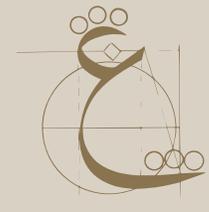
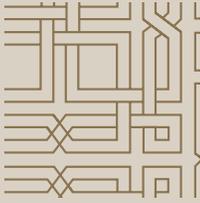




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Reflections of Ottoman Studies: A Contextual Analysis of University Education in Bangladesh

OSMANLI
ARAŞTIRMALARININ
YANSIMALARI:
BANGLADEŞ'TE ÜNİVERSİTE
EĞİTİMİNİN BAĞLAMSAL BİR
ANALİZİ



MD ANISUR RAHMAN*

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to explore the current situation of Ottoman studies in the universities of Bangladesh. It surveys the first-hand data showing that universities' interest in this field and investigates course-contents of the different universities of Bangladesh in which Ottoman history being introduced. Accordingly, the primary sources in doing so are syllabi, curriculum, course packages, and research publications of the Bangladeshi academic environment, which are also the basis of the study's conceptual framework. The article follows a holistic approach via describing and analyzing the topic through primary and secondary sources. It also compares and interprets the data with building a cause-effect relationship of the phenomenon. It, finally, presents recommendations regarding the prospects of Ottoman studies in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladeshi academia, Ottoman studies, Turkey, Content analysis, Publications.

ÖZ

Bu makalede, Bangladeş üniversitelerindeki Osmanlı araştırmalarının mevcut durumu konu edilmektedir. Çalışmada ilk olarak üniversitelerin Osmanlı araştırmalarına ilgisini gösteren veriler tespit edilmekte ve sonrasında, Osmanlı tarihi çalışmalarının yer bulduğu üniversitelerin ilgili ders içerikleri incelenmektedir. Araştırmanın birincil kaynakları, aynı zamanda çalışmanın kavramsal çerçevesinin de temelini oluşturan ders özetleri, program müfredatları ve Bangladeş üniversitelerinde Osmanlı tarihi alanında üretilen yayınlardır. Makale, olguyu birincil ve ikincil kaynaklar üzerinden tanımlayıp analiz eden bütüncül bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Ayrıca söz konusu veriler neden-sonuç ilişkisi içinde karşılaştırılmakta ve yorumlanmaktadır. Çalışmada son olarak, Bangladeş'teki Osmanlı araştırmalarının geleceği hakkında bazı öngörü ve öneriler sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bangladeş akademisi, Osmanlı çalışmaları, Türkiye, İçerik analizi, Yayınlar.



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* Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Faculty of Arts, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Ph.D. Fellow, Department of History, Institute of Social Science, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey. E-mail: md.rahman@ogr.sakarya.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-0704-990X.

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of Dacca University (henceforth the University of Dhaka) in 1921 was a turning point for the development of higher education in Bangladesh. In subsequent decades, three major public universities were founded in Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Jahangirnagar, through which Muslim middle class emerged and the Bangladesh society became enlightened. The numbers of such institutions gradually raised to forty-six public and one hundred and seven private universities in which some universities include Ottoman history courses in their undergraduate and graduate curricula. In this regard, this research would allow us to get a general overview of Ottoman studies in higher education of Bangladesh including the engagement of researchers, professors, and intellectuals who write research articles, books and accordingly pursue Ph.D. degrees in this field. The paper also evaluates the literature produced by Bangladeshi academicians. Students' and researchers' fascination with studying Ottoman history for its wider context, the Turkish language is an obstacle since most people do not know it. This problem is partly because of the scarcity of works on Ottoman history written in Bangla. Finally, this article surveys the development and limitations of Ottoman studies in Bangladesh, and it presents some recommendations.

Bengal's Connectivity with Turkey: Historical Legacies and Its Continuity

Islamic life and legacy have influenced many spheres of Bengali life starting with the Turkish and Muslim conquests in the early thirteenth century. The following three centuries are regarded as the most constructive period in Bengal's history since the Bengali state and identity had developed in that period. For instance, known as '*Shah-i-Bangal*' (King of Bengal), Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (d.1358) was the first Muslim ruler who united the whole Bengal.¹ The Turkish presence intensely influenced the Bengali language, art, culture, literature, justice, and administration. The mobility of Turkish artists, administrators, artisans, Muslim *Ulema* (theologist), and people of different professions from Central Asia and Afghanistan shaped the Muslim civilization in Bengal.² Muslim cultural integrity continued and was influenced later by the Mughals. Unfortunately, Muslim identity and cultural heritage fell into crisis in the mid of the eighteenth century because of the British colonial rule, which continued till 1947. Against the cycle of imperialist rule Bengali Muslim show their inclusive sympathy towards the Ottomans, and they vehemently denied British conspiracy towards Khilafat. However, Bengal's relation with Turkey was continued, and its reflections can be seen in the writings of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Turkey and Bangladesh have increased the mutual understanding and cooperation to make economic, commercial, educational, and cultural connectivity. Some universities of Bangladesh have opened courses in Ottoman history since the 1920s; as a result, the new generation has bridged a good intellectual interaction with Turkish history and civilization. In recent years, Turkish drama serial like; *Kuruluş Osman*, *Diriliş Ertuğrul*, *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* and *Payıthat Abdülhamid* has been telecasted

1 Abdul Karim, *Banglar Itihas: Sultani Amol [History of Bengal Sultanate Period]* (Dhaka: Jatiyo grantho Prokashon [National Book Publishing], 1999), 73.

2 Richard M Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760 A.D.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1993), 21.

with popular image in Bangladeshi television channels which created a good perception of Bangladeshi mass towards Turkey.

Ottoman Studies at the Universities of Bangladesh: A Case-Study

Following western academia, modern education system was introduced and developed in Bangladesh, during the British colonial rule in which Bengali scholars played a vital role. British Government in India established the Dhaka University in 1921, and within a decade, it became the pioneer institution in East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh). On the eve of founding the University of Dhaka, the Department of History was one of the twelve teaching departments with eminent historian Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumder as Professor and Chairman. Islamic History was incorporated in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum of this department in 1929 that was a significant development to study and research Muslim history and civilization in Bangladesh. In the context of Islamic History, Ottoman history came to touch in the department's syllabus. Later in 1948, a fully-fledged Department, Islamic History and Culture was established under the Faculty of Arts, the breakthrough initiative to study and research the emergence of Muslim identity and its development in Bengal and the beyond.

From the very beginning of its inception, the Department of Islamic History and Culture offered comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs in the political, socio-economic, and cultural history of the Muslim world. The Master's syllabus of this department is designed into three separate domains; Group A- "History of the Modern Muslim States," Group B- "Socio-Economic History of Medieval Muslim States," and Group C- "History of Muslim Art and Archeology" of which first domain covers the modern history of the Muslim world including Ottoman history and the history of Turkish Republic. A course entitled "Turkey and the Balkan Muslim States since 1774" through which critical phases of Ottoman history after the treaty of '*Küçük Kaynarca*'; especially Ottoman-Europe relation, modernization in the Empire, the Eastern Question, Balkan Wars, and Ottoman's engagement in the First World War are being widely taught. This course critically examines the end of the Caliphate, the rise of the Modern Republic of Turkey and its political developments. In addition, the crisis of Turkish democracy and military engagement in Turkish politics, consequently the military coup of 1960, 1971, and 1980 is analyzed. The second domain covers the history of the medieval period of Islam under which there is a course on 'Socio-cultural and Economic History of Muslim World: Arab World, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia (Since 1517)'. Within the scope of this course, a brief account of the social phenomenon under the Ottoman rule, especially the *Millet system*; Ottoman reforms in the era of *Tanzimat*, conflicts of Islam, and secularism have been interpreted. Accordingly, the last domain covers the Muslim's contribution to world art and archaeology through the study of architectural remains and other available visible sources. Within its contexts, Ottoman art, architecture, and archaeology get special attention. Ottoman mosque architecture in the early era and its changing style after the conquest of Constantinople, especially the architectural dexterity of *Mimar Sinan*, Ottoman miniature painting, and its influences in world art is studied.³ The

3 Department of Islamic History & Culture, *Syllabus for Masters in Islamic History and Culture* (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 2011).

Department of Islamic History and Culture offers a course on Ottoman history as ‘History of the Ottomans’ at the undergraduate level. This course has been designed to provide a general idea of Ottoman history, from the establishment of this dynasty in 1289 to the fall of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate in 1924.

The Department of History, University of Dhaka has introduced a course on ‘West Asia in Modern Times’ at the undergraduate level in which modern Turkish history is precisely taught as a part of West Asian history. At the graduate level, the Department of History has three distinct branches. Among the three branches, Group-C has been designed as ‘international history’ in which there is a course entitled “West and Central Asia in Modern Times (Selected Topics)” where some particular issues like the domestic policy of Turkey after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, external relation of Turkey, especially with Western countries, has given specific emphasis.⁴

As the second public university of Bangladesh, Rajshahi University was established in 1953 and started its academic functions from the session 1954-55 by eight Departments, as the Department of History was one of them. Islamic History was a part of the History Department from its very inception, and in November 1956, Islamic History and Culture emerged as a full-fledged department under the Faculty of Arts.⁵ From the very beginning Ottoman history was incorporated significantly of those departments. As we have found three particular branches in Masters level curricular in the department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka; its reflection can be seen in the curricular of Rajshahi University as well. Statistics show that the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Rajshahi University has four specialized branches in graduate-level which have been designed as Group-A: Politico-Economic and Intellectual History of Islam, Group-B: Middle-East in Modern Times, Group-C: Muslim Art and Archaeology, and Group-D: South and South-East Asia in Modern Times. Among these branches Group-B is specialized in Middle East history. The specific aspects of Turkish history like Ottoman-Europe relation; more specifically Franco-Ottoman, Anglo-Ottoman, Russo-Ottoman relations along with the crisis of the Ottoman history like Eastern Question, Greek War of Independence, Crimean War, Balkan Wars and involvement of Turkey in the First World War has been included as the subject-matter in this course. The significant phenomenon of Turkish histories like Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turanism, Turkism, Nationalism, and Secularism has been introduced in the syllabus. The political development of modern Turkey, political leadership, parliamentary government and democracy, political transformation, military in the politics, and ethnic crises like Kurds and Armenians are critically studied. In Group-C, Ottoman art and architecture are taught in the contexts of Muslim art and archeology.⁶ The Department of Islamic History and Culture offers three courses on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level. The aim of these courses is to teach the students about the fundamental history of the Ottoman Empire, from 1289-1919. These courses discuss almost all remarkable aspects relating to the emergence of the Turkish Republic as a result of the successful nationalist movement following World War I, dooming the European conspiracy. It explains modernizing policy under Mustafa Kemal;

