CEAS Lecture Series
ft.
 Boduerae Kwon
Professor of Korean Literature, Korea University

“‘Self-determination’ and ‘Representation’ in the March 1st Movement: An Experiment in Simultaneity and Immediacy in 1919 Colonial Korea”

To commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the March First Movement in Korea, Professor Kwon will discuss the historical implications of the event in relation to the notions of “self-determination” and “representation.” The 1919 movement gave rise to a new sense of time among Koreans, one in which they felt that catastrophe and utopia were simultaneously imminent. It was with this newfound feeling of immediacy that the people of colonial Korea experimented with “self-determination” and “representation” on both the individual and national level. With a focus on the case of the “33 national representatives”—the individuals at the center of the movement who signed a proclamation of Korea’s independence—this talk examines Korean experimentation with a “democracy without parliamentarianism” under the influence of Woodrow Wilson’s principle of ‘national self-determination,’ arguing that the movement served at once to dismantle and revitalize the very concept of “representation.”