

*Aftermaths of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Middle East
(1878–1939)*

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Class Days: Wednesdays — November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 ; December 7, 14, 21 / Time: 9:00–11:00
Papers' Presentation and Discussion: February 1, 2 (TBC)
Meeting place: Aula 2 (TBC)
Office Hours: By appointment

Description: This graduate / upper-level undergraduate seminar examines the making of aftermaths for the Ottoman Empire following watershed moments such as the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, and the wars that preceded them. It aims to help students interpret the major themes and problems of late Ottoman history together with some of the key debates that still surround certain events, processes, and figures associated with that history. Class discussions are organized chronologically and thematically, in order to examine military, diplomatic, and administrative processes in tandem with the competing claims raised about these processes in narratives constructed across time and space — such as those about the nation, homeland, “great men,” and the ideologies and identities associated with them. This approach facilitates analyzing how imperial structures were dismantled in practice as well as how politics of memory shape constructions of difference in retrospect, at the intersections of religion, ethnicity, race, class, and gender. It helps students formulate connected frameworks for studying the Balkans and the Middle East by critically engaging with the division of “(post-)Ottoman” histories into separate “regional” and “national” compartments. Seeing beyond these divides is essential for comparative analyses of the making and re-making of aftermaths for the Ottoman Empire in more than twenty countries across three continents. Transcending these divides is essential also for the broader intellectual objective of producing nuanced interpretations of frequently used but seldom problematized terms such as historical background, imprint, legacy, and heritage in (former) imperial domains.

Final grades for the course will be evaluated on the basis of active participation in class discussions (50%) ; a final paper — 5000–7000 words, the topic of which should be discussed and confirmed with the instructor by November 30 (30%) ; and presentation of the final paper in class (20%).

Course Outline

Class Meeting 1: November 2 — 09:00–11:00

The Balkans and the Middle East as Former Ottoman Domains

Introductions, detailing expectations
Thinking across nations, regions, and “eras”
How to question conventional divides in historically significant and *explanatory* ways?
Reorderings: “The Tanzimat Era” and narratives of centralization, modernization, Westernization
Questions of agency — change as aspired and imposed

Materials for the Week:

Amy Singer, “The Ottoman Balkans and the Middle East Compared: How Might This Be Accomplished?,” in *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean: The Balkans and the Middle East Compared*, Eyal Ginio and Karl Kaser, eds., (Jerusalem: The European Forum at the Hebrew University, 2013), 23–40
Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72–108

James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 180–216 (+ primary sources from 227–231)

John R. Lampe and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2021), 1–17; 53–62; 147–154

Class Meeting 2: November 9 — 09:00–11:00

Empires: Ruptures and Continuities

Before and after “the imperial turn”

Shifts in paradigm, approach, and methodology

“Local/indigenous” versus “foreign/Ottoman”?

How to balance scholarly attention to rupture and continuity?

Background, imprint, legacy, heritage; interchangeable terms?

Materials for the Week:

Alan Mikhail and Christine Philliou, “The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 54, No. 4 (2012), 721–745

Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 13–46

Maria Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans,” in *Imperial Legacy: the Ottoman imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, L. Carl Brown, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 45–77

Albert Hourani, *The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East* (London, Longmans for the University of Essex, 1970), 1–20

Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–10

Class Meeting 3: November 16 — 09:00–11:00

Empires and Wars: Endings and Beginnings

“The Constitutional Moment” (1876-1878) and the accession to the throne of Abdulhamid II

Defeat and Victory: The Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878 and the Balkan Wars

Endings for the empire, beginnings for the nation(s)?

Seeking nuance: Dissolution, partition, dismantling

Multiple viewpoints of imperial gaze over “others”

Materials for the Week:

Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 109–149

M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett (eds.), *War and Diplomacy: The Russo–Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011) introduction by Yavuz and Sluglett; “European Equilibrium or Asiatic Balance of Power?: The Ottoman Search for Security in the Aftermath of the Congress of Berlin” by Feroze A. K. Yasamee, 1–16, 56–78

Yana Hashamova, “Looking for the Balkan (Br)other: The National Gaze in Dzhanik Faiziev’s The Turkish Gambit,” *The Russian Review* Vol. 74, No. 2 (2015), 211–229

Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, ““Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!” “Awakening a Nation” Through Propaganda in the Ottoman Empire During the Balkan Wars (1912-13),” in *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide*, Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem and Maurus Reinkowski, eds., (London; NY: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 77–102

Watch: *The Turkish Gambit* (2005), Dzhanik Fayziev

Class Meeting 4: November 23 — 09:00–11:00

Peoples(.) and Empires at War

Multilayered identities and “overlapping affiliations”

“Leaders,” “Intellectuals,” “elites,” and “others”

Intersections of religion, ethnicity, and gender

Violence and trauma: displacement, famine, massacre, dispossession, assimilation

The *emergence* of minorities and majorities

Materials for the Week:

Leyla Amzi–Erdogdular, “Alternative Muslim Modernities: Bosnian Intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 59, no. 4 (2017), 912–943

Dimitris Kamouzis, “Elites and the Formation of National Identity: The Case of the Greek Orthodox millet (mid–nineteenth century to 1922)” in *State–nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830–1945*, Benjamin C. Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dimitris Kamouzis and Paraskevas Konortas, eds., (London; NY: Routledge, 2013), 13–46

Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yektan Türkyılmaz, “Unravelling Layers of Gendered Silencing: Converted Armenian Survivors of the 1915 Catastrophe,” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East: Recovering Voices from the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Amy Singer, Christoph K. Neumann and Selçuk Akşin Somel, eds., (London; NY: Routledge, 2011), 25–53

Melanie Tanielian, *The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 1–21; 235–258

Thomas B. White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 21–42

Watch: *Safarbarlik* (1966), Henry Barakat

Class Meeting 5: November 30 — 09:00–11:00

Competing Narratives of Great Men: Midhat Pasha and Sultan Abdulhamid II

Personifying historical significance — and claims

Competing symbols for competing identities?