4 Department of History, *Curriculum of the Department of History* (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 2018).

5 Rajshahi University (RU), “www.ru.ac.bd & ru.ac.bd/IHC/” (Access 01 May 2021.)

6 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Curriculum for M A Final Year Session 2019-2020* (Rajshahi: University of Rajshahi, 2019).

political, socio-economic and cultural development of Turkey. Furthermore, Turkish politics, democratic phases and military engagement in politics with its far-reaching consequences are reviewed. Moreover, the recent development of Turkey is also given more emphasis with an evaluation of the Turkish role in the regional and international arena.⁷

The History Department of Rajshahi University offers two courses relating to Ottoman history at the undergraduate level. The course entitled 'History of West and Central Asia, 1258-1774' has been designed to focus on the rise, expansion, characteristics, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Generally, by reading this course, students can get an idea about the geographical features of West and Central Asia, the origin of Mongols, Ilkhanids, Mamluks, and Ottomans as well. Another course entitled 'History of West and Central Asia, 1774-1945', deals with Ottoman history's significant part revealing interactions with European powers. In addition, Ottoman modernization, the crisis in Ottoman history, for instance, Eastern Question and Empire's participation in the First World War, subsequently breakup of the Ottoman Sultanate, and rise of the nation-state have been discussed here. The politico-socio-economic and cultural development of Republican Turkey till 1945 has been focused on this course.⁸ The department has two particular branches at the graduate level, of which Group-B; incorporates a course on 'West Asia and World Politics since 1945'. The course has explored the history of the modern Middle East, rise of the nation-state, geopolitics of the Middle East and Arab-Israel conflict along with Turkish experiments of democracy, political parties, the rise of Islamic parties, foreign policy, mainly Turkish role in West Asia along with world politics have been evaluated.⁹

The University of Chittagong was established in 1966 as the third public university of Bangladesh in the port city of Chittagong. The Department of History was opened at the time of inaugurating the university. This department offers a course on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level as 'History of West Asia, (1258-1919), through which students can get a good idea about the rise of the Ottomans, their administration, politics, military reforms, justice, the crisis of Ottoman history in the nineteenth century, the rise of nationalism, and the fall of the Caliphate.¹⁰ There are three individual branches at the graduate level, Group-C entitled 'Contemporary History and International Affairs' in which a course 'History of West Asia in Modern Times' is offered. Under this course, the modern historical phenomenon of the Middle East is discussed along with some particular aspects of Ottoman history, for instance, the European approaches towards Turks, Turkey as the sick man of Europe, Treaty of Severs and Lausanne, abolition of the Sultanate and Caliphate, *Kemalism*, Turkish foreign policy, Turkish participation in the First and the Second World War, and democratic advancement of Turkey.¹¹

In 1978, the Department of Islamic History and Culture was established at Chittagong University. It is assumed that with the establishment of the Department of Islamic History and Culture; a new episode was opened to study the history of the Muslim world. Although

7 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Curriculum for B. A. Hon's Session 2019-2020* (Rajshahi: University of Rajshahi, 2019).

8 Department of History, *Curriculum for BA Hon's Session 2019-2020* (Rajshahi: University of Rajshahi, 2019).

9 Department of History, *Curriculum for M A Final Year Session 2019-2020* (Rajshahi: University of Rajshahi, 2019).

10 Department of History, *Syllabus B A Hon's Session 2020-2021* (Chittagong: University of Chittagong, 2020).

11 Department of History, *Syllabus M A Final Year Session 2020-2021* (Chittagong: University of Chittagong, 2020).

officially, there are three distinguished branches at the graduate level but the department only offers courses on modern history, while in their Master's program, a course entitled 'Contemporary History of Turkey, Palestine, and Jordan' is offered. This course describes the political, diplomatic and military history of Turkey. In addition, the modern phenomenon of Turkish history, for instance, the First World War and Turkey, *Kemalism*, Turkish foreign policy, democratic advancement of Turkey, Turkey's engagement in NATO, and the military coup of 1960, are studied.¹² There are two courses on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level as 'History of the Ottoman Turks (1288-1788) and History of the Ottoman Turks (1789-1924)'. Both the courses smeared in detail about the fundamental aspects of Ottoman history, society, culture, justice, administration, economy, army, reforms, treaty, conquest, trade and commerce, foreign relation, the crisis of the Empire, and finally, the downfall of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate.¹³

Jahangirnagar University was established as the fourth public university of Bangladesh in 1970, in which the History Department was one of the inaugural departments. There is a course on Ottoman History in this department entitled 'History of West Asia (From 1453-1945 A.D.)'. Under this course, some selected topics of Ottoman history are visualized especially social conditions of the Ottomans during the French Revolution, Ottoman's territorial expansion, reforms of the Ottomans in the era of *Tanzimat*, problems of Ottomans with peripheral provinces like the Greek War of Independence, Syrian invasion and Muhammad Ali, Russia and the Eastern Question, Western ideas which shackled the Ottomans, like Neo-Ottoman, Constitutional Movement of 1868, Pan-Islamism and Young Turk Movement. At the graduate level, there is a course as 'West Asia and Contemporary World' in which the position of Turkey is determined in the context of the modern political history of the Middle East.¹⁴

Islamic University was established at Kushtia, Bangladesh, as the major international theological center in 1979, at which the Department of Islamic History and Culture came into being in 1991.¹⁵ The department has three branches in the Master's program: A) Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Islam B) Middle-East in Modern Times C) Muslim Art and Archaeology. Among these three branches; group-B offers a particular course on Ottoman and Balkan history namely 'Turkey and the Balkan Muslim States in Modern Times' and in this course, the modern phenomenon of Turkish history, especially modernization of the Ottoman Empire, the crisis of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, the First World War and Turkey, reforms of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, democracy, military in Turkish politics, Turkey and NATO are interpreted. Group-C has been designed to know Muslim art and architectural history in which Ottoman arts and architecture gets a particular concern.¹⁶ At the undergraduate level, there is an introductory course on Ottoman history as 'History of the Ottoman Turks till 1924', in which almost 635 years of Ottoman rule has been elaborately discussed.

12 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Syllabus M.A Final Year Session 2019-2020* (Chittagong: University of Chittagong, 2017).

13 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Syllabus for B.A. Hon's Session 2019-2020* (Chittagong: University of Chittagong, 2017).

14 Department of History, *Curriculum* (Savar: Jahangirnagar University, 2017).

15 Islamic University (IU), "iu.ac.bd" (06 May 2021.)

16 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Curriculum* (Kushtia: Islamic University, 2019).

One of the oldest and largest educational institutions of Bangladesh, Jagannath College, was declared as a public university in 2005 situated in the capital Dhaka.¹⁷ From the beginning of this university, Islamic History and Culture is one of the distinguished departments under the faculty of Arts. This department also has specialized branches in the Master's program which is streamlined to form three groups, each having distinct themes-Group A: Modern Muslim States, Group B: Sociological History of Islam, Group C: Islamic Art and Archaeology. In Group-A, a course has been enlisted on Ottoman history as 'Turkey and the Balkan Muslim States since 1774'. This course has been designed from the treaty of '*Küçük Kaynarca*', and its overall subject-matters are very important to know modern world history in the context of Ottoman modernization. Rather constitutional development of Ottomans, the influence of Ottoman intellectuals in politics and society, Crimean War, Cretan war, Bulgarian Atrocities, treaties like San Stefano, Berlin, Sevres, Lausanne, Nationalist movements- Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turkism have got special concern in this syllabus. In addition, the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate and Sultanate and the rise of the modern Republic of Turkey are significant parts of this course. Furthermore, the political development of modern Turkey after the fall of the Caliphate, especially Turkish political advancement from one-party democracy to multi-party democracy and Coup d'état in 1960, 1971, and 1980 have been included in the syllabus. Moreover, Turkey's bilateral developments, such as joining NATO and EU, the prospect of democracy, economic and technological development are specified. In Group-B, a course has been designed as 'Development of Muslim Political Thought and Institution Classic, Medieval and Modern'. In this course, the political thought of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is determined and compared with other prominent Muslim political thinkers. In Group-C the department offers courses on Muslim art and archeology where Ottoman art and architectural history are elaborately studied, including Ottoman miniature painting, its themes, style, and prominent Turkish artists on a large scale. This department offers an introductory course on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level, as 'History of the Ottoman Turks from 1300 C.E. to 1924' to represent a general idea of Ottoman history.¹⁸

The Department of History of Jagannath University was also established in 2005. This department offers a course at the undergraduate level on West Asian history in which some selected facts of Ottoman history from the era of Sultan Suleiman to the Young Turks movement are accounted. History Department has three specialized branches in Masters and in group-C contemporary world history is taught. This group represents a course on 'West and Central Asia in Modern Times' focusing some selected topics on West Asian states. In this course, the domestic policy of Turkey after *Mustafa Kemal* and aspects of Turkish foreign policy are investigated.¹⁹

Khulna University was founded in 1991 and the Department of History and Civilization was opened in 2017 under the school of Arts and Humanities. This department offers an introductory course on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level. Its subject matter is very comprehensive, which overviews the historical background of founding the Ottoman

17 Jagannath University (JnU), "jnu.ac.bd" (Access 16 May 2021.)

18 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Syllabus for Honours and Masters* (Dhaka: Jagannath University, 2018) & Md. Anisur Rahman (ed.) *Students Handbook, Bachelor of Arts (Honors): 4 Years Program and MA 1 Year Program* (Dhaka: Department of Islamic History and Culture, Faculty of Arts, Jagannath University, 2018), 9-19.

19 Department History, *Syllabus for Honours and Masters* (Dhaka: Jagannath University, 2019).

Empire, its expansion policy, Ottoman-Europe relation, fall of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of modern Turkey, Kemalism and political development of the republic, democracy, and the military coup of 1960.²⁰

As an affiliating university, the National University of Bangladesh was established on 21 October 1992 to impart undergraduate and graduate education through its nearly 2300 affiliated colleges. It includes 275 Government Colleges and 2000 Non-government Colleges, of which more than 770 colleges provide graduate education among 2.8 million students throughout the country.²¹ Department of History and the Department of Islamic History and Culture have existed in most of graduate-level colleges. In the undergraduate syllabus, the Department of History has acquainted a course on Ottoman history named 'History of West Asia 1560-1914', and under this course, Ottoman History from 1560-1914 is indoctrinated. There is a course at the graduate level as 'West and Central Asia in Modern Times', in which modern Turkish history is pretended.²² The department of Islamic History and Culture of this university offers an elementary course on Ottoman History at the undergraduate level in which itemized ottoman history, culture, society, politics, bureaucracy, administration, law and order, justice, war and treaty, foreign relation, Ottoman modernization, Easter Question, Empires' engagement in the First World War and finally fall of the Ottoman Empire are descriptively discussed. In addition, at the graduation level, two courses are adopted focusing on the modern republican history of Turkey and Ottoman architectural history.²³

To provide open and distance learning among the masses (young and age-old who are fall of students); Bangladesh Open University was established on 21 October 1992.²⁴ History is one of the leading departments at the School of Social Science, and this department has introduced two courses in Masters and a course at the undergraduate level about the History of West Asia in which Ottoman history is taught based on some selected topic.²⁵

At present there are 107 private universities of Bangladesh, among them only in the Asian University of Bangladesh; there is a full-fledge Department as 'Islamic History and Civilization', which started its academic functions in 2005 under the faculty of Arts. There are two courses on Ottoman history at the undergraduate level, and a course on the Ottoman history and modern Turkey is offered in the graduate syllabus.²⁶

Statistics show that there are forty-six public universities of Bangladesh among them, four is Agriculture University, one is Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, five is Engineering and Technology University, eleven is Science and Technology University, one Textile University, one Aviation and Aerospace University, one Maritime University, one Medical University and the rest seventeen are General Public University.²⁷ Among

20 Khulna University (KU), "www.ku.ac.bd" (Access 07 May 2021.) & History and Civilization Discipline, *Syllabus for Honours* (Khulna: Khulna University, 2017).

21 National University (NU), "nu.ac.bd", (Access 15 May 2021.)

22 Department of History, *Syllabus for Hon's and Master* (Gazipur: National University, 2014).

23 Department of Islamic History and Culture, *Syllabus for Hon's and Master* (Gazipur: National University, 2009).

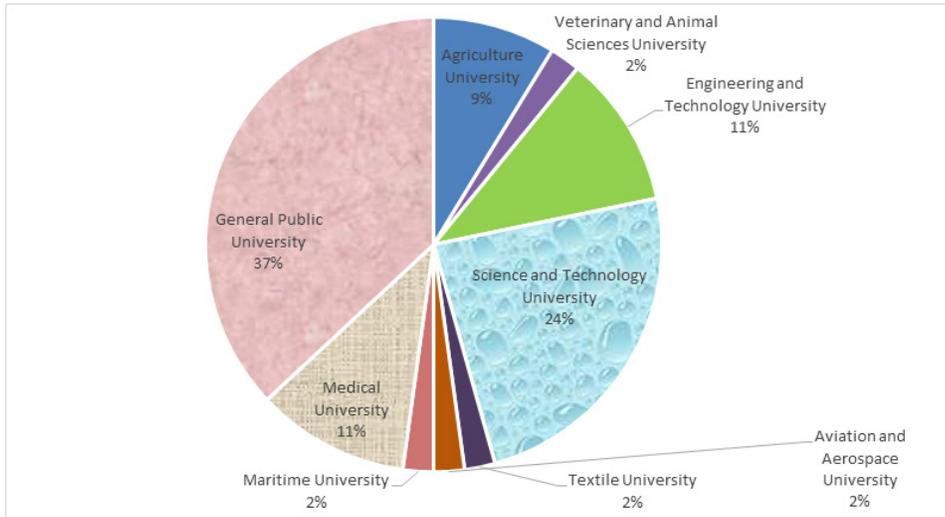
24 Bangladesh Open University (BOU), "bou.edu.bd" (Access 12 May 2021.)

