

ATA 59D
RETHINKING OTTOMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY:
WHERE IT HAS BEEN AND WHERE IT IS GOING?
Spring 2019
Nadir Özbek

Wednesday 10:00-13:00

Office Hrs: Wednesday 14:00-16:00 and by appointment.

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Course Description:

During the last two or three decades generations of Ottoman scholars carried out extensive research and published with almost a snowball effect numerous articles and books on differing themes and topics. Since the 1980s English language Ottoman historiography has always been in contact with historiographical currents of Europeanists; yet during this time span social theory and European historiography passed thorough major paradigmatic turns, which, without any time lag, influenced Ottoman historiography. To put in a very brief form, one major early shift is from structuralism to post-structuralism, that is from an epistemology that privileges “the social and economic” to one that totally overpowers capital as an abstract conception with a capacity to adjudicate social relations. Modernization paradigm, and its orientalist and eurocentrist premises, as the informing ideology of American hegemony and its developmentalist capitalism during the post-WWII era is seemingly over. The new social history approach of early 2000s has already produced plenty of works perhaps naively empowering divergent and under-vocalized social groups and moving far beyond overgeneralized conceptions of class and national identity. Following the collapse of post WWI political order in our region and the political chaos that followed in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East the belief in ethnic and national identities as analytical concepts resurfaced. Notwithstanding this broad restructuring of the social and political world that we live in, the students of Ottoman history are turning to new topics and paradigms such as history of intercommunal conflicts, population displacements, law and legality, public opinion, history of ideas, and history of environment and epidemics. Is there a new shift in Ottoman historiography? Perhaps a shift reflecting an attempt to move away from nation form, and even empire form, that is the so-called boundaries of political systems, a shift encouraging transregional/transnational and transcultural sensibilities, both in the political, social and environmental realms.

This seminar aims to locate main trends in Ottoman historiography and provide a critical reading of recent scholarship. We will first read general articles aimed at providing an assessment of what’s going on in Ottoman historiography. We will also pay attention to parallel debates among European historians related to shifts in interest and focus in the field. Next, we will focus on specific themes for in-depth reading and critical assessment. Throughout the semester we’ll organize two or three public seminars (with invited colleagues as lecturer or discussant) on selected topics that we cover in the class.

Assignments:

Weekly Readings: This seminar is organized around common readings as the basis for weekly discussions. (60%)

Review Article: Each student will write a short review article examining a group of work (books and articles) on one of the themes we are covering in the class. The article will be no more than 2,000 words. Students should submit the list of books and articles they are going to review during week 5. (40%)

THEMES AND SELECTED READINGS:

I. MAPPING THE FIELD: NEW TRENDS AND APPROACHES:

- Aksan, Virginia H. "What's Up in Ottoman Studies?" *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 3-21.
- Toledano, Ehud R. "A Comment on Virginia H. Aksan's "What's Up in Ottoman Studies?"" *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (2015): 215-18.
- Kırlı, Cengiz. "From Economic History to Cultural History in Ottoman Studies." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (2014): 376-78.
- Kolluoğlu Kırlı, Biray, and Deniz Yüksek. "The Cultural Turn in the Social Science and Humanities." In *Overcoming the Two Cultures: Science versus the Humanities in the Modern World-System*, edited by Richard E. Lee Lee and Immanuel Wallerstein. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2004.
- Mikhail, Alan, and Christine M Philliou. "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, no. 4 (2012): 721-45.
- Bulliet, Richard W. "Confessions of a Middle East Studies Specialist." *Middle East Law and Governance* 9 (2017): 199-222.
- Gratien, Chris, Michael Polezynski, and Nir Shafir. "Digital Frontiers of Ottoman Studies." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 37-51.

