

Lecture #1 / Turkey's History

This lecture will cover the history of Turkey from the Byzantium and Ottoman Empires to the present day Turkey. A chronological approach will highlight the main points in the evolution of modern day Turkey, its alliances in the Crimean War, World War I, War of Independence, and World War II. Issues of ethnicity related to Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks, as well as strategic global alliances in the Middle East are key sources of tension which make Turkey an important player in global politics on the world scene.

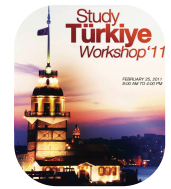
Lecture #2 / The Gulen Movement

The lecture will look at the Gulen Movement both within Turkey and outside of Turkey with respect to the Movement's philosophical underpinnings, goals, practices, and impact on education. Since Mr. Gulen has chosen to live in the United States, it is important to understand his reasons for doing this, the relationship of the Movement to Islam and secular practices in general. Mention of Fetullah Gulen typically evokes strong reactions among Turks who are not part of the Movement. The lecture will take a closer look at how widespread the Movement is both within Turkey, who the people are who belong to the Movement, who do not belong, and what is expected of practitioners to be considered in good standing in the Movement.

Lecture #3 / Role of Islam in Turkey, Sufism and other beliefs

This lecture will address two important components of religion in Turkey. First, as an avowedly secular country politically, Islam appears to play a prominent role in Turkey's politics today. This lecture will explore voting patterns of Turkish citizens, specifically do Turkish voters increasingly expressing Islamic preferences in their voting and how is the expression of Islam affected (positively or negatively) by the country's secular values. Second, to contextualize the role of Islam in Turkey, the lecture will describe the role of Christianity, Judaism, and other belief systems practiced in Turkey today.

Special attention will be paid to Sufism, its basic beliefs, roots in the teachings of al-Ghazal, a mystical form of Islam, practices, and perceptions within Islam.



Lecture #4 /Women's Issues

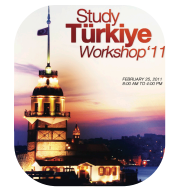
This lecture will address what life is like for an average Turkish woman from the perspective of culture, family, child-rearing, education, employment, and religious practices and expectations. Specifically, the lecture addresses the differences in lifestyle between poor and rich women, and divorced, single, and widowed women. Particular attention will be paid to practices regarding dating, marriage, and consequences for women who do not “fit the mould” if, for example, they do not wish to get married or may be gay/lesbian. Similarly, the question of domestic abuse will be addressed in terms of how pervasive a problem it is and how it is addressed when it occurs.

Lecture #5 / The Press in Turkey

Turkey is the region's most advanced democracy whose press has enjoyed relative journalistic freedom. This lecture will look at how Turkish journalists are formed, what formal training they receive, and what standards are applied to good journalism in Turkey. More specifically, the lecture will examine Turkish press's coverage of Arab Spring, the role of the PKK (the Kurdish militant wing), and general economic uncertainty in Turkey today. The role of the press will be explored as a source of stability or instability for the government and its impact on shaping perceptions of Turkey's contributions to NATO, the EU, and its tenuous relationship with the US. More importantly, the lecture will examine role the press played in shaping the secular Western image of Turkey as well as portraying Turkey as a voice of moderation in the Middle East. Does the press truly enjoy journalistic freedom and is the press free to report on other freedoms such as religion? What newspapers exist and which are the best English language media for western readers?

Lecture #6 / Turkey's Government and Parliament

This lecture will give an overview of Turkey's parliamentary processes, for example, how parliament is elected, what are the qualifications for becoming a member of parliament, how laws are passed, the number of extant parties, and the role of the opposition parties. Special attention will be paid to the role of the army in the government, how dissent is handled, and how the public can protest parliamentary decisions. Of particular interest will be discussion of the role of women in the political process, and the rights of women compared to those of men in theory and practice.



Lecture #7 / Turkey as a Regional Power

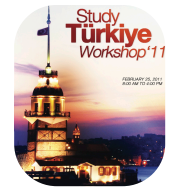
Turkey is at an important crossroad in its history. Literally and figuratively, Turkey is a bridge between East and West and increasingly growing in importance as a regional power politically, socially, and economically. It is being considered for membership in the European Union (EU) but there is strong opposition from several EU members. This lecture will examine the impact of membership on Turkey's economy, politics, and culture; the reasons why some major European countries are opposed to Turkey's membership, such as Turkey's perceived threat as Muslim nation, and Turkey's impact on NATO. On a regional and global level, Turkey plays a key role in terms of its relationships with Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iran, and hence a look at Turkey's alliances will explain why the U.S. needs Turkey as an ally.