25 School of Social Science, *Students Handbook, Bachelor of Arts (Honors): 4 Years Program, History* (Gazipur: Bangladesh Open University, 2019), 14-50.

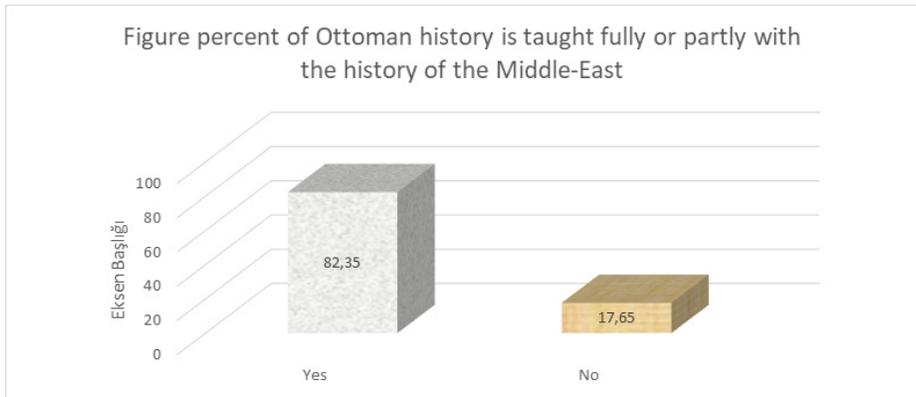
26 Asian University of Bangladesh (AUB), "aub.edu.bd" (Access 13 May 2021.) & Asian University of Bangladesh, *Student Hand Book* (Uttara: Asian University of Bangladesh, 2007), 93-106.

27 University Grants Commission (UGC), "<http://www.ugc-universities.gov.bd/public-universities> and <http://www.ugc-universities.gov.bd/private-universities>" (Access 14 May 2021.)

seventeen General Public Universities of Bangladesh, Islamic History and Culture exist only in five Public Universities as the full-fledged department in which Ottoman History and Civilization is taught broadly. In fourteen universities, the Department of History exists in which Ottoman history is introduced fully or partly with the history of the Middle-East and West Asia. It would be worthwhile to mention that the department of Islamic History and Culture is one of the leading departments which promote the history, culture, civilization, and heritage of the Muslim world. As a vital part of Muslim civilization and cultural history Ottoman studies is consistently recognized as one of the essential areas of research for the teachers and students of Islamic History and Culture.

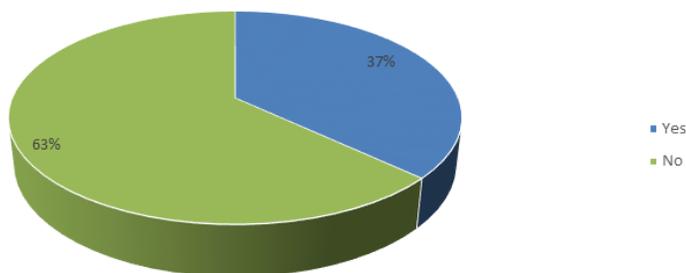


This graph represents the categories of different universities in Bangladesh



This graph presents the status of Ottoman studies as a part of Middle East history in Bangladesh academia.

Figure Percentage Distribution of Department, Islamic History and Culture among the public universities of Bangladesh



This graph represents the status of Islamic History and Culture Department at the universities of Bangladesh, in which Ottoman history is comprehensively studied.

Contents Experiments of the Ottoman History in Bangladesh Academia

Describing the contents of Ottoman History in Bangladesh, we can notify the following perspectives in the undergraduate syllabus of Islamic History and Culture. The course is designed to teach the students a general idea regarding the origin and development of the Ottoman dynasty from 1289 to its fall in 1924. The syllabus covers the significant events of Ottoman history by sequencing the reign of all Ottoman Sultans from *Osman Gazi* to Mehmet VI. The contribution of the Janissaries in the epoch-making battles of the Ottomans, foreign policy of the Empire, Ottoman bureaucracy, especially the role of viziers is comprised in the syllabus. Especial attention is given to the Eastern Question; Greek War of Independence, Crimean War, nationalist movement in the Balkans and treaties with European powers, especially with Russia, England, and France, are evaluated. Ottoman modernization, constitutional movement, the New Ottoman's movements, the Young Turk movement, Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism is integrated into undergraduate syllabus. The Balkan Wars on the eve of the Ottoman's engagement in the First World War is also critically studied. Nationalist Movement, Treaty of Sevres, Treaty of Lausanne, the rise of *Mustafa Kemal, Kemalism*, and politics of modern republic are accounted with great importance. Such course design aims to introduce the learners to the socio-economic, political, cultural, diplomatic, administrative, and military history of the Ottoman Empire.

