

SOCL 361 | Turkish Culture Today

(1.0 Unit*)

Time: TBD

Location: Ankara University TÖMER, Emniyet Mah. No:8, 06560 Yenimahalle/Ankara, Türkiye

Number of hours: 42 (6 academic hours per week, over the course of 7 weeks)

Instructor: Associate Professor Seda Pekşen, Ph.D.

**One Bryn Mawr unit is equivalent to four undergraduate semester hours or five graduate semester hours.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an exploration of Türkiye's major intellectual and artistic movements in the 20th and 21st centuries, with particular attention to literature, film, art, and music. Throughout the discussions, the focus will be on how Türkiye established its own unique culture transcending both the Western influence and the nationalistic tendencies, progressing towards a distinctively Turkish modernism and postmodernism in literature and the arts.

Additionally, this course provides three hours per week of Turkish instruction provided by expert Turkish language faculty at Ankara University TÖMER. Students will be placed in small groups for class according to their proficiency level.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to address the following inquiries:

- How artists and thinkers responded to major events of recent history and helped shape Türkiye's society since World War Two.
- Identifying the "keys" to understanding Turkish artistic and intellectual trends and what makes a work distinctly Turkish.
- Interpreting the role of artists and intellectuals in Türkiye today and their influence on Western thought and global culture.
- Developing foundational proficiency in modern Turkish by mastering essential grammatical structures and building practical listening and speaking skills needed to navigate daily life in Türkiye.

MAIN COURSE MATERIALS

- Halman, T. S. (2008). *A Millenium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*. Ministry of Culture and Tourism.
- Halman, T. S. (Ed.). (1982). *Contemporary Turkish Literature: fiction and poetry*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Atil, E. (Ed.). (1980). *Turkish Art*. Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Ersoy, A. (2008). *Traditional Turkish Arts*. Ministry of Culture and Tourism.
- Ellinger, E. & Kayi, K. (2008). *Turkish cinema 1970-2007: a bibliography and analysis*. P. Lang.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Grading will consist of:

Category	% Points
Student presentations	40%
Participation in class discussions	20%
Final exam	40%
TOTAL	100%

Grade Scale

Ankara University's letter grading rules will be applied. For more information, please refer to the university's official guidelines: <https://bbs.ankara.edu.tr/bolognabilgi.aspx?menu=18>

ATTENDANCE POLICY & PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is required by American Councils for International Education. Excused absences include those due to observance of religious holidays and illness. In these cases, students must notify their American Councils contact person on each day they will be absent, and to be prepared upon the request of American Councils staff, to be examined by a physician.

American Councils may dismiss from the program any student who demonstrates poor attendance, inability to focus on academic studies due to ongoing physical or emotional problems, or behavior that interferes with the ability of other students to participate fully in the program. Missing classes may result in the lowering of a student's grade or loss of academic credit. Cases of habitual tardiness may also result in grade reductions or other disciplinary actions.

If a student misses one class, but then attends all other classes on that day, it is her/his responsibility to contact local American Councils staff and inform her/him of this fact within 24 hours. If a student does not contact American Councils within this period, the student will be considered absent for the entire day. (Individual course instructors may have additional participation requirements).

ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact American Councils in accordance with its Accommodations Policy, which was distributed to all participants upon admission to the program. Students seeking accommodations who have not yet informed American Councils of this request should speak to the Resident Director immediately about their needs. Students are also welcome to contact me regarding accommodations but should be aware that all accommodations are provided in accordance with the American Councils Accommodations Policy.

COURSE CONTENT

Each week will contain three hours of the following content course as well as three hours of Turkish language.

Week 1

Introduction to Turkish Artistic and Intellectual Trends. Focusing on 20th-century literary movements (New Literature, Dawn of the Future, National Literature) and artistic groups (1914 Generation, The Independents, Group D, Newcomers).

- **Required Reading:** Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, "On East and West".
- **Further Reading:** Arzu Öztürkmen, "Individuals and Institutions in the Early History of Turkish Folklore, 1840-1950".

Week 2

Characteristics of Turkish Fiction. From storytelling traditions and Dede Korkut Tales to the early novel, modern short stories, and the Turkish Avant-Garde.

- **Required Reading:** Jale Parla, “The Wounded Tongue: Turkey’s Language Reform and the Canonicity of the Novel”.
- **Further Reading:** Kemal H. Karpat, “Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature: Part I”.

Week 3

Modernism and Postmodernism in Turkish Literature. Examining social realism, village novels, satire (Aziz Nesin), and key authors like Tanpınar, Oğuz Atay, and Orhan Pamuk.

- **Required Reading:** Kemal H. Karpat, “Social Themes in Contemporary Turkish Literature: Part II”.
- **Further Reading:** Talat Sait Halman, “Modern Turkish Literature: Disorientation and Reorientation”.

Week 4

Turkish Art Since the Republic. Investigating Orientalism (Osman Hamdi Bey), the transition from Islamic traditions, and painting since the 1960s (Siyah Kalem Group, 1968 Generation).

- **Required Reading:** Elif Dastarlı, “Questioning Century-Old Turkish Art Through the Polarisation Concept”.

Week 5

The Heyday and Decline of Turkish Cinema. Social realism, commentary, and taboos in the 1960s–70s, followed by the declining period of the 1980s–90s.

- **Required Reading:** Asuman Suner, New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, identity and memory.

Week 6

The Revival of Turkish Cinema and Digital Platforms. Provincial stories (Nuri Bilge Ceylan), cross-cultural narratives (Fatih Akın), and representations of refugees.

- **Required Reading:** Ayşegül Akaydın Aydın, “TRT’s International Digital Platform ‘Tabii’...”.
- **Further Reading:** Çağla Çavuşoğlu-Üstün (2024); Bayrakdar & Burgoyne (2022).

Week 7

Turkish Music: From Folk to Rap.

Aşık traditions, classical music systems, Anatolian Rock, pop stars, and diaspora Rap music.

- **Required Reading:** Orhan Tekelioğlu, “The Rise of a Spontaneous Synthesis...”.
- **Further Reading:** Irene Markoff (1991); Fatih Akın’s documentary Crossing the Bridge.

Week 8

Synthesis, Wrap-up, and Final Exam.