

HIST232/NELC282

Governing Differences: State, Society, Language, and Religion in the Ottoman Empire

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Diverse backgrounds affect the multiplicity of human experience in this world. Personal or group identity—defined by economic background, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sex—determines the parameters of our social, economic, and political relations. As heterogeneity becomes a norm in the societies of a globalized world, modern nation states are devising policies to address the needs of their diverse populations. In this course we will seek to examine questions: how did imperial administrations of the past deal with diversity? What did diversity mean in a historical imperial context?

The Ottoman Empire stretched over vast territories in three continents and ruled over a diverse population between fourteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the governing elite in the Ottoman Empire was Turkish-speaking Muslims, languages spoken in the empire included, but were not limited to, Arabic, Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Kurdish, Ladino, Greek, Romanian, and Serbian. Christian, Muslims, and Jews lived under the banner of Ottoman sultans for centuries. Not everyone was equally privileged and well off. Menial laborers, peasants, slaves, sex workers were all part of the Ottoman society along with wealthy bankers, rich merchants, clergy, high-ranking civil and military officialdom.

Defining diversity broadly this seminar will explore how the Ottomans governed the differences among its diverse population. In addition to broader queries mentioned above, we will explore answers for specific questions such as: what were some of the issues that the Ottomans faced in governing a poly-ethnic and multicultural empire? Was the famous Ottoman *millet system* successful model for the coexistence of various religious groups? Or was its success simply a myth? By tackling questions of this sort, the seminar aims to shed a light on the historical experience of diversity in the Ottoman Empire.

Requirements and Grading

- 20% Attendance & Participation
- 20% Paper Proposal
- 50% Final Paper
- 10% Paper Presentation

Week 1: The Ottoman Empire

- Norman Itzkowitz, *The Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
- Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age (1300-1600)*

Week 2: Theorizing Tolerance

- Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: the Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Molly Greene ed., *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005).
- Karen Barkey "Aspects of Legal Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire" (pp. 83-108) at *Legal Pluralism and Empires, 1500-1850*, NYU Press (July 2013)

Week 3: Gender and Governance

- Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- James E. Baldwin, *Prostitution, Islamic Law and Ottoman Societies*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2012), pp. 117-152.

Week 4: Diverse Sexualities

- Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005).
- Stephen O. Murray, Homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire, "Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques, Vol. 33, No. 1, Eighteenth-Century Homosexuality in Global Perspective (Spring 2007), pp. 101-116
- Byron and Oriental Love, Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jun., 2013), pp. 1-32

Week 5: Everyday Life

- Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
- James Grehan, The Mysterious Power of Words: Language, Law, and Culture in Ottoman Damascus (17th-18th Centuries) *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Summer, 2004), pp. 991-1015

Week 6: Discussion of Paper Topics & Sources for Research

- Presentation by Mr. David Giovacchini (Middle East Collection, Van Pelt Library)
- Discussion of Research Paper Topics

Week 7: Reform and Equality

- M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
- Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

Week 7: Jewish Identity

- Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Sarah Abrevaya Stein, Creating a Taste for News: Historicizing Judeo-Spanish Periodicals of the Ottoman Empire, *Jewish History*, Vol. 14, No. 1, The Press and the Jewish Public Sphere (2000), pp. 9-28

Week 8: Christian Minorities

- Christine Philliou, *Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Jan., 2009), pp. 151-181.
- Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Week 9: Heterodoxy and Conversion

- Marc David Baer, *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).
- Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia. The Interactions between Alevi and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia*, *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 41, Issue 1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 89-111.
- Selim Deringil, "There Is No Compulsion in Religion": On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 547-575.

Week 10: Race

- Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its demise, 1800-1909* (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1996).
- Eve Troutt Powell, *Tell This in My Memory: Stories of Enslavement from Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Blond, Tall, with Honey-Colored Eyes: Jewish Ownership of Slaves in the Ottoman Empire*, *Jewish History*, Vol. 20, No. 3/4 (2006), pp. 315-332.

Week 11: A Better off Majority?

- James H. Meyer, *Im Migration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1914*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Feb., 2007), pp. 15-32.
- Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: the Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995).

Week 12: Languages

- Johann Strauss, *The Millets and the Ottoman Language: The Contribution of Ottoman Greeks to Ottoman Letters (19th - 20th Centuries)* *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 35, Issue 2 (Nov., 1995), pp. 189-249
- Linda T. Darling, "Ottoman Turkish: Written Language and Scribal Practice, 13th to 20th Centuries" (pp. 171-195) From: *Literacy in the Persianate World*

(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

Week 13 & 14: Presentation of Final Papers