

Muhammet Topal

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 MA | PhD Candidate | MENAS & History
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My scholarship bridges history, sociology, and political science through area studies and theoretical inquiry. Combining intellectual, biographical, and transnational approaches, I focus on the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Caucasus and the broader MENA region within comparative and interdisciplinary frameworks that connect these contexts to global debates. I am dedicated to cultivating critical perspectives on the dynamics of the modern era, while pursuing research that traces how intellectuals and political actors navigated the transformations they experienced. Beyond academia, I draw inspiration from creative writing and mountaineering.

Curriculum Vitae**Education**

<u>2021-2026</u>	PhD Candidate University of Arizona (UA) History & MENAS School of Global Studies. Major: Middle Eastern & North African Studies, Minor: History, GPA: 4.00/4.00
<u>2025-2026</u>	University of Arizona College Teaching Certificate Graduate Interdisciplinary Program, University Center for Assessment, Teaching & Technology
<u>2020-2026</u>	INALCO L'Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales History Centre d'Études et de Recherche Moyen-Orient, Méditerranée (CERMOM). Major: Langue littérature et sociétés du monde. Chair: A. Toumarkine. (Joint doctoral degree continued at the UA)
<u>2018-2020</u>	MA École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) - Université PSL History & Religious Studies Faculty: Sciences humaines et sociales, Department: Civilisations, cultures et sociétés & Islamologie et mondes musulmans. Graduation Grade: Bien (3.70/4.00).
<u>2016-2017</u>	Sciences Po Institut d'études politiques Political Sciences & International Relations BA Minor: Department of Political Sciences & International Relations
<u>2013-2018</u>	BA Boğaziçi University History Faculty: Arts and Sciences, BA Major: History
<u>2013-2014</u>	English Program, <i>Boğaziçi University</i> School of Foreign Languages (YADYOK)
<u>2009-2013</u>	Istanbul Cumhuriyet Anatolian Highschool

Teaching Experiences

University of Arizona - Instructor of Record:

Spring '26	Introduction to Political Islam (HIST/MENA/POL 385)
Fall '25	Middle East Ethnic & Religious Minorities (ANTH/HIST/MENA/JUS/POL/RELI 389)
Spring '25	Introduction to Political Islam (HIST/MENA/POL 385)
Fall '24	Introduction to Political Islam (HIST/MENA/POL 385)
Spring '24	Introduction to Political Islam (HIST/MENA/POL 385)
Fall '23	Introduction to Political Islam (HIST/MENA/POL 385)
Summer '22	Religion of Islam (MENA/REL 160B)

University of Arizona - Graduate Teaching Associate (TA)

Spring '23	Middle Eastern Humanities (MENA 160A Prof. Leila Hudson)
Spring '23	What is Politics? (POL 150 Prof. N. Chomsky & M. Waterstone)
Fall '22	Middle Eastern Humanities (MENA 160A Prof. Leila Hudson)
Spring '22	History of the Modern Middle East (MENA 277 Dr. Lora F. Goffman)
Fall '21	The Roman Empire: Rulers & Ruled (CLAS 335 Dr. Bridget Langley)
Fall '21	Islamic Civilization: Traditional & Modern (MENA 150 Dr. Nayel Badareen)

Eylül Academy¹ - Instructor:

2015-2021 World History (Ottoman Empire, MENA, Europe, Turkey, Islam)
Human Geography,
Continental Philosophy

Other Professional Experiences

2021-2026 Outreach Speaker, Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), University of Arizona
Summer '24 Visiting Scholar, Orient-Institute Istanbul
2024-2026 Large Language Model Trainer, Outlier AI, (Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages),
2018-2020 Librarian & Archivist, École normale supérieure-Paris (Library of Social Sciences and Humanities)
Summer '16 Intern, Mephisto Publishing House-Istanbul
Summer '15 Project Assistant, Istanbul Development Agency, International Mimar Sinan Architecture and Tourism Project²

Languages

- Turkish — Native (L1)
- English — C2 (Advanced)
- French — C1 (Advanced)
- Ottoman Turkish — Research (Advanced)
- Arabic — B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- Persian — B1 (Intermediate, in progress)
- Russian — A2 (Elementary, in progress)

Digital Humanities & Education Technologies

ArcGIS StoryMaps
Social Network Analysis (SNA)
Panopto, Perusall, PlayPosit, PlayLab
D2L (Brightspace), Moodle
Canva, Adobe Express, Microsoft Office

