



## HIST 233 – The Medieval Hero: East and West

### The Course

Designed as an introduction to reading and analyzing epic narratives, this course focuses on four such key types of works re-introduced in writing during the Middle Ages: the Shahnama, the Oghuznama, the Alexander Romance, and the Arthurian Legends. Introduced at the outset will be the main themes and narrative tools employed in the construction of epics; the common features which make a “hero”; and the relevant historical contexts. These will then be brought to bear on a close examination of the works in question, with the final case study of Alexander and the Romances serving to explore the common aspects of “Eastern” and “Western” epics and heroes. The course will conclude with a discussion of the afterlife of these epics.

**Important Note:** This syllabus may be subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to follow announcements and e-mails regarding all issues related to this course.

### Warning

Please note that one module (weeks 5 and 6) of this course will be held in Turkish due to the nature of selected works. Although English translations of the relevant parts will be partially available, the discussions focusing on specific concepts will pursue in Turkish.

### Instructor

N. Zeynep Yelçe ([zeynep.yelce@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:zeynep.yelce@sabanciuniv.edu))

### Assistant

Abdullah Güloğlu ([aguloglu@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:aguloglu@sabanciuniv.edu))

### Class Schedule (Live on Zoom)

Thursday, 14:40-15:30 – Friday, 12:40-14:30

<https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/95140263630>

### Office Hours (on Zoom)

Wednesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

<https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/99323209063>



### Time-Conflict Policy

Time Conflict requests will not be accepted due to in-class assignment load.

### Course Requirements

Attendance and participation	20 %
Reflection Portfolio	25 %
Midterm Exam	20 %
Final Exam	35 %

Exams constitute of around four essay questions. When answering the questions, you are expected to engage in contextual and conceptual discussion rather than citing exact dates and/or telling a story in detail.

Reflection Portfolio consists of five slides to be prepared as lectures proceed throughout the semester. Each slide contains your notes and reflections about the relevant legend and/or hero. The fifth slide is meant as an overall evaluation and analysis of all slides. No make-up will be offered for portfolio entries.

For more information, please see Course Information.

### Grading

Your letter grade, as well as exam grades, is based on your individual performance. Requests for extra work or other compensation will not be accepted. E-mails concerning such requests will not be replied. Letter grades are calculated according to the following letter grade scale and are not open to negotiation.

min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.
59	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96
D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A



### **Attendance**

Attendance is compulsory in this course. Attendance follow-up starts at the end of the add-drop period. Attendance is taken on an hourly basis during all live sessions. Failure to attend more than three hours requires points to be taken off the overall grade. Students who miss 9 hours (regardless of medical reports) in total will automatically receive 0 points for Attendance and Participation. For more information, please see Course Information.

### **Participation**

Please keep your cameras on during Zoom sessions. Participation (contribution to class discussions, poll participation, general involvement, etc.) will be taken into consideration along with attendance in grade calculations.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

HART 233 does not tolerate dishonesty and plagiarism. Plagiarism is an ethical and academic offense. Papers with plagiarism issues will be graded F, and your semester grade may be F depending on the severity of the offense. The offense may also be referred to as the University Ethics Committee. For information on plagiarism, please see Course Information.

### **Students with Special Needs**

It is the policy of Sabancı University to accommodate students with special needs and disabilities. To determine accommodations and/or academic adjustments, please contact [specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu).



## **SUCOURSE and COMMUNICATION**

You are responsible for reading your e-mails, following course announcements, as well as exam and assignment dates. You can find all you need to know about the course in SuCourse.

**Homepage:** You can find my e-mail, office hour information, and class schedule here.

**Syllabus:** You can find the syllabus for the whole semester here. This will not be updated. For updates, follow the Announcements and Course Information.

**Course Information:** This tab is regularly updated. You can find important information about Discussion and Office Hours, Portfolio Instructions, Exam Rules, Tips for Papers and Exams, Plagiarism, as well as Tips for Remote Learning.

**Announcements:** This is the most important tab if you wish to make life easier. Our communication is through Announcements. All announcements and updates are posted here and simultaneously sent to your e-mail address. You are responsible for reading all e-mails and announcements carefully. If you lose or cannot find an e-mail or cannot remember a date, check the Announcements.

**More Stuff:** Interesting and useful websites and other material, not mandatory.

**Exams:** This is where we are going to have our Exams.

**Assignments:** This is where you upload your Portfolio slides.

**Reading List:** The list and links to our sources are provided here. Sources are provided as either online e-books, e-pub or pdf files. Access to these sources will be removed as soon as the semester officially ends.

**Lectures:** Weekly lecture files are posted here.

**Google Shared Drive:** Weekly lecture recordings are posted here.

**Attendance:** You can follow your attendance (not participation) here.

**Grades:** You can follow your exam and portfolio slide points here. You will not see your course grade (letter grade) here.

**E-Mail:** In cases when we send an e-mail rather than posting an announcement, the original mail can be found here.



## COURSE SCHEDULE

**WEEK 01. Feb 25-26 : Introduction**

**WEEK 02. Mar 04-05 : Medieval Life and the Medieval Hero**

**WEEK 03. Mar 11-12 : The Shahnameh**

Read: Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 38-80 (parts on the legendary kings)

**WEEK 04. Mar 18-19 : Rostam and the *Shahnameh***

Read: Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 179-198 (Seven Trials of Rostam)

Due: Reflection Slide 1 (March 24, Wednesday, 23:00)

**WEEK 05. Mar 25-26 : Oguz and Oguznama**

Read: *Oğuz Destanı: Reşideddin Oğuznâmesi*, pp. 17-49; *Oğuz Kağan Destanı*; "Tevarih-i Al-i Selçuk Oğuznamesi," pp. 163-99.

**WEEK 06. Apr 01-02 : Oguznama and the Book of Dede Korkud**

Read: "Dirse Han Oğlu Boğaç Han", "Basat Depegözi Öldürdigi"

Due: Reflection Slide 2 (April 07, Wednesday, 23:00)

**WEEK 07. Apr 08-09 : Midterm Exam**

**WEEK 08. Apr 15-16 : Arthurian Legends**

Read: Selections from *The History of the Kings of Britain*

**WEEK 09. Apr 22 : Arthur and The Quest of the Holy Grail**

Read: Selections from *Le Morte d'Arthur*

Due: Reflection Slide 3 (April 28, Wednesday, 23:00)



**WEEK 10. April 29-30 : Alexander the Great and Alexander Romances**

Read: Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 441-528 (parts on Alexander), and Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Greek Alexander Romance*.

**WEEK 11. May 06-07 : Alexander and Iskandar**

Read: Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, pp. 441-528 (parts on Alexander), and Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Greek Alexander Romance*.

Due: Reflection Slide 4 (May 12, Wednesday, 23:00)

**WEEK 12. May 13-14 : Ramadan Holiday**

**WEEK 13. May 20-21 : Modern Re-presentations**

Watch : *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) director: Steven Spielberg  
(available on Netflix)

Read : Aronstein, "Not Exactly a Knight"

**WEEK 14. May 27-28 : The Hero in Medieval Fantasy: "The Witcher"**

Watch : *The Witcher* (2019)  
(available through Netflix)

Due: Reflection Portfolio in full (May 26, Wednesday, 23:00)

**WEEK 15. June 5 : Final Exam**