HIST 134b – The Ottoman Empire: From Principality to Republic by way of Empire
Department of History, Brandeis University
Fall 2019, Tues and Thurs., 2-3:20, Schiffman Humanities Center Rm. 123

Note: The course will cover all the topics on the syllabus. However, it is likely that we will skip some of the readings, or that I’ll ask smaller groups of students to prepare each of several articles listed for a particular week. Do not judge the syllabus by the number of reading items listed!

Course description and Objectives
The Ottomans in history: how did a tiny principality grow from 1300 to be a global Islamic empire by 1550 and become a modern nation state by 1923? Who were the Ottomans? What are their legacies in today’s world?

Tracing the development of the state chronologically, the course will investigate and analyze the Ottomans from different perspectives: major events; key ideas; administrative institutions; prominent individuals; economic, social and cultural practices; and material culture. Among the historical and historiographic issues to be considered: Why were the Ottomans successful in establishing an empire? What was the Ottoman dynasty? What was Islam in the Ottoman Empire? How did the Ottomans organize and manage an enormous agrarian empire? What are the aesthetic and architectonic achievements of the Ottomans? How did the Ottomans confront a variety of internal and external challenges? What did “reform” mean in an Ottoman context? Course materials include: lectures, readings of original sources and scholarly research, still and moving images, maps, and objects. In its final week, the course will consider the demise of a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, multi-lingual Ottoman empire and its transition to a modern nation-state.

Classes will comprise a mixture of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to prepare for each class and participate actively. Evaluations will be based on attendance and participation, written work and a final exam.

Credit Hours
Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine (9) hours of study time per week preparing for class. This includes readings, preparing for discussion, any necessary research, writing, and study for exams.
Prerequisites: none

Course Materials
You will find the course materials either in the bookstore, or available online through the library or LATTE.

Learning Goals
- To acquire a broad familiarity with the history and culture of the Ottoman state from start to end, and to understand the legacy of the past and its uses in the present
- To appreciate Ottoman history as an aspect of global history, and of the regional histories of the Middle East, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, the Caucasus, the Black Sea and Indian Ocean
- To explore the “doing of history”: who are historians, what do they do, and how?
- To develop your critical abilities as a reader, speaker and writer
- To enjoy the adventure and labor of learning!

Course requirements & Evaluation method
- Class attendance
  Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded for each class. More than two unexcused absences will earn a reduction of your final grade at the rate of 1/2 grade per every two additional unexcused absences. In order for an absence to be recorded as “excused”, you must notify me and get my approval in advance. Beyond this, only documented emergencies will be approved as “excused.”
  Examples of unacceptable excuses: “My roommate forgot to wake me up.” “Someone else already bought my vacation ticket.” “I really needed to finish another assignment.”
- Class participation 20%
  o You are expected to prepare for class by doing the reading and thinking about the suggested discussion questions for each reading.
  o In addition, you are expected to bring your own questions, written down, to class. These can be on any aspect of the reading that is unclear, on the connection between this reading and any previous assignments, or on the contribution of this reading to the general topic and themes of the course. By rotation, students will be asked to begin a class discussion.
  o All questions will be collected at the beginning of each class, but please keep a copy for yourself as well.
  o There are no “dumb questions.”
- Map quiz 5% in class on Sept. 5
- Mid-term assignment 20% – Short paper (1000 words)
  o Discuss one question, in depth, with specific references to readings. You must get prior approval from me on the question you choose.
  o Due dates: Choose a question by Oct. 17; submit a draft by Oct. 24; to be handed in at the beginning of class on Oct. 31.
- Final paper 25% (2500 words)
  o Discuss one source, with reference to additional readings. You must get prior approval from me of the source you choose and your preliminary supporting bibliography.
Due dates: Choose a topic by Nov. 19; submit an outline, a bibliography and a draft of the introduction by Dec. 3 (earlier is better!); papers are due by Dec. 16.

- Final exam 30% – date TBA
- Grading:
  - All assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course.
  - You must receive a passing grade on the final exam & paper in order to pass the course.

- Extensions
  No extensions will be granted on any of the assignments. Rather than spend time thinking of excuses or growling about the course demands, please skip to working on the assignment. Do not wait until 24 hours before an assignment is due in order to contact me for help deciding what you will do and how. Let’s have a conversation early on; that way even if you do pull an all-nighter, you will have been thinking about your topic, gathering material and letting ideas percolate so that you don’t start “cold”.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit to Turnitin.com software to verify originality. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS – Library guides.

