to 2007, as well as a recipient of John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Grant and the American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship.