MODERN TURKISH HISTORY

HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND MODERN TURKEY (19-20th c.)

Course Description

The main purpose of this introductory course with two parts is to provide students from different backgrounds with an interdisciplinary approach in the study of the history, society, politics and culture of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire and of Modern Turkey.

The first part of the course provides a general survey of Ottoman/Turkish History from about the mid-nineteenth century until World War II with a particular focus on the early Republican era. The Eastern Question and the end of the Ottoman Empire - a comparative and analytical account of Westernisation, Ottoman reform attempts, the struggle for a Constitution, the economic and social transformations, diplomacy and foreign policy--; The end of World War I - the rise of Turkish nationalism, the National Struggle --; Kemalist political, social, economic and cultural reforms in the 1920s and 1930s with special reference to Kemalist principles are the subjects that will be covered.

The second part of the course will cover the Republican era after Atatürk. Among the subjects are single-party era/İsmet İnönü period, Turkish foreign policy during the WWII (1939-45), the transition from single-party to multi-party system and the Democrat Party experience (1950-60), foreign policy developments and the Cold War period, (1945-1970), internal developments leading to the 1980 coup-d'etat and, finally, the political and economic events that shaped Turkey’s future from 1980 to 2000.

About the Professor

Sevtap Demirci is professor at Bosphorus University, Istanbul, Turkey. Her Ph.D. is from the University of London. She is the author of numerous books and publications on international and Turkish history.
REQUIRED TEXTS


Recommended Reading

II- OUTLINE

PART I

- The Ottoman Empire: Political, Economic and Social Structure.
- The Eastern Question and the Partition of the Ottoman Empire
- The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and efforts to prevent it: The Reforms: the Westernization Process; the Tanzimat-The Reorganisation (1839); the Islahat-Imperial Rescript (1856); the Constitutional Era (1876); the Second Constitutional Era (1908)
- From Empire to Nation State, 1908-1923.
- World War I (1914-1918) and its aftermath. The end of the Ottoman Empire: the Mudros Armistice (Oct, 30 1918) and the “death warrant” of the Empire: the Treaty of Sevres (August 10, 1920)
- The National Struggle Period (1919-1922) Military victory: The re-establishment of complete and undivided Turkish sovereignty
- The Lausanne Peace Treaty (July 24, 1923) the diplomatic victory: The recognition of Modern Turkey in international arena.

PART II

- Transformation of the old-Ottoman system and the emergence of the New Republic: The Kemalist Reforms.
- Political and Economic Developments: 1923-1938
- The period after Atatürk 1938-45
- Transition from the single-party to the multi-party system 1923-1946 : the Democratic Party Experience (1950-1960)
- Fluctuations in Cold War Foreign Policy
- Internal and external developments leading to the September 12, 1980 Coup d’état (1960-1980).
- Review, Essay, Exam
PRELIMINARY NOTES

Part I

The Ottoman Empire, which lasted for six centuries, grew from one of a number of Turcoman principalities that ringed the Byzantine state in western Anatolia from 1299. Within two centuries the Ottomans had established an Empire which spanned three continents, namely Asia, Africa and Europe, and controlled vast resources, lands and armies thereby becoming one of the most powerful empires in history. If an empire is defined as a “political unit having an extensive territory or number of territories and ruled by a single supreme authority”, then the rule of the Ottomans officially lasted from 1299 to 1923.

Until the end of the seventeenth century, this multi-ethnic Empire was the most influential power in world politics involved in wars, conquest, and diplomacy. However, from that century on, having reached the effective limits of its expansion, it began to lose a large part of the power it once had possessed. The conquests stopped, they fell behind technologically and tactically superior European armies and war-once an important source of income for the Empire-had become a loss-making endeavour. The military weakness was accompanied by permanent fiscal crises. On the decline since the Treaty of Karlowitz of 1699, the Ottoman Empire was preserved through the existing balance among the Great Powers of Europe. The Empire labelled “the sick man of Europe” since 1844, had entered a long process of dissolution.

The Eastern Question, an expression used to indicate the problems created by the decline and the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, had been a focal point of European diplomacy for over a hundred years. The root of the matter was the inability of the Ottoman Empire to maintain its territorial integrity. The more the economic and strategic interests of the Great Powers in the Empire grew and the ensuing rivalries became visible, the more firmly the Eastern Question became an established priority on the agenda of international relations. Therefore the Eastern Question, the question of what should become of the Ottoman Empire, played a significant and even at times a dominant part in shaping the relations of the Great Powers.

The Ottomans decided that they needed an urgent program to end this deterioration. It was believed that a vigorous program of Westernization might enable the Empire to throw off its weakness. This brought on a period of Westernisation attempts led by Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), Sultan Abdulmecid (1839-1861)/Tanzimat- the Reorganisation (1839) and Islahat -the Imperial Rescript (1856); Sultan Abdülagiz (1861-1876); Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) -1876 and the 1908 Constitutions, and the Young Turks, and the Committee for Union and Progress (1908-1918). All of these efforts proved fruitless and the end was the definitive dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The Great War (1914-1918) was but the culmination of this long process of dissolution.

The Ottoman Empire, which participated in the Great War on the side of the Central Powers, was defeated by the Allies and compelled to sign the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918. Following the Armistice, the Allies worked, in line with their war-time secret agreements, the details of the peace treaty which later was signed by the Ottoman delegation in August 10, 1920 at Sevres. The Treaty of Sevres was the Allied solution to the centuries old Eastern Question, but not the final one. The draft treaty was drawn up on the model of all of the previous treaties made between victors and vanquished since the 1918 Armistice. The Ottoman government felt it had no option but to sign the treaty, which in fact past a sentence of death upon the Empire. Sultan Vahdettin’s policy was to accommodate the Allies, particularly the British, in the hope of a lenient treaty. No
articles were discussed or negotiated. The draft treaty was entirely contrary to the policy
of the integrity and independence of Turkey, the policy of preserving a compact territory
and defensible frontiers. Not only did it detach territories of enormous extent from the
Empire, it also imposed upon the territory left to the Turks a strict Allied supervision. The
survival and total destruction of the Empire now dependent upon whether the treaty
would be signed.

The rising Nationalist movement in Anatolia put an effective break on this quick solution.
As a consequence of this unrest, the Assembly did not ratify the treaty although under
pressure from the Allies. Nevertheless, the Ottoman government signed it. The
Nationalists, who practically had the support of the whole of Turkey, protested that the
Istanbul delegation did not represent the Turkish people in any way and had no authority
to conclude a treaty on behalf of Turkey. They expressed their determination to fight in
order to avert its realization; their alternative to this treaty was the National Pact (*Misak-
ı Milli*). So the Nationalist movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk,
emerged in Anatolia and grew swiftly into a major power forcing the Allies to revise their
standpoint.

With the decisive victory of the Turkish forces over the British-backed Greek army, the
first stage of the National Struggle had been won. With the Mudania Convention, which
followed the further successful advances of the Turkish army right up to Chanak, the
second part of the long battle was accomplished: it put an end to hostilities and opened
the way to Lausanne peace negotiations. At Lausanne the third stage began, namely that
doipolarcy; the initiaive was transferred from the soldiers to the diplomats. The
Lausanne Peace Conference (1922-23) was convened, providing a platform on which
age-old accounts could be settled. But it took five years from the initial Mudros Armistice
to complete a general peace settlement; and it was not until July 24, 1923 that the final
peace treaty was signed at Lausanne.

The Conference, which gave birth to the treaty and ultimately to the foundation of the
Turkish Republic, was the final phase in the long-standing Eastern Question. It was a
great turning point in Turkish history, sealing the fate of former Ottoman territories,
representing a landmark in the history of the Middle East by changing the map of the
region, closing a chapter in the long-war years, introducing security and stability in
Turkey’s foreign relations and forcing the Allies to recognize the independent and
sovereign nation state. However the chief significance of the Peace treaty was the
reestablishment of complete and undivided Turkish sovereignty in almost all the
territories that comprise the present day Turkish Republic, which was proclaimed in
October 29, 1923, shortly after the signature of the treaty, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
as its first president and Ismet Inönü its prime minister.

**Part 2**

When the military victory and the political program of the Nationalists had been achieved
and recognized by the world in an international treaty, the founder of Turkey, Mustafa
Kemal Atatürk believed that it was time to make fundamental changes in the whole
structure of Turkish society and culture. By formulating and adopting certain political
principles which later became the part of the political programmes of the Republican
People's Party created by Atatürk, Turkey's face was literally altered. The institutional
reforms continued into the social, legal and cultural spheres during the rest of the 1920s.
It was a transformation from an Islamic, multinational Empire to a national Turkish state,
from theocracy to a constitutional republic, from old Islamic concepts of authority identity
and loyalty to new conceptions of a modern secular Republic. He set Turkey on the path
of modernization and secularization by fostering Turkish national consciousness and by
breaking the hold of Islam over law and education as well as in the state.
It would be too optimistic to think that the opposition to the new regime and to the strong personality of Mustafa Kemal would not rise considering the above-mentioned radical changes. Atatürk faced some serious challenges to his authority during the first half of the 1920s. His government was opposed by those who refused to accept the abolition of the caliphate and the establishment of a secular state. Opposition manifested itself in the shape of the Progressive Republican Party (1924) and the Free Republican Party (1930)- both of which were closed on the grounds that they posed a threat to the regime. So until 1946 Turkey was ruled under a single-party regime. The 1924 Constitution stipulated that all power resided in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which was the only legitimate representative of the sovereign will of the nation. The Republican Peoples’ Party was identified closely with the state, and all reforms were carried out by the ruling Republican Party.