II. THE SHIFTING SPACE IN OTTOMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY:

TRANSNATIONALISM/TRANSREGIONALISM:

- Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard, and Jürgen Kocka, eds. *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.
- Harootunian, Harry. "Some Thoughts on Comparability and the Space-Time Problem." *Boundary* 32, no. 2 (2005): 23-52.
- Harootunian, Harry D. "Ghostly Comparisons: Anderson's Telescope." *Diacritics* 29, no. 4 (1999): 135-49.
- Cora, Yaşar Tolga, Dzovaniar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi. "Ottoman Historiography's Black Hole." In *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century. Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovaniar Derderian and Ali Sipahi, 1-15. London: I.B. Tauris, 2016.
- Gutman, David. "Ottoman Historiography and the End of the Genocide Taboo: Writing the Armenian Genocide into Late Ottoman History." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (2015): 167-83.
- Markiewicz, Christopher. "Europeanist Trends and Islamicaate Trajectories in Early Modern Ottoman History." *Past & Present*, no. 239 (2018): 265-81.
- Hagemann, Karen, Simone Lässig, David Blackbourn, James M. Brophy, Pieter M. Judson, Alexander M. Martin, Lloyd S. Kramer, Alex Chase-Levenson, Roger Chickering, Suzanne Marchand, Sebastian Conrad, Birgit Aschmann, Jürgen Osterhammel, and Andrew Zimmerman. "Discussion Forum: The Vanishing Nineteenth Century in European History?: Introduction: The Shifting Space of the Nineteenth Century in European History." *Central European History* 51, no. 4 (2018): 611-95.
- Blumi, Isa. *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*. New York: Plgrave Macmillan, 2011.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY:

- İnal, Onur. "Environmental History as an Emerging Field in Ottoman Studies: An Historiographical Overview." *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 38 (2011): 1-25.
- İnal, Onur. "Ottoman and Turkish Environmental History: An Overview of the Field." *Environment and History* 24 (2018): 297-99.
- White, Sam. "Middle East Environmental History: Ideas from an Emerging Field." *World History Connected*, no. 2 (2011).

- White, Sam. "Rethinking Disease in Ottoman History." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 549-67.
- Mikhail, Alan Mark. *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Mikhail, Alan Mark, ed. *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Tabak, Faruk. *The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870: A Geohistorical Approach*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Varlık, Nükhet. *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347-1600*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Bulmuş, Birsen. *Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2012.
- Ayalon, Yaron. *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire: Plague, Famine, and other Misfortunes*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

IV. GLOBAL ECONOMIC HISTORY AND THE CRITIQUE OF NEW INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMICS:

- Pomeranz, Kenneth. "Comparisons, Connections, and Narratives of European Economic Development." In *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, 1-27. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Sokoloff, Kenneth L., and Eric M. Zolt. "Inequality and the Evolution of Institutions of Taxation: Evidence from the Economic History of the Americas." In *The Decline of Latin American Economies: Growth, Institutions, and Crises*, edited by Sebastian Edwards, Gerardo Esquivel and Graciela Marquez, 83-136. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Özbek, Nadir. "Tax Farming in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Institutional Backwardness or the Emergence of Modern Public Finance?" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49, no. 2 (2018): 219-45.
- Pamuk, Şevket. "Economic History, Institutions, and Institutional Change." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 532-35.
- Klein, Herbert S. "The "Historical Turn" in the Social Sciences." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 48, no. 3 (2018): 295-312.
- Daunton, Martin. "Rationality and Institutions: Reflections on Douglass North." *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 21, no. 2 (2010): 147-56.
- Pierre, Jon, B. Guy Peters, and Gerry Stoker, eds. *Debating Institutionalism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008.
- Boldizzoni, Francesco. *The Poverty of Clío: Resurrecting Economic History*. Princeton: Princeton University of Press, 2011.