In this class, any act of plagiarism for any reason will earn an automatic F for the assignment and will be reported. Two such instances in a semester will earn an automatic F for the course.

Communications
We will use the LATTE system and email in order to communicate, including specific notifications and any out-of-class discussions about the material.

University Statement on Documented Disability
If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis and wish to request a reasonable accommodation for this class, please see me immediately.

Computers and other devices in class
None. No phones, tablets or e-readers, either. No recording of any type. Our in-class encounter with the Ottomans is “unplugged” and “screen saving”. Any visual materials I bring to class will be made available to you on LATTE. If you have a documented learning issue for which you require a device, please see me in my office hours at the beginning of the semester or make an appointment to discuss this.

Professor’s note: I recommend that you read through this syllabus from start to finish as soon as possible, to ensure that you understand what we will be studying, the kinds of assignments involved, and my expectations. If anything is unclear, please ask about it before it becomes a problem.
COURSE PLAN

Week #1: Introduction the Ottoman Dynasty – Al-i Osman / آلہ عثمان / (Thurs. 8.29.2019)
... to the professor, the course, the participants....and the Ottomans

Required materials

  - Highly recommended before the first class. Howard explains what he wants to achieve in this textbook. Along the way, he introduces some of the major themes of Ottoman history, as he sees them. As we read during the semester, see if you can discern how his perspective differs from those of other authors. From mine, and eventually, yours.

  - These two chapters are useful for situating Ottoman history generally as a subject of study. You should read them at some point during the semester, but they are not required for the first class.

- Maps of the Ottoman Empire and the post-Ottoman world
  - The Ottomans originally occupy a small region, but eventually rule a very large area of territory that may not be familiar to you. It can be challenging to follow because they expand in all directions, gaining and losing territory, and then contract in the same non-linear fashion. More than the details of the precise borders (which are not clearly known), it is more important to understand the general direction and pace of change, along with the impact of the changes.
  - You are expected to familiarize yourself with a list of cities, bodies of water, mountain ranges and rivers that are fundamental to your ability to learn successfully throughout the course. The list will be available on LATTE. There is a map quiz in class on Sept. 5.
  - Some resources
    - Google Maps

Week #2: State – Fortune / devlet / دولة (9.3/9.5)

- MAP QUIZ (Thursday)

Required materials

  - Ch. 1: “Ottoman Genesis, 1300-1397,” pp. 8-38
  - Ch. 2: “A Blessed Dynasty, 1397-1494,” pp. 39-85


**Additional materials**

**Week #3: Building and Development / ʿimara-imaret – عمارت / عمارَة (9.10/9.12)**

**Required materials**
  - source: Ottoman miniature of the devşirme (collection), from the Süleymannname (book of Süleyman), from 1588, found in the library of the Topkapi Palace, TSM, Ms. Hazine 1517.
  - Together with the texts, please look closely at the city maps of Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul in this article.
  - Find the three cities on Google maps, and make sure to zoom in/out, and look at both street view and satellite view, so that you have a sense of the terrain. What do you observe?
- source: passage from “A History of Edirne,” by Hekim Beşir Celebi

**Additional materials**
- digital resource: *caravanserais (hans)* in Anatolia at the [Turkish Han website](http://turkishhan.org)
- visual resources:
  - tour the [Edirne palace](https://www.edirne.gov.tr/en)
  - tour the [Topkapi palace](https://www.topkapi palace


**Required materials**
- source: *Map* of Matrakci (Mattraki) Nasuh. available through Google images

**Week #5: Justice / adalet / عدالت (9.24/9.26)**

**Required materials**

• Darling, Linda T. “Circle of Justice.” In Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE.

• Image: “Circle of Justice”

• Sources: ferman; kanunname; tapu tahrir defteri

Additional materials

• animations of Sultan Süleyman I’s campaigns (an early digital history work)


• Özbaran, Salih. “Ottoman expansion in the Red Sea.” In CHT, Vol. 2:173-201

Week #6: Gender and Its Boundaries / harem / ﻣﺤﺮم (10.8 = Erev Yom Kippur/10.10)

Required materials


• Watch: episode #1 (1:40:00) of “A Magnificent Century” (and then as much more as you’d like). Available free on youtube.

