



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Turkey Program, Summer 2026

PS 365: Government and Politics of the Middle East

Instructor: Dr. Brittany Wood

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: This course offers a comprehensive examination of Middle Eastern history and politics, with a special focus on the Ottoman Empire, the rise of the Turkish Republic, and the region's evolving dynamics in the 21st century. The course also examines Turkey's complex relations with its neighbors, including Greece, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, as well as its role in broader Middle Eastern affairs. Special attention will be given to the Arab Spring's impact on the region and Turkey's strategic responses to geopolitical challenges.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Critically analyze the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire and explain how its legacy has influenced the modern political and social landscape of the Middle East.
2. Describe of the formation and evolution of the Turkish Republic, including key reforms initiated by Ataturk
3. Assess the current challenges facing Turkish democracy.
4. Evaluate Turkey's complex relationships with its neighbors, identifying key historical events and contemporary issues that shape its foreign policy and regional influence.
5. Analyze the effects of the Arab Spring on Turkey and the broader Middle East, understanding the shifting dynamics and Turkey's strategic responses to these developments.
6. Determine the influence of non-state actors, understanding their impact on both Turkey's domestic politics and regional stability, and will be able to discuss how these actors interact with state policies.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- Overview of key historical periods in the Middle East
- The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire
- Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the foundation of modern Turkey
- Early political and social reforms in Turkey
- The tension between secularism and religious conservatism
- Analysis of democratic backsliding and authoritarian trends
- Key conflicts and alliances in the region
- Long-term consequences of the Arab Spring on Middle Eastern politics
- Impact of other non-state actors on regional stability
- Turkey's role in NATO and its relations with the West

5. Required Readings and Materials: Articles, Chapters, Documentaries, and other materials needed will be provided by the instructor.

6. Graded Assignments:

A. Participation (10%)

Students will be assessed on level of engagement in class discussions, as well as during lectures, tours, excursions, and class presentations.

B. Pre-Departure Writing Assignment (20%)

Students will be provided two questions, one on the common reading and one on the common film. Each student will write a 1-page response to each question (meaning, two 1-page responses) and submit them prior to departure.

C. Mobile Learning Activities (20%)

Students will use their mobile devices to document their findings and make connections between their on-site experiences and course content. Students must submit a video or photo, along with 1-2 sentences describing the posted media and another 1-2 sentences explaining how it relates to course material. Some days the

instructor may provide a specific prompt that you must respond to, other days will be prompt free. On prompt-free days, students are encouraged to use their oral presentation topic to guide their posts.

D. Current Event Assignments (20%)

Students will be tasked with reading news from global media sources to stay up to date on current events. Students will submit 2 response papers (2-3 paragraphs) summarizing the articles and connecting them to course material.

E. Oral Presentation (30%)

Using the course materials combined with news articles, personal observations while abroad, and supplemental readings, students will present to the class on one topic related to the course.

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KUIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

7. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- **Grammar and Style Checking:** AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- **Concept Understanding:** Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- **Research Assistance:** AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

8. Attendance Policy:

KIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kis.org/about-kis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIS may prevent you from participating on your KIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIS Program Director or other KIS Faculty;

the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.