V. NEW HISTORY OF CAPITALISM AND LABOR:

- Hilt, Eric. "Economic History, Historical Analysis, and the "New History of Capitalism"." *The Journal of Economic History* 77, no. 2 (2017): 511-36.
- Nacar, Can. "Railroads as Sites of Social Conflict: Railway Companies, Trespassers, and the Law in the Late Ottoman Empire." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 4, no. 1 (2017): 117-36.
- Sefer, Akın. "The Docks of the Revolution: The Struggles of the Port Workers of Istanbul in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century." MA., Boğaziçi University, 2009.
- Terzibaşoğlu, Yücel. "'A Very Important Requirement of Social Life': Privatisation of Land, Criminilisation of Custom, and Land Disputes in Nineteenth-Century Anatolia." In *Les acteurs des transformations foncières autour de la Méditerranée au XIXe siècle* (ed. by V. Guéno et D. Guignard), Karthala and Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme,

2013., edited by Vanessa Guéno and D. Guignard, 25-39. Karthala: Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme, 2013.

VI. FOUCAULT AND ITS AFTERMATH: THE AGAMBEN-EFFECT, LAW, POLITICS, and HISTORY:

- Ferguson, Heather. *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018.
- Schull, Kent F., M. Safa Saraçoğlu, and Robert Zens, eds. *Law and Legality in the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- Rubin, Avi. "Was There a Rule of Law in the Late Ottoman Empire?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2017).
- Rubin, Avi. "Modernity as a Code: The Ottoman Empire and the Global Movement of Codification." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2016): 828-56.
- Mundy, Martha, ed. *Law and Anthropology*. Burlington: Ashgate/Dartmouth, 2002.
- Levy-Aksu, Noemi. "An Ottoman Variation on the State of Siege: The Invention of the İdare-i Örfiyye During the First Constitutional Period." *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 55 (2016): 5-28.
- Özbek, Nadir. "'İstisna Hali': 'Devletsiz', 'Abdülhamidsiz' Osmanlı-Türkiye Tarihi Yazmanın İmkânları." *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 301 (2019): 46-53.

VII. GENDERING OTTOMAN HISTORY:

- Wiesner-Hanks, Merry. "Early Modern Women and the Transnational Turn." *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7 (2012): 191-202.
- Maksudyan, Nazan. "Feminist Perspectives on Ottoman Urban History." *Moderne Stadtgeschichte*, no. 1 (2018): 26-38.
- Tuğ, Başak. "Gender and Ottoman Social History." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 2 (2014): 379-81.
- Köksal, Duygu, and Anastasia Falierou, eds. *A Social History of Ottoman Women*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Maksudyan, Nazan, ed. *Women and the City, Women in the City: A Gendered Perspective to Ottoman Urban History*. New York: Berghahn, 2014.
- Yılmaz, Seçil. "Threats to Public Order and Health: Mobile Men as Syphilis Vectors in Late Ottoman Medical Discourse and Practice." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 13, no. 2 (2017): 222-43.
- Aykut, Ebru. "Toxic Murder, Female Poisoners, and the Question of Agency at the Late Ottoman Law Courts, 1840-1908." *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 114-37.
- Mahir Metinsoy, Elif. *Ottoman Women During World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Balsoy, Gülhan. *The Politics of Reproduction in Ottoman Society, 1838-1900*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Kozma, Liat. *Policing Egyptian Women: Sex, Law, and Medicine in Khedival Egypt*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

VIII. HISTORY OF IDEAS AND CONCEPTUAL HISTORY:

- Pernau, Margrit. "Provincializing Concepts: The Language of Transnational History." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East* 36, no. 3 (2016): 483-99.
- Harootunian, Harry D. "All the Names of History." In *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*, ix-xxxii. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Translated by Samuel Todd. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Topal, Alp Eren. "From Decline to Progress: Ottoman Concepts of Reform 1600-1876." Ph.D., Bilkent University, 2017.
- Kılınçoğlu, Deniz T. *Economics and Capitalism in the Ottoman Empire*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Şiviloğlu, Murat R. *The Emergence of Public Opinion: State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

- Özbek, Nadir. "Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism and the Hamidian Regime, 1876-1909." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 1 (2005): 59-81.
- Özbek, Nadir "Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908-1918)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 5 (2007): 795-809.
- Kırlı, Cengiz. "Surveillance and Constituting the Public in the Ottoman Empire." In *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Seteney Shami, 177-203. New York: Social Science Research Council, 2010.