Sabancı University, FASS, Fall 2021

HIST 511: Trends, Debates, Historians I

Instructor: Ayşe Ozil (ayseozil@sabanciuniv.edu)

Time: Tuesdays, 11:40-14:30

Place: FASS 1011 and online (Students will register through their Sabancı University e-mail accounts to attend online classes and will keep the web camera on throughout the session)

Office Hours: By appointment

Course description:

This course will explore the meanings and practices of history-writing from Antiquity through the Late Medieval Era. The focus will be both on historians who lived and wrote within this time range and on modern scholars who studied various aspects of history and history-writing concerning the same period. We will relate each historian to their context and historiographical paradigm and situate each contribution within the framework and literature to which it pertains. Based on these historians and their works, we will pay due attention to the examination of various historical questions, debates and trends. A side objective of the course is to study problems of overall organization and sustained consistency in writing synthetic books and the emphasis is on reading complete books by leading historians. The course will start with introductory sessions on meanings, methodologies and sources of history-writing. We will then move on to an exploration of Ancient Greece and Rome to be followed by the Medieval Era. These works will then be scrutinized for the methodological insights they might shed on Ottoman historical studies. In this context, we will discuss controversies among scholars of Ottoman history about the question of the emergence of empire in a medieval and early modern context as well as the socio-economic characteristics of this empire including the feudalism debate. To counterbalance the mostly political and also socio-economic focus of the course, we will close the semester with readings on women’s history and urban history.

Requirements and Assessment:

1. Attendance and informed participation: Students are required to attend every session, having critically read the assigned texts to initiate and participate in class discussions. Students should also follow up on any extra assignment. (15 %)

2. Presentation in class: Students make 20-min presentations in class on a rotating basis beginning with Week 3. Presentations will be based on an assigned article or book chapter about the topic of that week and will not be a simple summary of the assigned text, but involve a discussion of the wider context and additional research. Class is also expected to read the assigned text and prepare questions/comments for discussion. (20 %)
3. **Take-home Examination (Final Paper):** Students choose a topic from (or related to) the syllabus, submit the title, a detailed abstract (700-word) and a preliminary bibliography (at least 10 items) for their final paper (**deadline: Oct 26**). (5 %) The final paper must include discussion/references to at least 5 subjects/questions raised in class and the readings. Students submit their final paper (**4000 words; deadline: Jan 12**). (30 %)

4. **Final examination:** The examination is composed of 2-3 essay questions. (30 %)

**Schedule and Readings:**

**Readings and extra materials** will be available on reserve, on SU course+, ([http://sucourse.sabanciuniv.edu](http://sucourse.sabanciuniv.edu)), or online. Since all announcements on the online page are considered official by the university rules, it is the students’ responsibility to follow these announcements and materials provided through SU course+ online. Students are to check the SU course+ website in order to follow weekly pacing, additional materials and announcements.

"Course content, requirements and policies are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor".

**Topics and Required Readings**

**Week 1, Sept 28:** Introduction and Fundamentals of Historiography

- Ferdan Ergut, *Tarihîn Hakikatleri* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2021), excerpts.

**Week 2, Oct 5:** Ancient Greek Historical Traditions I

Week 3, Oct 12: The Ancient Greek Historical Traditions II


Week 4, Oct 19: Historiography on the Ancient Period I


Week 5, Oct 26: Historiography on the Ancient Period II


Week 6, Nov 2: Romans and History


Week 7, Nov 9: Historiography on Romans: Class and Gender


**Week 8, Nov 16:** Historiography on the 19th Century Perceptions of the Classical Past


**Week 9, Nov 23:** The Early Medieval Period: Historians

- St Augustine, *The City of God* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1950). (IC online)


**Week 10, Nov 30:** The Late Medieval Period: The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State


**Week 11, Dec 7:** Ottomans, Ottomanists and History: The Feudalism Debate


- Halil İnalçık, “The Ottoman State: Economy and Society 1300-1600”, in Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1600-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994, pp. 103-154.

Week 12, Dec 14: Ottoman Historiography and Women


Week 13, Dec 21: Urban History


Week 14, Dec 28: Student paper presentations and discussion.