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:


II. THE SHIFTING SPACE IN OTTOMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY:

TRANSNATIONALISM/TRANSREGIONALISM:


III. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY:

White, Sam. "Middle East Environmental History: Ideas from an Emerging Field." World History Connected, no. 2 (2011).


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

V. NEW HISTORY OF CAPITALISM AND LABOR:

VI. FOUCAULT AND ITS AFTERMATH: THE AGAMBEN-EFFECT, LAW, POLITICS, and HISTORY:
Rubin, Avi. "Was There a Rule of Law in the Late Ottoman Empire?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2017).

VII. GENDERING OTTOMAN HISTORY:

**VIII. HISTORY OF IDEAS AND CONCEPTUAL HISTORY:**
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.