Lecture #8 / Business Environment and Ethics in Turkey

This lecture will provide an overview about markets, market forces in what is essentially a capitalist system in Turkey. Comparisons will be made with the US regarding consumerism, consumer behavior, profit motives, attention to customer service. Given the Muslim nature of business in Turkey, what are the attitudes toward money, loans, banking, and finance in general. The focus will be on both family run small businesses as well as corporations, multinational organizations and their role in the Turkish economy. Special attention will be paid to business ethics, the challenges it presents related to ethical norms in society at large, and relationship to religious beliefs.

Lecture #9 / Conservation, Biodiversity & Energy Policies

The topic of conservation, biodiversity and energy policies will discuss per capita resource use, land availability, ecological footprint, and the contribution of various resources to GDP. A comparison with the United States will highlight differences in approach of the two countries to climate change, control of greenhouse gases, water conservation, and development of renewable energy sources. Of particular interest is a look at water consumption and rationing, if any; interest in environmental conservation and recycling; use of mass transit; reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear energy.



Specific questions the lecture will answer include:

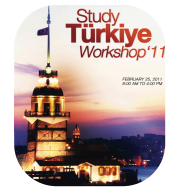
- The influence of non-profits or grassroots organizations in preserving biodiversity.
- Endangered species and efforts to protect them.
- Does Turkey have agencies comparable to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy, and if so, are they instrumental in determining Turkey's energy policies? For example, are there fuel efficiency standards that auto manufacturers must meet? Is nuclear power welcomed by most as a feasible way to meet Turkey's energy needs? Are there anti-nuclear protests in Turkey, and are they tolerated?
- Government policies to support the development of renewable energy.
- Policies regarding national parks and forests. Are they used for logging and grazing as they are in the US? Which species predominate in the forests and what measures are taken to preserve them?

Lecture #10 / Decorative Arts and Architecture

The decorative arts in Turkey are found in both residential and commercial interiors. They are not only of interest to the tourist trade but to the local populations as well. A visit to a local pottery shop will illustrate the process of making tiles/pottery/porcelain, the materials that are used in making glazes and enamels and put the tradition of making ceramics into historical perspective, including influences exerted by other forms such as miniatures, marbling and calligraphy. Along with decorative arts, attention will be paid to sacred spaces and the splendid architecture of mosques and their designs, the meaning of symbols found in these monumental works of art, and the many ways secular and religious architecture differ yet maintain similarities.

Lecture #11 / Rug weaving

The art of rug weaving is as complex as it is beautiful and represents different kinds of weaves, either flat woven or pile rugs. The variations in flat woven rugs vary by region. This lecture will examine the similarities and differences in rug style by region, the criteria used to determine the quality of rugs, materials typically used, such as wool and silk, design and color preferences, significance of motifs in rug design, Persian influences on Turkish rugs, and the dyes, natural and chemical, used in the production of these rugs. This lecture will include a visit to a local rug weaving shop.



Lecture #12 / Healthcare in Turkey

This lecture will look at health care in Turkey, specifically accessibility determined by how much money people have, hospital Vs outpatient medical care, training of health care providers, public health concerns and treatment of the most common illnesses affecting the general population and women and children in particular.

Lecture #13 / Agriculture in Turkey

This lecture will look at the agriculture in Turkey to address the rapid conversion from a largely agrarian society to a largely urban one, at least in western Turkey. Associated with this shift, and of prime importance in environmental and social science, is the changing role of women in society, the family and the economy. Lecture will address how the lives of women are different, and whether they are enriched or impoverished. What has been the effect of this shift on family size and family cohesion?

This lecture will address the nature of farming operations that exist now, and what they replaced, the role of small scale vs. industrialized, large-scale farming, crops produced in Turkey including poppy seeds, the economics of farming and primary export, genetically engineered crops and their acceptance in Turkey. Implicit in the rapid conversation from a largely agrarian society to a large urban one is the changing role of women and the impact of agricultural policies on family size and cohesion.

This lecture will be held at a local Agriculture Research center operated by a local university.