

ATA 501
Sources, Methods and Approaches in Turkish History

2025/2026 Spring, Thursdays 9:00-12:00

Faruk Yaslıçimen
Assistant Professor
The Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History

E-Mail: faruk.yaslicimen@bogazici.edu.tr
Phone: 0212-359-4875
Office Hours: Fridays 15:00-17:00

ATA 501 examines major methodological and theoretical transformations that have shaped Ottoman and Turkish historiography over the past half century, situating Ottoman studies within broader currents of global historical scholarship. The course is concerned primarily with methods and approaches rather than sources, focusing on innovative historiographical interventions that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and continue to shape historical writing today. Through themes such as the cultural and linguistic turns, microhistory, the revival of narrative, conceptual history, environmental history, oral history, the history of emotions, postcolonial and imperial critiques, and, finally, AI-assisted historical research and writing, ATA 501 explores how changing analytical frameworks redefine questions of power, agency as well as the contours of scholarship in the study of the Ottoman and Turkish history.

ATA 501 is designed to introduce graduate students to these influential trends not only as objects of analysis but also as intellectual resources for their own research. Beyond familiarizing students with major works of historiography, the course aims to inspire them to reflect on how such approaches can be productively mobilized in formulating research questions, constructing arguments, and making sense of primary source materials at the outset of their academic careers. The structure of the course follows a deliberate progression: each thematic unit begins with close readings of foundational theoretical and historiographical texts, followed by works produced within the same intellectual climate in Ottoman and Turkish historiography, enabling students to locate their own interests within a broader scholarly landscape.

As a graduate-level course, ATA 501 requires active student participation. The course is discussion-based and does not follow a lecture format; students are expected to engage closely with the weekly readings through short reflection papers and to contribute to collective learning by delivering presentations on assigned texts (at least three over the semester, depending on enrollment). Through this format, the course seeks to foster methodological self-awareness, equipping students with the tools necessary to navigate contemporary historiographical debates.

Readings with the sign “*” means that they are required, while all others are suggested.

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance	%20
Participation	%10
Presentations	%30
Weekly Reflection Papers	%40

	TOPICS	READINGS
1. WEEK 12/02/2026	Introduction to the Course and the Topic	In the first week, we will discuss Ottoman and Turkish historiography in the twentieth century, with particular attention to the methods and approaches that have shaped the field over the past fifty years. Building on the shared historiographical knowledge acquired so far, the opening week will also introduce the structure of the course and outline the tasks and assignments to be carried out throughout the semester.
2. WEEK 19/02/2026	The Cultural Turn and Microhistory	<p>* Carlo Ginzburg, <i>The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller</i>, (Middlesex, 1982) xiii-xxvi, 1-30, 51-60, 125-128.</p> <p>* Clifford Geertz, <i>The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays</i>, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), s. 3-30.</p> <p>Leslie Pierce, "Fatma's Story: The Dilemma of a Pregnant Peasant Girl," <i>Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) pp. 351-374.</p> <p>Yahya Araz, "Kadınlar, Toplum ve Hukuk: 16. ve 17. yüzyıl Osmanlı toplumunda eşleri tarafından terk edilen kadınlar," <i>Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar</i>, Vol. 6/246 (2007-2008) pp. 61-82.</p> <p>Cemal Kafadar, "<i>Kim Varmış Biz Burada Yoğ İken</i>," <i>Dört Osmanlı: Yeniçeri, Derviş, Tüccar, Hatun</i>. İstanbul: Metis, 2009.</p> <p>Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," <i>The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History</i>. New York: Basic Books, 1999. pp. 75-107.</p>
3. WEEK 26/02/2026	The Linguistic Turn	<p>*Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifacts," in Geoffrey Roberts (ed.) <i>The History and Narrative Reader</i> (New York, 2001) pp 221-236.</p> <p>* Claire Norton, <i>Plural Pasts: Power, Identity and the Ottoman Sieges of Nagykanizsa Castle</i> (New York: Routledge, 2014) pp. 1-12, 147-56.</p> <p>Ebru Aykut, Nurçin İleri, Fatih Artvinli, <i>Tarihçilerden Başka Bir Hikaye</i> (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2019).</p>
4. WEEK 05/03/2026	Revival of the Narrative	<p>*Lawrence Stone, "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History" in <i>The Past and the Present Revisited</i> (1979): 74-96,</p> <p>*Eric Hobsbawm, 'On the Revival of Narrative,' in <i>On History</i>: 186-19</p> <p>* Oktay Özel, <i>Kiske Kuşunun Peşinde: Katamizeler (1835-1981)</i>. İstanbul: İletişim, 2024.</p> <p>Natalie Zemon Davis, <i>The Return of Martin Guerre</i> (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984)</p>

