City and Identity: Representations of Culture

Course Definition and Objectives:

This course is about reading a city through different layers of culture. Istanbul is like a social and cultural melting pot with all its heterogeneity; and the variety of differences causes multiple layers of sub-cultures to emerge. These differences can be ethnic, religious, geographical, socio-economic, ideological, political, artistic and other kinds. Groups constituting these different layers express/visualize their identities through different means such as products, artworks, images, consumption or behaviors. The course consists of two sections. The first and theoretical part aims to set the general concepts through various readings. This part firstly looks at the basic concepts of city, culture and identity. After that, different ways of representing/expressing identities and reading the city will be discussed. The transformation of local cultures under a global context will be examined. Last part of the theoretical section focuses different methods of collecting, documenting and visualizing information.

The second part requires the students to do a field research/case study on a selected group/case in the city and analyze/interpret the representations of culture. This group/case can be selected according to the students own research areas or interests. So, various groups of concepts in the city can be the subject of research such as art communities, gypsy music, football fans, minibus culture, art in public space, Islamic consumerism, graffiti or hip-hop culture. Different documentation and research methods should be selected according to the topic like film, photography, sound recording, survey, interview, and content and/or discourse analysis.

Week 1-2: Introduction to fundamental concepts of city, society and culture
Week 3-4: Ways of and studies on representing identities. Local cultures in global context.
Week 5-6: Understanding research methodic and visualizing information. How to design and implement case studies
Week 7: Implementation and revising of case studies

Course Requirements:

Since one of the main aims of the course is to make use of the theoretical information about the city and cultural representations via conducting case studies, several field trips to important sites, and basic research assignments about the districts are planned. One of the trips will be to İMÇ, second to Tarlabası district and also one to Fatih, Çarşamba district if possible. The trips will be organized in the first three weeks.

There will be a midterm exam with essay questions covering materials introduced in the class, in readings and in the field trips. The final project is required to be a written document up to 3000 words about the chosen topic, including the documentation and the textual interpretation.

The breakdown of grades will be as follows:
Attendance and participation to the class: 15%
Participation to trips: 15%
Midterm exam: 30%
Final project: 40%

Course Pack: Assigned readings for the course will be available as a reader at Canon. Most of the resources will also be reserved at the IC.
Weekly schedule and reading assignments:

**Week 1-2:** Introduction to fundamental concepts of city, society and culture


urban space, representation, culture, city


artifact, artificial


visuality, aesthetics, art, artwork, non-artwork


material culture, social interaction, city, walking, pedestrian


globalization, neighborhood, transformation, culture, urban economy


social interaction, society, individual


individual, society, metropolis, social interaction


consumption, city culture, consumer culture, shopping


city, culture, economy, public space, urban economy

**Week 3-4:** Ways of and studies on representing identities. Local cultures in global context.


istanbul, local, globalization, culture, representation

Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

fragnents, culture, society, differentiation, identity


city, power, culture, identity


istanbul, concepts, culture, society


visuality, politics, subculture, style, sign, object


material culture, social interaction, individual, performance


consumption, identity, mass customization, uniqueness


consumption, production, product, material culture, lifestyle


object, image, identity, subculture


istanbul, music, music industry, globalization, representation, culture


popular culture, turkey, society, music, cultural representation


islam, politics, style, representation, fashion, ideology, culture

identity, popular culture, sociology

**Week 5-6:** Understanding research methodic and visualizing information. Analyzing different examples of research, mapping and data visualizations. Learning how to do case studies.


case study, study design, research, qualitative research, methodology


qualitative research, reliability, validity


qualitative research, social sciences, methodology


research, concept maps, data visualization, documentation


documentation, mapping, city, urban economy, sociology

**Week 7:** Implementation and revising of case studies