

MUBIT Inter-University Doctoral Cooperation in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Basel/Bern/Zurich
Near and Middle Eastern Studies. The Graduate School of Social Sciences (G3S) University of Basel

Call for Applications

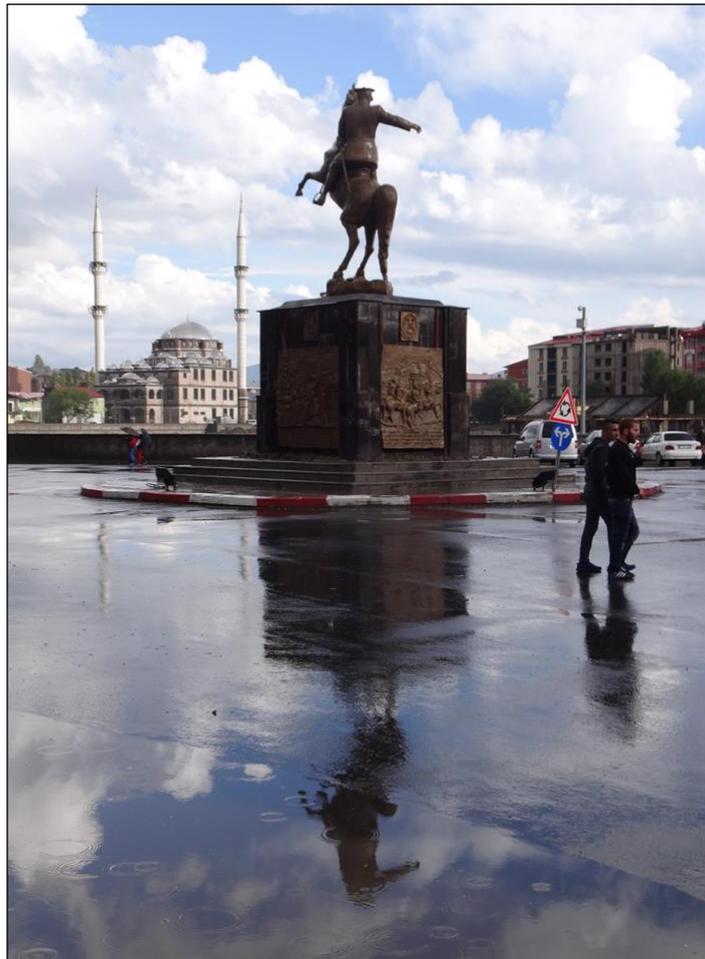
9th Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies in Basel

10–11 December 2021

Contemporary Turkish Politics

with

Dr. Berk Esen (Sabancı University, Istanbul)



Kars, 2016 (Photo: AEB)

Organized and hosted by
Prof. Dr. Maurus Reinkowski
Dr. Alexander E. Balistreri

About

The Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies is a **two-day workshop in Basel, Switzerland**, designed for international doctoral students conducting research on the Near and Middle East. The workshop consists of a two-day, intensive program in which select students work closely with invited experts. Successful completion of the workshop entitles students to 3 ECTS credits.

This year, we are thrilled to host **Dr. Berk Esen** of Sabancı University in Istanbul to lead our 9th annual workshop on the topic of “**Contemporary Turkish Politics.**” For more information on the content of the workshop, see below. The 2021 workshop will be held between **10 December (12:00 p.m.) and 11 December (13:00 p.m.) at the University of Basel**. As of the circulation of this call for applications, the Covid-19 regulations of the University of Basel **allow for in-person courses**.

Application

Currently enrolled Ph.D. students who wish to attend the workshop should write an email to Alexander Balistreri (alexander.balistreri@unibas.ch), with a **short text** summarizing their academic background and explaining how this workshop fits in to their research interests (max. 400 words, in third-person singular, in English). Applicants should also provide a **CV** (in English, Turkish, German, or French), sent as a PDF. Up to 12 applicants will be selected for participation in the workshop, based on relevance of their research project and a demonstrated ability to contribute constructively to the discussions.

The deadline for applications is 26 September 2021. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation by 1 October 2021, at the latest. The workshop is **free of charge**. Unfortunately, funding for travel and lodging is currently unavailable. We will provide successful applicants with information about more affordable accommodation in Basel.

Requirements for Successful Participation

Participants are entitled to 3 ECTS points for successful participation. Participants will receive by **15 October 2021** a list of readings to be completed prior to the workshop. Successful participation at the workshop is subject to the mandatory completion of the required readings in advance and active participation in the workshop discussions.



