

**SABANCI UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**POLS 353: Turkish Politics II**

**Instructor:** Berk Esen

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**Office Hours:** Wed 3.30-4.30 & Thu 1.30-2.30 (or by appointment)

**Class Hours:** Wed 4.40-7.30 (FASS 1097)

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive view of contemporary Turkish politics in the post-1980 period. Starting with the 1980 coup, this era has constituted a sharp break with prior republican history and experienced a set of major changes in the country's political system, socio-economic factors, and cultural scene. In this course our focus will primarily be on main political events during the past four decades. As such, we will examine and discuss the primary themes, issues, trends and challenges faced by Turkish society in this period and discuss how they have been translated into the political arena. The first three sessions will cover the basic political developments throughout this period as a basic introduction to the course material. We will then proceed with a thematic analysis of the course material, analysing the major actors and topics of Turkish politics.

The course is designed in a seminar format. Although my lectures will introduce the course material to students each session, students are expected to discuss the readings and share their own opinions on the weekly topic. Some of these topics Kurdish politics, Islamist movement, contentious politics and protests, migration and diaspora politics, political economy, gender politics and LGBTI+ groups and democratic breakdown, among others. Regarding learning objectives, students are expected to learn key political figures and parties; become familiar with major political debates; and trace the transformation of the political system.

**Grading**

Students are expected to complete the weekly readings before attending the lectures and will be given a grade (20 %) based on their attendance & class participation. They will be graded based on their performance in the midterm and final exam (30 % each). Students will also be required to write an annotated bibliography on one of the weekly topics. More information will be provided about this assignment during the first session.

1. Class Participation & Attendance: 20 %
2. Annotated bibliography: 20 %
3. Midterm Exam: 30 %
4. Final Exam: 30 %

I may have to revise the course plan according to the countrywide reassessment to be made regarding higher education. This is expected to happen at the beginning of April. The content to be delivered is certain but the method of course delivery, the number and dates of exams,

and some other details are subject to change. Until announced otherwise, lectures will be conducted synchronously in class via Zoom. Sessions will not be recorded and uploaded to the course site on moodle. Participation to the sessions is, therefore, strongly encouraged.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated in the course and will be penalized accordingly. Students *are expected to* submit their own work without any outside assistance. In your written assignment please make sure to cite your sources openly and do not copy anyone else's work without a proper reference. Persons who commit plagiarism will be penalized in accordance with Sabancı University policy.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: Introduction & Historical Overview**

Zürcher, Erik Jan. (2017). *Turkey: A Modern History*. Fourth revised edition. London: I.B. Tauris. Ch. 15

Demirel, T. (2003). The Turkish military's decision to intervene: 12 September 1980. *Armed Forces & Society*, 29(2), 253-280.

### **Week 2: Turkish Politics in the 1980s and 1990s**

Zürcher, Erik Jan. (2017). *Turkey: A Modern History*. Fourth revised edition. London: I.B. Tauris. Ch. 16

Eligür, B. (2010). *The mobilization of political Islam in Turkey*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 6

Watts, N. F. (1999). Allies and enemies: Pro-Kurdish parties in Turkish politics, 1990–94. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 31(4), 631-656.

Cizre-Sakallioglu, U. M., & Yeldan, E. (2000). Politics, society and financial liberalization: Turkey in the 1990s. *Development and change*, 31(2), 481-508.

### **Week 3: Post-2002 Turkish Politics**

Zürcher, Erik Jan. (2017). *Turkey: A Modern History*. Fourth revised edition. London: I.B. Tauris. Pp. 319-337 ch. 17

Esen, B. (2021). Competitive authoritarianism in Turkey under the AKP rule. In *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey* (pp. 153-167). Routledge.

Arat, Y., & Pamuk, Ş. (2019). *Turkey between democracy and authoritarianism*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 4

## **Week 4 Islam, Secularism and Democracy**

Gumuscu, S. (2023). *Democracy or Authoritarianism: Islamist Governments in Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia*. Cambridge University Press. (TBA)

Gumuscu, S. (2010). Class, status, and party: The changing face of political Islam in Turkey and Egypt. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(7), 835-861.

Mecham, R. Q. (2004). From the ashes of virtue, a promise of light: the transformation of political Islam in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(2), 339-358.

Gülalp, H. (2001). Globalization and political Islam: The social bases of Turkey's Welfare Party. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33(3), 433-448.

## **Week 5: Kurdish Politics**

Tezcur, G. M. (2015). Electoral behaviour in civil wars: The Kurdish conflict in Turkey. *Civil Wars*, 17(1), 70-88.

Biberman, Y. (2018). Self-defense militias, death squads, and state outsourcing of violence in India and Turkey. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41(5), 751-781.

Gunes, C. (2021). Kurdish politics in Turkey. In *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey* (pp. 180-191). Routledge.

## **Week 6: Democratic Breakdown in Turkish Politics**

Kubicek, Paul (2020). "Faulty Assumptions about Democratization in Turkey", *Middle East Critique*, 29:3, 245-257.

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2021). Why did Turkish democracy collapse? A political economy account of AKP's authoritarianism. *Party Politics*, 27(6), 1075-1091.

Akkoyunlu, K., & Öktem, K. (2016). Existential insecurity and the making of a weak authoritarian regime in Turkey. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16 (4), 505-527.