World War II (1939-1945) had profound effects on Turkey’s political and economic situation and brought the single-party system to an end. Despite having stayed out of the war, wartime economic restrictions, the desire for more open Islamic observances and for the relaxation of some of the secular requirements for which party had long stood were the main factors contributing to the end of the single-party system. The opposition to the single party rule emerged soon after Atatürk’s death; however, it was subordinated to the more pressing national interests during the war. Once peace was achieved, more liberal political, economic and social attitudes and policies were in demand. The Republican People’s Party split and, with the emergence of the Democratic Party in Turkish politics in 1946, the multi-party system came into existence.

The Democratic Party rule between 1950-1960 took a pro-Western stand. Liberal parliamentary democracy along with liberal economic policies, and greater freedom for religious practices were introduced. However, towards the end of the Democratic Party decade, economic difficulties and political repression –the increased majority seemed to have pushed the Democrats towards more authoritarian government- created discontent among civilians and the army as well as at some intellectual quarters. The result was a military coup, which took place in May 27, 1960.

Fundamental changes took place in the structure of the international system after the World War II. The formation of a bipolar international system represented by the USA and the USSR necessitated that Turkey put its national security before its political agenda. Having been subject to Soviet demands for territorial concessions, Turkish policymakers felt the necessity to forge close ties with the West, particularly with the USA. Turkey having been included in a variety of Western institutions and fully integrated into the Western alliance, played its well-defined role, which was to resist Soviet expansionism by serving at NATO’s southern flank. Its foreign policy strategy could be summarized as affiliation with the West and non-intervention in the regional politics of the Middle East.

The 1970s were years of crises for Turkey. The world-wide recession, dramatic increase in the price of oil, the huge foreign debt, the American arms embargo, high unemployment, rampant inflation, massive shortages along with political violence, and terrorism were the main contributing factors to the deteriorating situation in Turkey. The military took over in September 12, 1980, and justified its involvement in politics by pointing to the threats to Turkey’s national security and territorial integrity, as well as separatist activities and unstable and weak governments in office unable to deal effectively with the numerous challenges facing the country. As for the economic policies, all obstacles which had stood in the way of a market economy were removed as favored by the International Monetary Fund, with the decree of January 24, 1980. The introduction of political activity in the spring of 1983 and the elections held in November were decisive steps towards civilian rule. Foreign policy developments (i.e. the collapse of Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, the US intervention in Iraq and the
“emergence of a new world order”), however, put Turkey’s economic and military capacity, as well as diplomatic initiative to the test.
PART I

WEEK I – The Ottoman Empire: Political, Economic and Social Structure

Readings:


Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*. Cambridge University Press. 1994. pp.576-636 (social life) pp.1-43; 761-797


Essay Questions

1. Explain the main characteristics of the Ottoman Empire (social, political and economic structure, system of government, official ideology ect.)

2. Clarify the reasons behind the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

3. Analyse the effects of European Capitalism on Ottoman economy.
WEEK 2- The Eastern Question and the Partition of the Ottoman Empire

Readings


Essay Questions

1. The Eastern Question, the expression used to indicate the problems created by the decline and gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, had been a focal point in European diplomacy for over a hundred years. The more the economic and strategic interests of the Great Powers in the Empire grew and ensuing rivalries became visible the more firmly the Eastern Question became an established priority on the agenda of international relations.

2. The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the European Powers was dialectic in nature. On the one hand, this relation was destructive and corrosive in its impact on traditional Ottoman society (capitulations, manipulations an alienation of the Christian minorities, the state loans), on the other it provided the very basis for its renewal so as to enable it to cope with a world in a rapid change (the influence of Western ideas on the ruling class which resulted in modernising the state structure).

Do you agree with the above-mentioned statement? Discuss.