In graduate, contents are also very comprehensive to understand the modern phenomenon of Ottoman history. The course starts with the discourses of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century. The Ottoman reforms and modernization in Western line from the era of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) to the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) are speculated. In this respect *Nizam-i-Cedid, Sened-i-ittifak, Tanzimat Movement, Güllhane Hatt-ı Şerif, Hatt-ı Hümayun*, Constitution of 1876 are focused. A particular concern is the Eastern Question: The Greek War of Independence, Serbian Uprising, Bulgarian Atrocities, and the Crimean War. Ottoman foreign policy and different treaties like the Treaty of

'*Küçük Kaynarca*', 'Treaty of San Stefano', 'Treaty of Berlin', 'Treaty of Sevres', and 'Treaty of Lausanne' are taught. The constitutional movements in the Empire and the role of the intellectuals like *Ziya Gökalp*, *Namık Kemal*, *Mustafa Fazıl Paşa*, and others are evaluated along with the rise of Young Turks, Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turkism. Ottoman Empire's entry in the First World War, the Nationalist Movement, and finally abolition of Sultanate and Khilafat is impended. Modern Republican History of Turkey is studied extensively. The emergence of Republican Turkey, *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* and *Kemalism*, rise and development of political parties in Turkey, presence of armed forces in politics, *Coup d'état* of 1960, 1971 & 1980, foreign policy of Turkey, Constitutional amendments of 2010, entry of Turkey in EU, regional bodies like Economic Cooperation Organization, Developing-8, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, South-East European Cooperation, and others are also studied. The department also includes lessons in Turkish paintings and architecture, especially the mosque architecture, for instance İznik: Hazi Ozbeks Mosque, Bursa: Mosques of Orhan Ghazi, Ulu Cami, and Yeşil Cami, Edirne: Üç Şerefeli Mosque. Istanbul: Mosques of Fatih, Architecture of Sinan; Şehzade Mehmet Mosque, Süleymaniye Mosque, Mihrimah Sultan Mosque, Sultan Ahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque), Edirne: Selimiye Mosque and others.²⁸ In such a way, the students of the Department of Islamic History and Culture get a broad idea about Ottoman history and civilization. The Department of History of the different universities of Bangladesh offers a course on West Asian history in which Ottoman history and civilization are studied comprehensively, focusing on some selected areas both in undergraduate and graduate syllabus.²⁹

Scholarly publications of Bangladeshi Academician in Ottoman History

Some renowned professors and intellectuals of Bangladesh have written a few valuable books on Ottoman history in Bangla. Most of the books have been enlisted in the syllabus of the Islamic History and Culture and History Department. Students of these departments pursue the following books to know Ottoman history. Statistics show that from 1969 to 2019, almost thirteen books have been published by Bangladeshi academicians. An attempt has been taken to embark on a short review of all the books here.

In 1969 Professor Enam-ul Haque wrote a book on "*Adhonik Iran, Turosko o Mishor*" (*Modern Iran, Turkey and Egypt*). He supplied valuable information about the modern history of Iran, Turkey, and Egypt. In the Turkish part of this book, he discussed the background of the establishment of modern Turkey and gradual political development in the Republican era, especially democracy and military engagement in politics.³⁰ Professor Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka, wrote a worthy book on "*Modhojurer Muslim Itibas*" (*History of Medieval Muslim*) in 1976. In his book, Professor Ashraf discussed the origin of Turks, especially Chagatai and Ottomans,

28 This analysis has been made based on the *Syllabus, Curriculum & Student Hand Book* of the Department of Islamic History and Culture of different Universities of Bangladesh.

29 All information has been collected from the *Syllabus, Curriculum & Student Hand Book* of the Department of History of different Universities of Bangladesh.

30 Enam-ul Haque, *Adhonik Iran, Turosko o Mishor [Modern Iran, Turkey and Egypt]* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1969).

along with the rise of the Ottoman dynasty. Wars, pacts, treaties and reforms of the Ottomans had been explored according to the nature of the regimen of the Sultans.³¹ Professor M. Abdul Qader wrote a book on *“Turosker Itihas” (History of Turkey)* in 1978. This book is regarded as a precious compilation of Ottoman history in Bangla. Professor Qader presented here a detailed description of the history of the Ottoman Empire from its establishment in 1289 to the end of the Caliphate in 1924. The significant aspects of Ottoman history; government and politics, administration, revenue, trade and commerce, justice, war and treaty, foreign policy, *Tanzimat*, modernization in the Empire, Ottoman intellectuals and their philosophy, Eastern Questions, Balkan Wars, Ottoman’s participation in the First World War, and the fall of Ottomans have been significantly spoken. Bangladeshi researchers recite this book as one of the essential sources in Bangla about Ottoman history.³² Sofiuddin Juarder, a renowned professor of Islamic History and Culture at the University of Dhaka, conducted two important research studies about Middle East history. His first volume on Middle East history as *“Adhonik Modhoprachho Prothom Khondo” (Modern Middle East Vol.I)*, published in 1978, and second volume as *“Adhonik Modhoprachho Ditiyo Khondo” (Modern Middle East Vol.II)*, in 1987 from Bangla Academy. In these two books, professor Sofiuddin presented a detailed discussion about the discourses of Middle East History. The Ottoman legacy in Middle East history, along with the political development of modern Turkey, has been analyzed in the first volume.³³ Professor Muhammad Ali Asgar Khan; Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajshahi, wrote a book on *“Adonik Torosker Itihas” (History of Modern Turkey)* in 1984. His book is regarded as more authentic and highly informative because he knew the Turkish language and completed his Ph.D. from Ankara University. His book supplies valuable information about the modern history of Turkey, emphasizing the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire and the background history of the foundation of the Modern Republic of Turkey, including *Kemal Atatürk* and his six arrows and later political development of Turkey, the transformation of Turkey from one party Republic to the multi-party Republic. Finally, the military coup of 1960 has been critically analyzed in his book.³⁴