5. WEEK 12/03/2026	Conceptual History	<p>* Reinhart Koselleck, "Introduction and Prefaces to the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," <i>Contributions to the History of Concepts (CHC)</i> Vol. 6, No. 1 (Summer 2011), pp. 1-25.</p> <p>* Sariyannis, Marinos, "Ottoman Ideas on Monarchy Before the Tanzimat Reforms: Toward A Conceptual History of Ottoman Political Notions," <i>Turcica</i>, No. 47 (2016) p. 33-72.</p> <p>* Alp Eren Topal, "Political Reforms as Religious Revival: Conceptual Foundations of Tanzimat," <i>Oriente Moderno</i> 101 (2021) 153-180.</p>
6. WEEK 19/03/2026		BAYRAM HOLIDAY
7. WEEK 26/03/2026	Environmental History	<p>* Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History," <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 35 (Winter 2009), 197-222.</p> <p>* Alan Mikhail, <i>Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History</i> (Cambridge, 2011), 1-37.</p> <p>* Çelik, Semih, "It's a bad fate to be born near a forest': Forest, People and Buffaloes in mid-nineteenth century north-western Anatolia," in <i>Seeds of Power: Explorations in Ottoman Environmental History</i>, Onur Inal and Yavuz Köse (eds.) (Winvick: The White House Press, 2019) pp. 111-33.</p>
8. WEEK 02/04/2026	Oral History	<p>* Portelli, A. (1998). What Makes Oral History Different? In R. Perks and A. Thomson (Ed.), <i>The Oral History Reader</i> (New York: Routledge) pp. 63-74</p> <p>Abrams, L. (2010). <i>Oral History Theory</i>, London: Routledge, pp. 1-32</p> <p>* Irvin Cemil Schick, "Bedensel Hafıza, Zihinsel Hafıza, Yazılı Kaynak: Hat Sanatının Günümüze İntikalinin Bazı Boyutları," <i>Nasıl Hatırlıyoruz? Türkiye'de Bellek Çalışmaları</i>, pp. 13-37</p> <p>Ramazan Aras, "Veiled memories: an ethnography of the single-party regime in Turkey," <i>Middle Eastern Studies</i>, 2019. pp. 1-17.</p>
9. WEEK 09/04/2026	History of Emotions	<p>William Reddy, "Emotions in History: France, 1700-1850," <i>The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp 173-211.</p> <p>Nil Tekgül, "Early Modern Ottoman Politics of Emotion: What Has Love Got to Do with It?" <i>Turkish Historical Review</i> 10/2-3 (2020) 132-154.</p> <p>Zeynep Yelçe, "Royal Wrath: Curbing the Anger of the Sultan," <i>Discourses of Anger in the Early Modern Period</i>, (eds.) Karl A. E. Enenkel and Anita Traninger (Leiden: Brill, 2015) pp. 437-457.</p>

10. WEEK 16/04/2026	Postcolonial Challenges: The Subaltern	<p>* Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," <i>American Historical Review</i>, 99 (5) (1994) 1475-1490.</p> <p>* Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Idea of Provincializing Europe," in <i>Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference</i> (Princeton University Press, 2007): 3-23</p> <p>* Marshall Hodgson, "Europe in a Global Context," <i>Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam and World History</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. pp. 3-35</p>
11. WEEK 23/04/2026	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS
12. WEEK 30/04/2026	Imperial Turn I: Post-Colonial Approaches to the Ottoman past	<p>* Deringil, Selim, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial," <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2003), p. 311-342</p> <p>Kühn, Thomas, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism," <i>Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East</i>, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2007) p. 315-331</p> <p>* Gölbaşı, Edip, "19. yüzyıl Osmanlı emperyal siyaseti ve Osmanlı tarih yazımında kolonyal perspektifler," <i>Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar</i>, No. 13 (Güz 2011) p. 199-222</p> <p>Türesay, Özgür, "The Ottoman Empire Seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: A Recent Historiographical Turn," <i>Belin: Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine</i>, No 60-2 (2013/2) p. 127-145.</p>
13. WEEK 07/05/2026	Imperial Turn II: Has there been an indigenous Ottoman Orientalism?	<p>* Makdisi, Ussama, "Ottoman Orientalism," <i>The American Historical Review</i>, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002) pp. 768-796.</p> <p>Herzog, Christoph and Raoul Motika, "Orientalism Alla Turca, Late 19th/Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim 'Outback'," <i>Die Welt des Islams</i>, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2000, pp. 139-195.</p> <p>* Kayapınar, Mehmet Akif, "Ussama Makdisi ve 'Osmanlı Oryantalizmi'," <i>DİVÂN İlmi Araştırmalar</i>, No. 20 (2006/1) pp. 311-317.</p> <p>Palabıyık, Mustafa Serdar, "Ottoman traveller's perceptions of Africa in Late Ottoman Empire (1860-1922): A discussion of civilization, colonialism and race," <i>New Perspectives on Turkey</i>, No. 46 (2012) pp 187-212.</p>
14. WEEK 14/05/2026	AI and Writing History	<p>* A.P. Leme Lopes. "Artificial History? Inquiring Chat GPT on Historiography", <i>Rethinking History</i>, 2023, Vol. 27, No. 4, 709–749</p> <p>* McLean, Mark A., David Andrew Roberts & Martin Gibbs, "Ghosts and the Machine: testing the use of AI to deliver historical life course biographies from big data," <i>Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History</i>, 57 (3) 2024, pp. 146-162.</p> <p>Villamor Martin, Marta, David A. Kirsch, and Fabian Prieto-Nañez. "The Promise of Machine-Learning- Driven Text Analysis Techniques for Historical Research: Topic Modeling and Word Embedding" <i>Management & Organizational History</i> 18 (1), 2023, pp. 81-96.</p>