Research Activities, Workshops, Certificates and Residencies

Spring '26 Organizer, 2nd MENAS Graduate Work-in-Progress Colloquium Series, University of Arizona
Summer '25 Participant, The 2nd Turkic World Summer School: The Rise of Turkic World, Ibn Haldun University
Spring '25 Organizer, 1st MENAS Graduate Work-in-Progress Colloquium Series, University of Arizona
Summer '24 Participant, LinguArc Archive Languages Summer School: Ottoman Archives and Diplomata (60-hour), Middle East and Africa Research Center, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University
Spring '24 Participant, Teaching and Talking about Sensitive Subjects, Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)
Summer '23 Participant, LinguArc Archive Languages Summer School: Ottoman Paleography (64-hour), Middle East and Africa Research Center, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University
Fall '18 Participant, Digital Humanities Workshop, École nationale des chartes | Université PSL
Spring '14 Participant, Traditional Ottoman Fine Arts Workshop, Boğaziçi University Art Center
Spring '13 Participant, Creative Story Writing Workshop, İstanbul Şehir University

Conference & Presentations

2026 “Mountaineering as the Covenant Experience of the Dual: Toward a Relational Ontology of Body and World”, *Thinking from the Dual – Ontology, Theology and the Humanities through the Lens of the Muthannā*, University of Lorraine, (October 13-14, Metz)
2026 “Organizing Exit: Political Agency Beyond State-Centered Muslim Politics”, *The 40th Annual Middle East History and Theory Conference (MEHAT): Playing with the Scales: The Local, Regional, and Global in Middle Eastern Studies*, University of Chicago (May 1-2)
2026 “Empire of Translations: Making of the Ottoman Public Intellectual from Phanariot Dragomans to the Translation Office”, *6th Mid-Atlantic Ottomanist Workshop*, Rutgers University (April 10-11)
2025 “Speaking Truth to Power: Mehmed Murad Bey's Individuation and Political Socialization in the Formation of the Late Ottoman Public Intellectual”, *The 59th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association*, (November 22-25, Washington DC)

¹ A private school in Istanbul preparing senior high school students and recent graduates for Turkey's competitive university entrance exams. I taught there during the fall and spring semesters between 2015 and 2018, and during the summer terms between 2018 and 2021.

² A project that brought together historians and architects from around the world to create a new tourism route tracing the architectural legacy of Mimar Sinan, the sixteenth-century Ottoman chief architect, across Turkey and post-Ottoman lands.

- 2025** “Finding a Place in the World: The Formation of Political Subjects through History Education (1839–Present)”, *Education in Turkey: Actors and Practices Conference*, Galatasaray University & Institut français d'études anatoliennes -IFEA, (October 9-10, Istanbul)
- 2025** “The Rise and Fall of A Young Turk Leader: Mehmed Murad Bey and the Political Geography of the Young Turks (1895-1898)” *History Conference in Memory of Yavuz Selim Karakışla*, Boğaziçi University (May 15-16, Istanbul)
- 2025** “Center of Power: Social Networks and Agency in the Late Ottoman Istanbul”, *15th Annual TAMU History Conference: Power and Agency*, Texas A&M University (February 7-8, College Station)
- 2024** “Making of An Ottoman Public Intellectual: Mizancı Mehmed Murad Bey”, *Orient Institute Colloquium Series* (July 31, Istanbul)
- 2024** “An Orient of One’s Own: Egypt of Ottoman Intellectual Émigrés during the Hamidian Era”, *International Nineteenth-Century Studies Association (INCSA) Conference: The Nineteenth Century Today: Interdisciplinary, International, Intertemporal*, University of Durham (July 10-12)
- 2024** “The Tale of Two Cities: Comparative Modernization in Istanbul and Cairo from the Perspective of the Ottoman Intellectual Émigrés during the Hamidian Era”, *Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies Symposium (SGNCS): Nineteenth-Century Global Cities and Urban Worlds*, Aix-Marseille University (June 6-8)

Publications & Dissertations

Books & Translations

- 2026** **Topal, Muhammet, tr.** 2026. *Biyografî*, by Melanie Nolan. İstanbul: Vakıf Bank Kültür Yayınları. Originally published as *Biography: An Historiography*, Routledge, 2023 (forthcoming).