Contemporary Turkish Politics Course Description

This two-day workshop examines the dynamics of continuity and rupture in contemporary Turkish politics with the goal of discussing, evaluating, and theorizing main political actors, events, and trends since the country's transition to parliamentary rule in 1983. Although Turkey underwent a dual process of economic and political liberalization in the 1980s, democratic consolidation remains an elusive goal after decades. Faced with Islamic and Kurdish groups challenging the regime, the military continued to wield strong influence over the governments and the bureaucracy in the 1990s and 2000s. The ensuing *Kulturkampf* between secularists and conservatives, along with their competing political narratives, structured the political system in this period. However, the military's influence in the political arena was soon eclipsed by a resurgent Islamist movement led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. After a long line of unstable governments, the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) gained dominance in national politics by mobilizing the conservative base.

Situated in a volatile regional environment, Turkey's international course also shifted dramatically from the late Cold War era to the post-Arab Spring world. Opening accession talks with the European Union and expanding diplomatic activities in the former Ottoman territories, the AKP governments turned foreign policy into an instrument to influence domestic politics. For many students of Turkish politics, the AKP's political dominance is a sign of growing piety within society. And yet, Turkish society has in the last decade become more urban, educated, and diverse than at any other point in its history. In sharp contrast with the government's conservative agenda, secular trends are reportedly on the rise among the country's youth. Drawing on a diverse set of scholarship from political science, history, sociology and international relations, this workshop seeks to weave together these separate areas to understand how political and societal trends have evolved in contemporary Turkey. The sessions will be broken up into four themes to help scrutinize the main political dynamics, actors, and issues that left their mark on Turkish politics over the last four decades.

Workshop Sessions:

- 1** | Turkey's Struggle for Democratic Consolidation
- 2** | Marketing Turkey Abroad: Turkish Foreign Policy in Uncertain Times
- 3** | The Kurdish Struggle for Political Recognition
- 4** | Old Wine in New Bottles: Political Islam's Struggle for Political Hegemony

(Detailed session descriptions available upon request.)



Dr. Berk Esen



Berk Esen is assistant professor of political science at Sabancı University, Turkey. Currently, he is also IPC-Stiftung Mercator Fellow at the Centre for Applied Turkish Studies at the Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin. Esen received his Ph.D. in government from Cornell University in 2015. Previously, Esen served as assistant professor and vice chair in the Department of International Relations at Bilkent University. He has been a visiting researcher at Columbia University, Sabancı University, and Torcuato di Tella University. Esen's research and teaching interests include the political economy of development, party politics, and authoritarian regimes, with a focus on Latin America and the Middle East. His research has been funded by the Science and Technology Institute of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) and published in top political-science and area-studies journals, such as *Party Politics*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Armed Forces & Society*, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *Review of Middle East Studies*, and others. Esen is the recipient of several prestigious awards, including the Sakıp Sabancı International Research Award for his work on democratic backsliding in Turkey and Hungary and the Turkish Science Academy Young Scientist Award (BAGEP). [@berkesen](#)

Selected Works and Media

“Berk Esen ile Kritik” (weekly program on Medyascope): <https://medyascope.tv/author/berkesen/> and <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLL18EnXCwNzWhoPcT1Ye4OcBlitPWqDT8>

“Praetorian Army in Action: A Critical Assessment of Civil–Military Relations in Turkey,” *Armed Forces & Society* 47:1 (2021), 201–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X20931548>

(with Şebnem Gümüşçü) “Why did Turkish democracy collapse? A political economy account of AKP’s authoritarianism,” *Party Politics* (published online May 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068820923722>

(with Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi) “An Alternative Account of the Populist Backlash in the United States: A Perspective from Turkey” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52:3 (2019), 445–450. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519000180>

(with Şebnem Gümüşçü) “Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey,” *Third World Quarterly* 37:9 (2016), 1581–1606. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1135732>

“Nation-Building, Party-Strength, and Regime Consolidation: Kemalism in Comparative Perspective,” *Turkish Studies* 15:4 (2014), 600–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2014.986318>



Further Information

For more information on the MUBIT program, including reports on previous workshops, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/phd/mubit/>

For more information on the Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Basel, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/>

Previous MUBIT Workshops

2013: *Turkish Nationalism: Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism*, with Prof. Dr. Erik J. Zürcher and Prof. Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz.

2014: *Arab Nationalism: From Ottoman Empire to Colonial Mandates*, with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kayali and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Michael Provence.

2015: *A Modern World in Flux. Studying Migration, Refugees, and Settlement Regimes from the Middle East and Beyond*, with Prof. Dr. Isa Blumi.

2016: *The Main Intellectual Currents in the Late Ottoman Empire*, with Prof. Dr. M. Şükrü Hanioglu.

2017: *From Unionism to Kemalism: Social and Political Transformation of Turkey*, with Prof. Dr. Asım Karaömerlioğlu and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kuyaş.

2018: *Digital Media, Islam, and Politics in the Middle East*, with Dr. Akın Ünver.

2019: *Values and Status Negotiation: Media in the Middle East and North Africa*, with Dr. Roxane Farmanfarmanian.

2020: *Arab Marxism: The Global History of Revolutionary Movements in the Middle East in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, with PD Dr. Manfred Sing and Miriam Younes.

Contact

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