

Dear Students,

You are kindly invited to the seminar entitled as "*The Politics of Ethics from Kinalızade to Birgivi: The beginnings of majoritarian identity politics in the early modern Ottoman Empire*" organized by the Department of History.

**Date:** 26 March 2024, Tuesday

**Time:** 16.30

**Avenue:** A 130 Seminar Room

**Title:** The Politics of Ethics from Kinalızade to Birgivi: The beginnings of majoritarian identity politics in the early modern Ottoman Empire

**Speaker:** Prof. Baki Tezcan, UC Davis

**Abstract:**

Birgivi's (d. 1573) *The Muhammadan Path in Arabic* and Kinalızade's (d. 1572) *The Sublime Ethics in Turkish* are two Ottoman classics that enjoyed a very wide degree of circulation since the sixteenth century.

Ethics is at the heart of both works. Whereas Kinalızade engages the Islamic tradition of practical philosophy through the Persian works of Tusi (d. 1274) and Davvani (d. 1502), Birgivi is most directly engaged with al-Ghazali (d. 1111). Since practical philosophy comprises ethics, as well as economics (in the ancient sense of household management) and politics, the connections between the moral and political worlds of Kinalızade and, thus, the political assumptions that inform his moral world are not difficult to uncover. While Birgivi is ostensibly less engaged with political power, this presentation suggests that there are important political (and epistemological) assumptions on which his moral world is built and that these assumptions are, arguably, more adoptable to modernity.

**Bio:**

Tezcan is a graduate of Istanbul Lisesi. He got his B.S. in International Relations from Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey (1994), and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University (1996, 2001).

He joined the History Department in 2002 (until 2015, he held a joint appointment in Religious Studies and taught in both departments). He was one of the founders of the Middle East/South Asia Studies Program (ME/SA), which he directed from 2012 to 2015. In addition to History and Religious Studies, he also taught for ME/SA and Medieval and Early Modern Studies programs, and led the "Last Empire of Islam" Summer Abroad Program in Istanbul in 2007, 2009, and 2011 (for photographs from these summers, see the Facebook group "Baki's Bottle," named after the water bottle Tezcan held up while leading his students in tourist crowds). His advising work in multiple academic units brought him the UC Davis Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award in 2005.

Tezcan held an American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) postdoctoral fellowship funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2001-02. He was a Society for the Humanities fellow at Cornell University in 2005-06. In 2011-12, he was a TÜBİTAK fellow at Istanbul Şehir University. For 2018-19, he was awarded a fellowship by the NEH.

He is a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Ottoman Studies* and the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, and the President of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association (OTSA). He also served in the editorial board of the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, was a delegate at large in ARIT, an executive board member of OTSA, and an associate member of the Institute of Turkish Studies. He is one of the co-founders of the Western Ottomanists' Workshop (WOW) and GIT - North America, and an occasional contributor (in Turkish) to *Bianet* and (in English) to *Jadaliyya*.

Among his prolific works, he is also the author of *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).