Lab Background and Setting
Like many other countries, in the 20th century Turkey was transformed by rapid urbanization. Today, roughly 70 percent of Turkey’s 73 million inhabitants live in cities, with the greatest populations concentrated in the western Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Straddling Europe and Asia, Istanbul bridges East and West, putting it at a critical crossroads for commerce, trade and cultural exchange for centuries. The significance of its geographic location cannot be underemphasized. Spreading seemingly uncontrollably along both sides of the Bosphorus Straits Istanbul boasts a population of 12.8 million, making it the largest city in Turkey and fifth largest city proper in the world.

Course Content and Description
The Istanbul Lab course accompanies the research seminar on Comparative Urban Politics and Policy (Poli 464). The purpose of the Lab is multifaceted. First, it provides students with an in-depth examination of one city in particular—Istanbul—so that they can gain micro-level knowledge and understand about how politics and policy work in a specific case and also apply theories and concepts from the more macro-level focus of the seminar course. Second, the Lab is the setting for both the research project and the field research trip to Istanbul.

In the Lab course, we will begin with a very broad overview of Turkish political economy since the founding of the Republic in 1923. From here we will examine local and transnational forces that have driven (and continue to drive) contemporary urbanization in Istanbul. The primary content of the Lab course will be on the key issues and problems that have emerged in Istanbul as a result of its rapid urbanization over the past several decades—for example, the politics of land-use, political representation (for migrants, women, the poor), the relationship between local and national politics, and the evolution of democracy and the secular Turkish Republic. In addition, this year we will focus on two other themes: (1) local elections, which take place in March, and (2) the Gezi Park protests and aftermath.

Woven into our substantive focus on politics and policy in Istanbul, will be regular attention to the building blocks of conducting social scientific inquiry in general and
comparative analysis in particular. The Lab will be the setting for learning how to design and conduct the research project and planning for the field research that students will engage in while in Istanbul.

**Course Requirements**

Grading for the course will be based on two main projects, class discussion and participation, and the poster presentation of the final project. The field research trip to Istanbul is the focus of the first assignment, and for many students, will also be the basis for the final project. Like any field investigation, our trip to Istanbul will be more productive if based (at least partly) on preparation. To this end, the Lab is organized to help students focus on a research question of their choice, but also one that we believe is promising in terms of viability (not all questions, no matter how substantively important, lend themselves to viable research projects). Hence, before we depart, our Lab efforts will ground students in both the general (regional and historical) forces influencing Istanbul, and more specific aspects of politics and policy to narrow the research question. Using this background, students will present their research question and their proposed strategies for the field investigation, and for leveraging data and methods to augment their field study.

While in Istanbul, students will blog, keep detailed field notes, and compile observations and other data that they will use to investigate their research question. In the week after our return, students will write up their analysis and include relevant supporting evidence (images, interview notes, secondary data).

In the second part of the semester, efforts will be devoted to helping students identify germane literature and data for the final project, and explore methodologies that will allow students to leverage the information they have assembled to maximum effect. As students refine the focus of their research, they will be instructed in how to prepare a research report that illustrates their research question, its importance, and the strategies they used in the field in Istanbul, and upon return, to integrate field observations with germane literature and data for the research project. In the Lab, we will explore known data sources and seek additional sources that fit students' particular research topics. Finally, students will submit the final project at the end of the semester and present the results of their inquiry in a poster session that brings together students from all three labs.

**Important Policies**

*Late work* will not be accepted without certified justification (e.g., doctors note, death in the family, etc.). Students involved in sports or other school-related endeavors need to make every effort to prepare in advance for these activities. *Electronics*: Computers, tablets, etc. may be used for note taking or searches germane to seminar discussions. General web surfing and texting during class are not permitted.

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1 If you have any conditions or challenges that may make it difficult for you to meet the requirements of this course, or that may cause you to require extra time on assignments, please let me know within the first two weeks of class so that we can make appropriate and equitable alternative arrangements.
Academic Honesty: Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Rice Honor Code.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Field research assignment: 35%
Class participation & attendance: 20%
Final project: 40%
Poster presentation: 5%

Grading Scale

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Course Topics and Schedule of Readings

Jan 16 Settlement and Urbanization of Istanbul

Jan. 23 Turkish Politics and Governance

Jan. 30 Local Government Organization, Function, Power in Turkey

Feb 6  
Guest Speaker, Yurter Ozcan, CHP Representative in the U.S.

- Insel, Ahmet. 2013. “Local Elections in Istanbul and Erdogan’s Political Future.” Aljazeera Center for Studies (Dec. 5th)

Feb 13  
Parties & Local Elections Social Movements/Gezi Park


Feb 20  
Political Economy of Urbanization/Housing in Istanbul


Feb. 27  
Transportation and Infrastructural Projects

- Maramary Tunel Presentation
- Third Bosphorus Bridge

http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/08/bosphorus-bridge-row-istanbul-turkey

Feb 28-  5:15 pm meet @ SallyPort for airport shuttle
Depart 8:00 p.m. Turkish Airlines TK 0034 - IAH

March 9  Return 7:15 pm Turkish Airlines TK 0033 - IAH

March 13  Work on field research assignment

Field Research Assignment Due March 18th

March 20  Housing & Urban Transformation

March 27  Project Specific Literature Review*
*We will add topics and readings below depending on project topics

April 3:  No Class: Spring Recess

April 10:  Data Sources

April 17:
  Draft of Final Project Due

April 24:  Methods of Analysis/Project Workshop

May 2:  Poster Session (TIME TBA)