Additional materials


Oct. 17: DEADLINE TO CHOOSE MID-TERM PAPER TOPIC (Oct. 17)

In this class we will discuss major themes of the course thus far and each student will present – very briefly – the topic of their paper, the question they hope to answer and the reason for asking their question. We will work together on defining topics, paper structure, and related subjects. Everyone participates; everyone benefits.

Week #7: Wealth-property / mal / ﻣﺎل (10.22/10.24)

Required materials


• **source:** *waqfiyya/vakfiye* (endowment deed) – Stephan, St. H. “An Endowment Deed of Khâsseki Sultân, Dated 24th May 1552.” *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 10 (1944): 170–94.

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT MID-TERM DRAFT (Oct. 24)**

**Week #8: Order *nizam* / نظام (10.29/10.31)**

**Required materials**

- **podcast:** Yaron *Ayalon*, “Natural Disasters and Ottoman Social History,” (episode 226, 40 min.)

**MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT DUE Oct. 31, at the beginning of class**

**Week #9: The Well-Protected Domains / Memalik-i Mahruse / ممالك محرسة (11.5/11.7)**

**Required materials**


**Additional materials**

- **podcast:** Gabor Agoston, “War, Environment, and the Ottoman-Habsburg Frontier” (episode 276, 45 min.)
Week #10: **Notables / a`yan / اعيان** (11.12/11.14)

**Required materials**


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Week #11: **(Re-)Ordering / tanzimat / تنظيمات** (11.19/11.21)

**Required materials**


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Week #12: **Abdülhamid II / عبد الحميد خان** (11.26/12.3)

**Required materials**

- **Source**: Sultan Abdülhamid II collection of photographs, Library of Congress, [click here]
- **Source**: “Teaching ‘the Language of Our Glorious Empire to Jewish Girls’: A Petition to Open a School in Istanbul [1895].” In *Sephardi Lives*, pp. 190-191
- **Source**: “The Fez as a Sign of Patriotism: An Appeal for Imperial Allegiance during the Greco-Ottoman War (1897).” In *Sephardi Lives*, 194-195

**Additional materials**

- **A novel**: Ahmet Midhat Efendi. *Felâtun Bey and Râkim Efendi: An Ottoman Novel*. Translated by Melih Levi and Monica M. Ringer. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016. [We will include a section from this novel in our required readings.]

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Week #13: **Türk / تركر** (12.5/12.10 – last day of classes)

**Required materials**

- **Quataert**, Ch. 9: “Inter-communal co-operation and conflict,” pp. 174-194.

• **Source:** “Excerpts from Ahmet Ağaoğlu’s *The Turkish World, 1912-1913.*” Presented by A. Holly Shissler, in Amin, et al., *The Modern Middle East,* pp. 345-349.


**FINAL PAPER DUE Dec. 16**

**FINAL EXAM – See exam schedule.**

Questions to guide your reading
1. Who is the author: origin, education, field of research, other publication(s)?
2. When was the article or book published and where? Are there different editions?
3. What is the topic of the article/chapter?
4. What is the question that the author is trying to answer about this topic?
5. What is the main thesis or claim of the author about the topic (the answer to the question)?
6. What is the structure of the discussion and how does it add/detract from the author’s work?
7. What are the author’s sources?
8. What is the author’s method?
9. Does the author draw inspiration from any other specific theory? How does this affect the article?
10. Is the author obviously engaged in a discussion with any previous scholarship on the subject?
11. How does the author use footnotes/references in this article?
12. What other rhetorical devices does the author use?

General histories and Textbooks
  - Vol. 1: *Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453,* edited by Kate Fleet. 2009
  - Vol. 2: *The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603* edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet. 2013

**Reference resources**
• *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition and/or 3rd edition. Leiden: Brill. Electronic resource. [Abbreviated as EI2 or EI3]
• **Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi** Click to access this resource online. It is in Turkish but many of the articles have accompanying illustrations which you can click on and enlarge. So, if you have a Turkish term, you may be surprised to see how much you can learn just from the images. Try it clicking on the word **yeniçeri** (janissary)!

**ASK ABOUT THE OTTOMANS!** The Ottoman Empire is a vast subject of study, and we might easily miss something of particular interest to someone in the course. Students who are especially keen on particular aspects of Ottoman history (a place, an ethnic or religious group, a period, an issue, a creative medium) are invited to let me know about these. I’ll do my best to include them in our readings and discussions, or to point you in the direction of relevant materials.