Culture, Power and History in Modern Turkey
A Humanities Seminar, Spring 2015

Dr. Brian Silverstein
Associate Professor
School of Anthropology

Is Turkey in Europe, or the Middle East? Is this a question of geography, history, politics or culture? Turkey is one of the world’s most populous Muslim-majority countries (with some 70 million people), is considered to be a functioning parliamentary democracy, is a member of NATO and a candidate for entry into the European Union. The country is also not a post-colony, and the figures who established the Republic of Turkey in 1923 had been born and raised in the Ottoman Empire, which existed for some 500 years in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East and North Africa. This ten-week, three hours a week course explores the history, culture, economy and politics of Turkey from the late 19th century Ottoman Empire to the Republican present. Course time will consist of lectures by the course coordinator, Dr. Silverstein, as well as UA experts on Turkey (of which we are fortunate to have several). Each week will be organized around a ‘theme,’ introduced by the coordinator and explored in depth by a UA faculty member whose scholarship furnishes them with considerable expertise on the topic at hand.

Required readings will include the following books (additional articles may be added in some weeks)

Pamuk, Orhan. Snow.

* * *

Week 1 Jan 29
Introduction: The politics of history and the status of the present. Examining fundamental disagreements about ‘what happened’ in the Ottoman past, and ‘what’s happening’ now in Turkey’s present.

Reading: Zürcher, pp 1-49

Week 2 Feb 5
Ottoman legacies, Republican present: The transition from multi-ethnic Empire to nation-state

Zürcher, pp 50-165

Week 3 Feb 12
Gender, masculinity and femininity, and changing roles


Optional:

**Week 4 Feb 19**
Modernization and Reform: science, remaking institutions and identities, and the role of Atatürk

Zürcher, pp. 166-205
Hanioğlu, Atatürk book

**Week 5 Feb 26**
The state: a ‘strong state’ tradition, liberalization, centralization, authoritarian tendencies

Zürcher, pp. 206-337

**Week 6 March 5**
Religion: Islam, secularism and minority faiths

Silverstein, “Islam and Modernity in Turkey” PDF article
Other articles TBA

**Week 7 March 12**
Economy: Statism, Developmentalism, and Liberalization

Readings TBA

**Week 8 March 26**
The AK Party era: social, political and economic transformation

Readings TBA
**Week 9 April 9**
Identity between East and West, minorities in Turkey, Kurds, diasporas

Reading: Orhan Pamuk’s novel, *Snow.*

**Week 10 April 16**
Turkey and the world around it: from being ‘closed’ pre-1950 to NATO, Israel, EU, etc.

Readings TBA
Brian Silverstein
Course coordinator

Bio sketch

Brian Silverstein is a cultural anthropologist and Associate Professor in the School of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, having received his PhD in anthropology from UC Berkeley. He is the author of the book *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (2011), and peer-reviewed articles in journals including *Comparative Studies in Society and History* and *Cultural Anthropology*. His research has been funded by a US Department of Education Fulbright-Hays fellowship, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities. Currently he is conducting research on Turkey’s European Union integration reforms, particularly the politics of statistics. He has been a reviewer for external funding agencies including the Social Science Research Council and the National Science Foundation. Recently elected to the board of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, he has also been asked to establish and be the inaugural director of the Arizona Center for Turkish Studies at the University of Arizona.