Articles & Chapters

- 2026** **Topal, Muhammet.** “Bringing Them Across the Border: Dagestani Mehmed Murad Bey’s Petitions for Emigration and Family Reunification.” *Keshif: E-Journal for Ottoman-Turkish Micro Editions 4*, no. 2 (University of Vienna, forthcoming).
- 2026** **Topal, Muhammet.** "A Camel Story: Hadji Ali and the Transimperial Routes of Labor, Identity, and Enterprise." *Footnotes: A Journal of History 8* (University of Arizona, 2026): 70–84. <https://journals.librarypublishing.arizona.edu/uahistjrn/article/id/10174/>
- 2025** **Topal, Muhammet.** "Temsil, Hafıza ve Anlatının İzinde, İpek Yolu'nda Üç Seyyah: Marco Polo, İbn Battûta ve Tudelalı Benjamin" [In Pursuit of Representation, Memory, and Narrative: Three Travelers on the Silk Road—Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and Benjamin of Tudela]. *Tarih Dergisi*, no. 32 (Silk Road special issue), edited by Kahraman Şakul (2025): 178–86.

Dissertations (Not Published)

- 2026** **Topal, Muhammet.** *The Making of an Ottoman Opposition: Mizancı Mehmed Murad Bey between Loyalty and Dissent*. PhD dissertation in progress, University of Arizona, September 2026. Committee: Benjamin Fortna (chair) Linda Darling, Yaseen Noorani, Maha Nassar, and Jadwiga Mooney.
- 2020** **Topal, Muhammet.** *Individuation et politisation : Portrait d'un intellectuel ottoman en tant que journaliste*. Master’s thesis, École pratique des hautes études, September 2020. Jury: Özgür Türesay (chair), Nicolas Vatin (co-chair) and Alexander Toumarkine.
- 2018** **Topal, Muhammet.** *Uncertainty of the Persian Border: The Making of an Ottoman-Qajar Borderland from 1823 to 1913*. BA graduation project, Boğaziçi University, May 2018. Supervisor: Edhem Eldem.

Fellowships & Awards

- 2022-2026** UA Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) Internship & Research Award (‘22, ‘24, ‘25, ‘26)
- 2026** University of Chicago Conference Travel Grant
- 2025** Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Conference Travel Grant
- 2024** UA Graduate & Professional Student Council (GPSC) Research & Travel Grants
- 2024-2025** UA MENAS Conference Travel Grant (‘24, ‘25)
- 2022-2024** UA MENAS Michael Bonine Memorial Travel & Research Award (‘22, ‘23, ‘24)
- 2023** UA MENAS Adel Gamal Advanced Arabic Language Award
- 2021, 2023** INALCO International Research Mobility Grant (‘21, ‘23)
- 2019, 2020** EPHE International Research Mobility Grant (‘19, 20)
- 2018-2025** International Scholar Grant of the Cultural Affairs Directorate, Touring Association of Turkey

References

Name	Relation	Current Title and Affiliation	Email
Benjamin C. Fortna	PhD chair and main advisor	Professor and Director, School of MENAS, University of Arizona	bcfortna@arizona.edu
Alexandre Toumarkine	INALCO supervisor; MA jury member	Professor, INALCO, History	alexandre.toumarkine@inalco.fr
Özgür Türesay	MA thesis jury chair	Associate Professor, EPHE-PSL, Department of History and Philology	ozgur.turesay@ephe.psl.eu
Yaseen Noorani	PhD jury member, Teaching advisor	Associate Professor, Arabic and Persian Language and Literature, School of MENAS, University of Arizona	ynoorani@arizona.edu
Linda T. Darling	PhD jury member	Professor Emerita, Department of History, University of Arizona	ldarling@arizona.edu
Maha Nassar	PhD jury member, Teaching advisor	Associate Professor, Modern Middle East History and Islamic Studies, School of MENAS, University of Arizona	mtnassar@arizona.edu
Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney	PhD jury member	Professor, Department of History, University of Arizona	jadwiga@arizona.edu
Nicolas Vatin	MA thesis jury member	Emeritus Research Director, CNRS; Honorary Director of Studies, EPHE; Researcher, Center for Ottoman Studies, Collège de France	nvatin@ehess.fr
Leila Hudson	Teaching advisor	Chair of the Faculty; Professor, School of Global Studies, University of Arizona	lhudson@arizona.edu
Laura Frances Goffman	Teaching advisor	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	goffman@illinois.edu
Edhem Eldem	BA graduation project supervisor	Visiting Professor, Department of History, Columbia University, former International Chair of Turkish and Ottoman History, Collège de France	ee2383@columbia.edu