3. One authority on the Eastern Question had noted that “The Ottoman Empire in 1774 was still stagnant and archaic. Its chances of survival now seemed to many observers very small”. But, if the Empire survived for almost another century and a half, that was due more to the rivalries of the Great Powers and their failure to reach agreement on how to divide ‘the sick mans’s’ legacy than to the patient’s will and determination to survive.

Discuss the above-mentioned statement in detail.
WEEK 3- The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Efforts to Prevent It: The Reforms: Westernization Process; Tanzimat- the Reorganisation (1839); Islahat-Imperial Rescript (1856); the Constitutional Era (1876); the Second Constitutional Era (1908)

Readings


Essay Questions

1. From 1699 onwards, the Ottoman Empire entered upon a long process of territorial disintegration, which lasted over two hundred years. Discuss the importance of the Congress of Berlin (1878) within this process.

2. On the decline since the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire pressed for a vigorous program of Westernisation and modernisation, which was believed to enable the Empire to rid its weaknesses and restore the authority of the centre that was undermined for some time.

In the light of the above-mentioned statement, discuss the reform process in the Ottoman Empire.
WEEK 4- From Empire to Nation State 1908-1923

Readings


Feroz Ahmad; *The Making of Modern Turkey*. pp.30-51


Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw; *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.Vol.II. Cambridge University Press, 2002 pp.272—310


Essay Questions

1. Discuss the role of minorities in the economic life of the Ottoman Empire during the Young Turk period (1908-1918).

2. To what extent was the Second Constitutional period successful in restoring political freedoms? Discuss.

3. Who were the Young Turks, and what was their role in the revolution of 1908?

4. Discuss the effects of the Balkan wars on the rise of Turkish nationalism.
WEEK 5 - The World War I (1914-1918) and its aftermath: The end of the Ottoman Empire: Mudros Armistice (Oct, 30 1918) and the "death warrant" of the Empire: Treaty of Serves (August 10, 1920)

Readings


Essay Questions

1. Discuss the role of the Great Powers in the Ottoman’s involvement in the First World War.

2. The process from Mudros Armistice to the Treaty of Sevres: Was this the successful realisation of the centuries-old Eastern question?

WEEK 6: The Period for National Struggle (1919-1922) Military Victory: The Re-establisment of Complete and Undivided Turkish Sovereignty

Readings

Sina Akşin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*. pp. 113-181.


Essay Questions

1. Evaluate the Nationalist policy following the signing of the Armistice of Mudros (October 30, 1918) by the Ottoman (Istanbul) government.

2. Compare the policies of Istanbul and Ankara Governments towards the Great Powers during the National Struggle.

3. Explain the stages of the National Struggle against the occupying forces of the Great Powers.
WEEK 7: The Lausanne Peace Treaty (July 24, 1923), The diplomatic victory: The recognition of Modern Turkey in international arena.

Readings


Essay Questions

1. The Lausanne Peace Conference was purely a continuation of the National Struggle which was now to be waged on the diplomatic front until the National Pact was fully recognised by the Allies. The Treaty (July 24, 1923) established complete and undivided Turkish sovereignty in almost all the territory included in the National Pact and was entirely contrary to the Treaty of Sevres signed by the Istanbul (Ottoman) government in August 10, 1920. What kind of conclusions can you draw by comparing these two treaties? Discuss.

2. The Lausanne Conference which convened on November 1922 provided a platform upon which age-old accounts could be settled. Rational and pragmatic thinking as well as realistic assessment of the circumstances determined the course of negotiations and encouraged the two parties (namely Britain and Turkey) towards a gradual rapprochement.

In the light of the above-mentioned statement, discuss the Nationalist diplomacy during the Lausanne negotiations

3. What were the internal and external consequences of the Lausanne Peace Treaty?
PART II-

WEEK 1- Transformation of the Old-Ottoman system and the Emergence of the New Republic: The Kemalist Reforms


Niyazi Berkes; *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* pp.461-473

Sina Akşin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*. pp. 226-232


Essay Questions

1. Following the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty which established complete and undivided Turkish sovereignty in almost all the territory included in the National Pact, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk embarked on an extensive programme of reforms aimed at secularising and modernising the whole structure of society and culture. Explain the principles formulated and adopted by Atatürk which reflected the ideological and philosophical framework for reforms.

2. The years following the Lausanne Treaty witnessed diplomatic changes and developments of the first magnitude and Turkey made such progress in the field of cultural, social religious and legal reforms towards Modernisation. Explain the fundamental changes that came to be known as “Atatürk’s Reforms”.