Apaydin, F., & Çoban, M. K. (2022). The political consequences of dependent financialization: Capital flows, crisis and the authoritarian turn in Turkey. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1-27.

## **Week 7: Midterm – Review**

## **Week 8: Turkish voting behaviour & Polarization (Guest lecture by Mert Moral)**

Topçu, Şeyma and Mert Moral (2022). When Policies Become Irrelevant On the Effects of Polarized Attitudes on Vote Switching. Unpublished paper

Moral, Mert (2022). Politics as (Un)Usual? An Overview of the June 2018 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Turkey in Çarkoğlu, A., & Kalaycıoğlu, E. (Eds.). (2021). *Elections and Public Opinion in Turkey: Through the Prism of the 2018 Elections*. Routledge.

Moral, M., & Zhirnov, A. (2018). Issue voting as a constrained choice problem. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(2), 280-295.

Moral, Mert (2016). On the Effects of Party and Electoral Polarization on Voting Behavior in Turkey. Unpublished paper.

### **Week 9: Opposition Politics**

Erçetin, T., & Boyraz, C. (2023). How to struggle with exclusionary right-wing populism: evidence from Turkey. *Democratization*, 30(1), 78-100.

Kahvecioğlu, A., & Patan, S. (2021). Embattled Ballots, Quiet Streets: Competitive Authoritarianism and Dampening Anti-Government Protests in Turkey. *South European Society and Politics*, 26(4), 489-515.

Selçuk, O., & Hekimci, D. (2020). The rise of the democracy–authoritarianism cleavage and opposition coordination in Turkey (2014–2019). *Democratization*, 27(8), 1496-1514.

Öktem, K. (2021). Dilemmas of Subnational Democracy under Authoritarianism: Istanbul's Metropolitan Municipality. *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 88(2), 501-537.

Esen, Berk. (2022). “Post-2023 Election Scenarios in Turkey”. SWP Comment.  
<https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/post-2023-election-scenarios-in-turkey>

### **Week 10: Political Economy of Turkey**

Güven, A. B. (2022). Towards a new political economy of Turkish Capitalism: three worlds. *Turkish Studies*, 1-20.

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2018). Building a competitive authoritarian regime: State–business relations in the AKP’s Turkey. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20(4), 349-372.

Ayhan, B., & Üstüner, Y. (2022). Turkey’s public–private partnership experience: a political economy perspective. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 1-24.

Tuğal, C. (2022). The strengths and limits of neoliberal populism: the statism and mass organisation of contemporary rightwing regimes. *Contemporary Politics*, 28(5), 611-634.

### **Week 11: Populism in Turkish Politics**

Tepe, S. (2022). Populist party’s challenge to democracy: Institutional capture, performance and religion. *Party Politics*, 28(4), 651-665.

Aytaç, S. E., & Elçi, E. (2019). Populism in Turkey. *Populism around the world: A comparative perspective*, 89-108.

Sandal, N. A. (2021). Religious populist parties, nationalisms, and strategies of competition: the case of the AK Party in Turkey. *Religion, State & Society*, 49(3), 248-263.

Özdemir, Y. (2020). AKP's neoliberal populism and contradictions of new social policies in Turkey. *Contemporary Politics*, 26(3), 245-267.

### **Week 12: Social Movements and Politics of Protest in Turkey**

Özen, H. (2015). An unfinished grassroots populism: The Gezi Park protests in Turkey and their aftermath. *South European Society and Politics*, 20(4), 533-552.

Arsel, M., Adaman, F., & Akbulut, B. (2021). Political economy of environmental conflicts in Turkey: From the Bergama resistance to the Gezi protests and beyond. In *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey* (pp. 309-321). Routledge.

Alemdaroğlu, A. (2021). Youth politics. In *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey* (pp. 205-218). Routledge.

Arslanalp, M., & Deniz Erkmen, T. (2020). Mobile emergency rule in Turkey: legal repression of protests during authoritarian transformation. *Democratization*, 27(6), 947-969.

### **Week 13: Gender Politics and the LGBTİ Movement**

Özbay, C. (2022). State homophobia, sexual politics, and queering the Boğaziçi resistance. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 121(1), 199-209.

Cindoglu, D., & Unal, D. (2017). Gender and sexuality in the authoritarian discursive strategies of 'New Turkey'. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 24(1), 39-54.

Arat, Y. (2022). Democratic Backsliding and the Instrumentalization of Women's Rights in Turkey. *Politics & Gender*, 18(4), 911-941.

Kancı, T., Çelik, B., Bekki, Y. B., & Tarcan, U. (2023). The anti-gender movement in Turkey: an analysis of its reciprocal aspects. *Turkish Studies*, 1-23.

### **Week 14: Politics of Migration & Diaspora Politics**

Erman, T. (2021). Migration from rural Anatolia to metropolitan cities. In *The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey* (pp. 347-359). Routledge.

Mencütek, Z. S., & Baser, B. (2018). Mobilizing diasporas: Insights from Turkey's attempts to reach Turkish citizens abroad. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20(1), 86-105.

Aras, N. E. G., & Mencütek, Z. Ş. (2015). The international migration and foreign policy nexus: the case of Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey. *Migration letters*, 12(3), 193-208.

Kirişçi, K. (2007). Turkey: A country of transition from emigration to immigration. *Mediterranean politics*, 12(1), 91-97.