Course Description:
The course introduces students to the range of methodologies and theories dealing with empires, modern states, fiscal systems, and comparative history. We start with the discussion of theories of comparison, the problem of temporality, and time-space relationship. We’ll specifically concentrate on providing a critique of well-established paradigms of comparison and linear conception of time still informing historiographies of Ottoman and Russian empires, China and Japan. The course aims to provide a critical and alternative ground of comparison for nineteenth-century histories of these societies. The course then proceeds to examination of comparative histories of these societies particularly with a focus on political economy, taxation and fiscal systems. We take taxation and fiscal systems not merely as institutional consolidations, but rather administrative practices and politics in the everyday realm. A focus on everyday will help us overcome an abstract conception of modernity and formulate a new ground for comparative history which will have room for historical differences within their shared context of global political economy of modern capitalism.

Course Requirements:
During the semester we are going to make common readings as the basis for our weekly discussions. Attendance and class participation is mandatory, unexcused absence will lower your grade. Participation and contribution to class discussions count 50%. You are expected to write a 2000-word review essay examining a group of books and articles in any geographic area that deals with the course themes. 50%.

Note: Pieces with * are optional readings.

Course Schedule:

Week I: Introduction to the Course

Week II: The Question of Comparability I
Week III: The Question of Comparability II

Week IV: Comparative Political Economy of Modern States:

Week V: Comparative Empires and Shared Histories of Modernity

Week VI: The Ottoman and Russian Empires in Comparative Perspective: Old and New Paradigms

Week VII: Paths Toward Modern Fiscal States: Political and Fiscal Making of the Nineteenth-Century European States
Week VIII: Paths Toward Modern Fiscal States: Japan

Week IX: Political Economies of China and Europe Compared

Week X: Ottoman Path to Modern State Reconsidered I

Week XI: Ottoman Path to Modern State Reconsidered II

Week XII: The Shifting Time and Space of Comparison in Ottoman Historiography I

Week XIII: The Shifting Time and Space of Comparison in Ottoman Historiography II

Week XIV: The Limits of the New Institutional Economics: The Question of Comparability Revisited


