

**American University  
Winter 2023  
Department of History  
Battelle-Tompkins T-27  
Professor: Anton Fedyashin  
HIST-490**

**The Culture of Eastern Orthodoxy: From Constantinople to Eurasia**

Course-Trip Dates: December 18-25, 2023

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**1. Course Description**

This course-trip will combine pre-assigned readings with visits to museums, galleries, and concerts in Istanbul, Türkiye, to explore the role of Byzantine Orthodoxy in forming the cultural and historical space of Western Eurasia from Anatolia and the Balkans to Russia and Eastern Europe. The students will read the assigned materials before departure. The group will be together for 12 hours each day visiting sites and contextualizing everything it encounters in the readings.

**2. Format and Learning Objectives**

This course is a mix of professor-led tours and discussions upon which all students will be graded. I expect active participation from you during discussions. Feel free to ask questions about the sites and debate with each other. Do not sit in silence because it will bring your grade down. The History Department Learning Outcomes are below:

1. Historical Literacy: Students will gain an understanding of the scope, breadth, and richness of historical studies.
2. Critical Thinking: Students will learn to apply historical methods to critically evaluate the record of the past, and how historians and others have interpreted it.
3. Public History Engagement Skills: Students will acquire basic insights into museum and cultural site construction and interpretation.
4. Communication Skills: Students will learn to organize and express their thoughts clearly and coherently, both in writing and orally.
5. Writing & Intellectual Skills: Students will demonstrate their mastery of the knowledge and skills involved in historical practice by conceptualizing and executing a reaction paper.

### **3. Office Hours**

American University places a premium on student-instructor interaction and encourages the development of intellectual relationships that lead to self-discovery. I cordially invite you to visit my office before departure or to speak via Zoom. You will also be able to speak to me at any time during the trip.

### **4. Readings**

We will read the following texts, which will be integral parts of the course. We will discuss them in class on a regular basis, and you will be graded on participating in these discussions.

Homer, *The Iliad*

Bettany Hughes, *Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities* (2017)

### **5. Requirements and Grading**

#### **A. Quizzes**

There will be no test for this course.

#### **B. Attendance**

Due to the unique format of this course, attendance will, of course, be mandatory throughout the trip.

#### **C. Writing**

All student taking the course for credit will write a 10,000-word essay exploring three museums or cultural sites of their choosing in the context of the assigned historical reading for the course. The focus will be the Byzantine cultural and religious tradition and its change over time as seen through the prism of these three sites. The papers will be due two weeks after the trip is over—by 5 pm on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

#### **D. Grading**

You will be graded on your participation in the daily seminars and your final paper. The discussions will be worth 60% and the paper 40% of your grade. To pass the course, students will have to maintain a consistently high level of participation.

### **6. Honor Code**

All students are required to abide by the University Honor Code. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

## 7. Course Outline

### Day 1, Monday, December 18

Arrive at Istanbul Airport and travel to hotel  
20:00 Dinner at the hotel

### Day 2, December 19, Tuesday

09:00 Depart for Istanbul Archeological Museum  
13:00 Basilica Cistern  
14:00 Lunch and discussion of Hughes chapters 1-10  
16:00 Galata Tower  
19:00 Dinner and discussion of Hughes chapters 1-10

### Day 3, December 20, Wednesday

06:00 Depart for the National Park of Troy  
19:30 Dinner and discussion of *The Iliad*

### Day 4, December 21, Thursday

09:00 Depart for Hagia Sophia  
11:00 Hagia Irene and Topkapi Palace Museum  
13:00 Lunch and discussion of Hughes chapters 11-20  
14:00 Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, Blachernae Palace  
19:00 Mürver Restaurant and discussion of Hughes chapters 11-20

### Day 5, December 22, Friday

09:00 Depart for Istanbul Naval Museum  
13:00 Lunch and discussion of Hughes chapters 21-30  
14:00 Dolmabahce Palace Complex (art gallery, seraglio, and palace)  
19:00 Dinner and discussion of Hughes chapters 21-30

### Day 6, December 23, Saturday

09:00 Depart for Tekfur Palace, Walls of Constantinople and Chora Church  
13:00 Lunch Dinner and discussion of Hughes chapters 31-40  
14:00 Cathedral of St. George (Constantinople Patriarchate), Valens Aqueduct, Mimar Sinan's Mosques, and the Grand Bazaar  
19:00 Dinner and discussion of Hughes chapters 31-40

### Day 7, December 24, Sunday

09:30 Depart for boat tour of Bosphorus (11 AM – 13:00 PM)  
13:30 Lunch and discussion of Hughes chapters 41-50  
14:30 Exploration of Istanbul's Asian Side  
19:00 Dinner at the hotel and discussion of Hughes chapters 41-50

Day 8, December 25, Monday

9:00 Breakfast and final discussion of readings, impressions, and final paper details  
Departure  
Transportation from to Istanbul Airport