14
WEEK 2- Political and Economic Developments: 1923-1938

Readings

Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* pp.52-101


Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw; *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol.II. Cambridge University Press, 2002 pp.373-396


Essay Questions

1. Discuss the limits of economic policy until 1929 (Great Depression).

2. What was the purpose of statist policy in 1930s?

3. Discuss the role of the Republican Peoples’ Party in the formation of political system in Turkey?

WEEK3- The Period after Atatürk: 1938-45

Readings

A.C. Edwards, “ The Impact of the War on Turkey” *International Affairs* Vo. 22 No.3, 1946


Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw; *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol.II. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.396-399

1. Despite the Alliance of October 19,1939 (Ankara Accord) Turkey remained neutral throughout WWII watching the turn of events with utmost caution. Evaluate the Turkish Foreign Policy during the WWII.

2. Explain the impact of the WWII on Turkey’s economic and social life.
WEEK 4- Transition from the Single Party to Multi-Party System

Readings

Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* pp.102-120.

Sina Akşin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*. pp.233-267.


Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw; *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol.II. Cambridge University Press, 2002 pp.399-410

Essay Questions

1. Perhaps the most important single factor in the democratic development of post-Kemalist Turkey is that in 1946 with the registration of the Democratic Party in Ankara the one-party rule ended. Discuss the reasons behind this transfer of power by free election and explain the differences between Republican Peoples’ Party and the Democratic Party.

2. Discuss the effects of the Soviet threat in shaping internal and external policies of Ankara.

WEEK 5- The Democratic Party Experience (1950-1960)

Readings


Essay Questions
1. It was not until the end of WWII that Turkey had its first real experience with democracy. Discuss the political events in 1945-1960 periods, which was characterised by Ankara’s transition from a single party to a multi-party system.

2. What were the bottlenecks of the economic policies during the Menderes era?

3. Evaluate the place of NATO with regard to Turkey’s national security.

**WEEK 6 - Fluctuations in Cold War Policy**

Readings


Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw; *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol.II. Cambridge University Press, 2002 pp.413-429


Essay Questions

1. Discuss the failure of state planning during 1960s.

2. National security and territorial integrity were Turkey’s foremost objectives during the rest of the Cold War period. State the shifts that Turkey pursued to achieve this goal.

3. “Turkey’s decision to join the Western camp in the Cold War was virtually inevitable. Neutrality was not seen as a viable option for Turkey in the circumstances of the time.” Discuss.
WEEK 7- Internal and External Developments Leading to the September 12, 1980 Coup d’état (1960-1980)

Readings

Feroz Ahmad, The Making of Modern Turkey. pp. 121-147; 148-180


Sina Akşin, Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present. pp. 268-279

Yasemin Çelik, Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1999. pp. 46-61


Essay Questions

1. Discuss the economic and political conditions prevailing in Turkey, which eventually led to the military intervention of September 12, 1980.

2. The drastic alterations that occurred in the structure of international system in the aftermath of WWII led to a major changes in the politics Ankara pursued in maintaining Turkey’s national security. Although maintaining national security and territorial integrity remained Turkey’s foremost foreign policy objective during the rest of the cold war (1960-80) period, there were several shifts in the strategies Ankara pursued to achieve this goal.

Discuss the above-mentioned statement in detail.

3. What sort of repercussions did the changes (extensive domestic institutional and political changes) in the Turkish political system, which occurred during the 1980s, have on the foreign policy decision making in the country? Discuss.

Readings

Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, pp.181-227

Sina Akşin, *Turkey: From Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to Present*, pp. 280-321

Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*. Westport, Conn: Praeger 1999, pp.76-95; 96-118.

William Hale; *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*. London; Franc Cass Publishers, 2000, pp.218-251

Ziya Öniş, “Turgut Özal and his Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (4), pp.113-134

Essay Questions

1. Explain the main political and economic developments occurred in Turkey between the years 1980-2000.

2. Turkish European relations in the post-cold war period were characterised by the same dynamics as those of earlier periods: by Turkey’s constant efforts to become fully integrated into all European institutions, and the European insistence that Turkey needed to accomplish EU’s both economic and political objectives to reach that goal.

   a) Why do you think Turkey tolerated a constant barrage of criticism and various rejections from the Europeans?
   b) Do you think the likelihood of Turkey being accepted as a European country appears quite remote?


4. Rejection by Europe has isolated Turkey and forced her to turn more to the USA. America determined to create a new system, which will allow her to play a hegemonic role in Europe and in the Middle East, has strengthened her relations with Ankara but at Ankara’s expense.

   Do you agree with the above-mentioned statement? Discuss.