

Istanbul: The Storied City

If one has a single glance to give the world, one should gaze on Istanbul.

Course #	19FIS
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Eleanor Johnson
Co-Moderator:	Joan Wofford
Date and Time:	Monday, 1:30-3:30 10 weeks, starting September 23
Location:	Lathrop Easthampton, Mt. Tom Room
Maximum number of participants:	18
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: We will explore the multi-dimensional layers of this singular city through the past and the present, focusing on the cultures and stories of the people who have lived and continue to live, here.

Description: There are few cities with such a rich overlay of civilizations: from Byzantium to Constantinople to Istanbul; from the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire. Sometimes called The New Rome, the New Jerusalem, Allah's City, Istanbul rests at the crossing point of West and East. We will explore the city's narrative in terms of its history, but also with appreciation for the many interwoven aspects of culture: religion, literature, architecture, food, arts, and crafts. Who fought the battles and laid their many sieges to the ancient city? What were the conflicts of faith that played out among the faithful? Why was the city so sought after by traders and empire-builders? In what ways can we understand the lived experience of those citizens of The City? And what do we know of Istanbul and its place in the world today? There are many opportunities for participants to follow their interests in the exploration of this fabled city.

Role of participants: Participants will make a 25-minute presentation on an area of interest, chosen from a list provided by the moderators or a topic of their own choice, in consultation with the moderators. They will be expected to use the internet, and to read a book in common.

Resources: Thomas Madden, *Istanbul: City of Majesty at the Crossroads of the World*, 2017 Penguin. Possible book in common: Bettany Hughes, *Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities*, 2017, Da Capo Press. An excellent, detailed resource, for those who wish to delve further. Jason Goodwin (Yesim mystery series) for a light touch.

About the Moderator: Eleanor Johnson has lived in the Middle East for many years, including four years (1974-1978) in Istanbul, at Robert College. She has been an LIR member for four years and was co-moderator of a seminar on Syria and London.

Joan Wofford has traveled in Turkey, has moderated more than 15 LIR seminars, including at least one on Turkey, and has a continuing interest in the Middle East.