

University of Hawai`i at Mānoa  
Department of Sociology  
Research Friday Workshops

**The Global Middle Class:  
What Does It Represent, How to Conceptualize It?**



**Dr. Hagen Koo**

Friday, February 28  
2:30 PM  
Saunders 244

One of the most interesting developments in the world today is the rapid growth of the middle classes in the developing world, especially in Asia. While the middle classes in America and Western Europe are shrinking in size and losing their glamor, the middle classes in many emerging economies are thriving and expanding. This phenomenon is often referred to as “the global middle class” in the media and scholarly writings.

But what is exactly meant by the global middle class, and what is actually happening to the middle classes in the developing world? How does globalization shape the newly emerged middle classes in Asia and elsewhere? What is the most fruitful way to conceptualize the relationship between neoliberal globalization and class inequality in the global era? Based on his case study of South Korea’s global middle class, Hagen Koo will explore these questions in this colloquium.