Turkish and Ottoman Studies Program

Mission

The Turkish and Ottoman Studies Program at the University of Washington promote intellectual dialogue and scholarship to provide a deeper, interdisciplinary, and critical understanding of Turkey through a rigorous program in language, literature, history, politics, and culture of the modern Turkey and the Ottoman Empire as well as sharing and preserving the ethnic heritage of Turkey through projects that involve local, national and international communities to advance mutual understanding.

Endowed Turkish Lecturer Fund

The Turkish and Ottoman Studies Program aims to establish an endowed lectureship position that will preserve the instruction of Turkish language and culture and will support a distinguished faculty member in their pursuit of excellence in scholarly research, teaching, and outreach.

Who are we?

Our program was founded in 1968 by our research professor Walter Andrews, who was hired by the University of Washington that year, while he was working on his dissertation in Istanbul. At the time, Walter was the basketball coach of Orhan Pamuk in Robert College in Istanbul, who in Walter’s words “opened the way for him to become an Ottomanist”. Walter taught Ottoman and Turkish literature from 1968 until his retirement from a Research professorship, which he still holds. He has published several books, translations, and articles on Ottoman literature and literary theory in Turkish and English including the Ottoman lyric poetry: An Anthology.

Prof. Selim Kuru started teaching as an Acting Assistant Professor in 1999 in the Turkish and Ottoman Studies Program at UW. Since 2015, he is the director of the program. His work focuses on Ottoman 14th-16th centuries Anatolian literary history, genres with respect to the topic of love and its place in the elite Ottoman society. Prof. Kuru is actively involved in the Graduate School Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Near East and Middle East Programs. He is among the founders of the Ottoman Studies Foundation and runs the intensive Ottoman and Turkish Summer Program in Cunda, Ayvalik, Turkey where he has been teaching Ottoman Turkish paleography.

Prof. Reşat Kasaba, an expert in the history and politics of the Middle East, is the Director of Jackson School and Chair of Stanley D. Golub in International Studies. Kasaba has taught undergraduate and graduate students at the School for over 30 years and is the recipient of a UW Distinguished Teaching Award. His courses cover a wide range of topics including economic history, state-society relations, migration, ethnicity and nationalism, urban history in the Middle East and world history. Recently, he has been researching the role of education in the formation of modern Turkish identity in the twentieth century. Dr. Kasaba is regularly featured in local and regional media for insights into some of the world’s most pressing issues, and is a monthly commentator on Voice of America (Turkey). He is currently President of the Association for Professional Schools of International Affairs and is a board member of the Middle East Studies Association of North America. Dr. Kasaba has written and edited seven books and over 40 articles and opinion pieces.
The program has grown stronger most recently with the addition of area studies faculty, Dr. Melike Yucel-Koc, and the enhancement of the Turkish language program. These developments have resulted in greater student interest and the establishment of new research projects. Dr. Yucel-Koc got her Ph.D. in 2015, specializing in Foreign & Second Language Education. Currently, she leads the Turkish Language Curriculum Project, a unique undertaking that aims to create a foreign and heritage language curriculum that aligns with national language teaching standards such as ACTFL and TESOL. Her current research on Turkish language learners and their needs supports this objective. Our program would be a pioneer among the other Turkish language institutions in the U.S. with this project. Dr. Yucel-Koc also leads the Oral History of Turkish Americans in Pacific Northwest Project, which aims to create a digital archive based on interviews with the Turkish Americans who migrated to Washington and greater Pacific Northwest area from Turkey.

Projects

The Ottoman Text Archive Project, led by our research professor Walter Andrews, aims to create a vast collection of documents crucial to understanding the history and cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire accessible in a central web-based text archive.

- The Svoboda Diaries Newbook Project, an activity of the University of Washington Ottoman Texts Archive Project (OTAP), is engaged in the web-based publication, in both web and print-on-demand formats (the “newbook formats”), of 45 Svoboda diaries and transcriptions of Svoboda diaries that have been digitized by the Digital Initiatives Program at the University of Washington Libraries.

- The Baki project, headed by Prof. Selim S. Kuru, is a multi-year collaborative international project aims to create digital tools or adopt existing tools for application to identifying and visualizing the history and evolution of a large manuscript tradition.

The Turkish Language Curriculum Project, headed by our lecturer Dr. Melike Yucel-Koc, aims to create a foreign and heritage language curriculum that aligns with national language teaching standards (ACTFL & TESOL). Her current research on Turkish language learners and their needs supports this objective. TOSP at UW would be a pioneer among the other Turkish language institutions in the U.S. with this project.

The Oral History of Turkish Americans in the Pacific Northwest, led by our lecturer Dr. Melike Yucel-Koc, aims to create a digital archive based on interviews with the Turkish Americans who migrated to Washington and greater Pacific Northwest area from Turkey.

Related Degrees

- Bachelor of Arts
- Minor
- Master of Arts

Upcoming Courses

- Turkish
- NELC