Victims and villains: Criminalization, Sexualization, Glorification

“Ottoman figures” from “Ottoman history”?

Seeing (like) a State through (the State’s?) Great Men

Materials for the Week:

Lucy Riall, “The Shallow End of History? The Substance and Future of Political Biography,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 40, no. 3 (2010), 375–397

Roderic H. Davison, “The Beginning of Published Biographies of Ottoman Statesmen: The Case of Midhat Pasha,” in *Türkische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte (1071-1920): Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses, München 1986*, Hans Georg Maier and Raoul Motika, eds., (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 59–79

Maria Todorova, *Scaling the Balkans: Essays on Eastern European Entanglements* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019) (chapter titled “Midhat Pasha and the Bulgarians”), 420–434

İrvin Cemil Schick, “Sultan Abdülhamid II from the Pen of his Detractors: Oriental Despotism and the Sexualization of the Ancien Régime,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2018), 47–73

Edhem Eldem, “Sultan Abdülhamid II: Founding Father of the Turkish State?,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2018), 25–46

Class Meeting 6: December 7 — 09:00–11:00

Interactions Among, With, Against, and Beyond States

Thinking “globally” about (former) Ottoman domains in the early twentieth century
Networks and hierarchies in a rapidly changing world
The Ottoman Empire in “the modern world”: An outdated, backward oppressor?
Historicizing class relations and the urban-rural divide
Bureaucracy and law in the aftermath(s) of the Ottoman Empire

Materials for the Week:

Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, “Fin-de-Siècle Egypt: A Nexus for Mediterranean and Global Radical Networks,” in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 78–100
Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 1–27
Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation-building and A History Denied*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 43–63
Ilana Feldman, *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2008), 1–28
Lampe and Brunnbauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook*, 203–212
Emily Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 135–163

Class Meeting 7: December 14 — 09:00–11:00

Remembering and Forgetting

Identifying the national through the imperial
Memories in comparison: the Balkans in contemporary Arabic writings
Constructing and contesting collective identity in urban space
Shared pasts, divergent futures: the case of Salonica and Beirut
Memoirs and the (hi)stories they tell for “us”

Materials for the Week:

Halil İnalçık, “The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case,” in *Imperial Legacy: the Ottoman imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, L. Carl Brown, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 17–29
Christine Philliou, “The Paradox of Perceptions: Interpreting the Ottoman Past through the National Present,” *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 44, no. 5 (2008), 661–675
Eyal Ginio, “Between the Balkan Wars (1912–13) and the ‘Third Balkan War’ of the 1990s: The memory of the Balkans in Arabic writings,” in *Untold Histories of the Middle East*, 179–198
Paul Dumont, “Salonica and Beirut: The Reshaping of Two Ottoman Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean,” in *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean*, 189–208
James A. Reilly, *The Ottoman Cities of Lebanon: Historical Legacy and Identity in the Middle East* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 71–111
Selim Deringil, *The Ottoman Twilight in the Arab Lands: Turkish Memoirs and Testimonies of the Great War* (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2018) (excerpts from the memoirs of Münevver Ayaşlı, and conclusion by Deringil), 142–159; 187–194

Class Meeting 8: December 21 — 09:00–11:00

The Making and re-Making of Aftermaths

New presents, new pasts?

What role for the historian amidst competing claims and assertions?

Leaving what behind, the past?

Questions of causality: Geopolitics and the significance ascribed to “imperial legacy”

Changing perceptions in light of popular TV series: Blessing or curse?

Conclusions

Materials for the Week:

Nicola Migliorino, *(Re)constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 45–87

Yücel Yanıkdağ, “The Battle of Gallipoli: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting in Turkey,” *Comillas Journal of International Relations* Vol. 2 (2015), 99–115

Vangelis Kechriotis, “History as a Public Claim and the Role of the Historian: Two Recent Debates Regarding the Ottoman Past in Greece and Bulgaria,” in *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean*, 287–310

Yannis G.S. Papadopoulos, “Uprootedness as an Ethnic Marker and the Introduction of Asia Minor as an Imaginary Topos in Greek Films,” in *Ottoman Legacies in the Contemporary Mediterranean*, 335–355

Jeffrey Mankoff, *Empires of Eurasia: How Imperial Legacies Shape International Security* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 1–15

Leyla Amzi–Erdogdular, “Ottomania: Televised Histories and Otherness Revisited,” *Nationalities Papers* Vol. 47, no. 5 (2019), 879–893

Watch: *Rembetiko* (1983), Costas Ferris