Professor Lutfur Rahman, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Rajshahi University, wrote a worthy book on *“Osmanio Saltanate” (Ottoman Sultanate)* reprinted in 2000. This book supplies valuable information about the foundation of the Ottoman Sultanate and its glory. He focused the reign of all Ottoman Sultans and the nature of their rule, especially treaty, conquest, administration, revenue, justice, and bureaucracy.³⁵ One of the renowned historians of Bangladesh, Professor Emirates of Rajshahi University, A. B. M. Hussain, wrote an important book on *“Moddoprachher Itihas: Ottoman Samrajjo Thake Jatisotta Rasto” (History of the Middle East: From the Ottoman Empire to Nation-State)* in 2011. He wrote this book under a fellowship of the University Grants Commission (UGC)

31 Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, *Modhojurer Muslim Itihas [History of the Medieval Muslims]* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1976).

32 M. Abdul Qader, *Turosker Itihas [History of Turkey]* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, 1978).

33 Sofiuddin Juarder, *Adhonik Modhoprachho Prothom Khondo [Modern Middle East Vol.1]* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1978).
Sofiuddin Juarder, *Adhonik Modhoprachho Ditiyo Khondo [Modern Middle East Vol.11]* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1987).

34 Muhammad Ali Asgar Khan, *Adonik Torosker Itihas [History of Modern Turkey]* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984).

35 Lutfur Rahman, *Osmanio Saltanate [Ottoman Sultanate]* (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation, 2000).

of Bangladesh. It is one of the best researches on Ottoman history in Bangla, and Professor Hussain applied his entire teaching and academic endeavor to write this book. Reading the introductory chapter of this book, a researcher can get an idea about his expertise in Muslim history and civilization. He had profound expertise in Muslim architectural and painting historiography, but at the end of his life, he was able to keep an exigent contribution in Ottoman historiography by composing this book. He critically examined Ottoman history in the Middle East context concerning representing some aspects of the Middle East politics in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, how Arab nationalism emerged in the era of Ottoman decay, and he opined that Middle East crisis is profoundly related to the fall of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate; consequently, British and French were able to occupy Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and very specifically Israel was born in Arab geography. He also discussed the political development of modern Turkey and its influence in the neighboring Arab states.³⁶ The original book of Yahya Armazani *Middle East-Past and Present* was translated in Bangla by Professor Enamul Haque, reprinted in 2008 as “*Moddhopraccho Otit o Bortoman*,” which is regarded as one of the primary sources to know the history of the Middle-East. In this book, a brief history of Turkey has presented.³⁷ Professor Golam Muhammad Rasul, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Rajshahi University wrote a book on ‘*Moddhopraccher Itihas*’ (*History of the Middle East*) reprinted in 2012. This book also purveys much information about the history of the Middle East along with a concise history of Ottomans and modern Turkey.³⁸ Professor Syed Mahmudul Hasan of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka, had expertise in Arab architecture, but at the evening of his life, by using all of his teaching and research experience, had written a book on modern history as “*Adhonik Muslim Bisso: Turosko-Iran-Afghanistan*” (*Modern Muslim World: Turkey-Iran-Afghanistan*) reprinted in 2012. He presented the history of three Muslim countries; Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. In the first section of this book, the history of modern Turkey in reference to the end of the Caliphate and the political advancement of Republican Turkey has been deeply discussed.³⁹ K. Ali was not a professional historian; he was a lawyer and wrote some books on Islam and Muslim history. Professional historians are reluctant to accept his books due to the lack of reliable sources, but students usually read his books for easy understanding. However, K. Ali wrote a book on Middle East history as “*Moddhopraccher Itihas*” (*History of Middle East*), in which Ottoman history, especially the trends of Ottoman modernization and the background of the decline of the Caliphate, has been presented in chronological order.⁴⁰ Another book on Middle East history as “*Adhonik Juge Poschim Asia*” (*West Asia in Modern Times*) has been written by M. A. Kawser, Associate Professor, Department of History of the University of Dhaka in 2019. In this book, the modern political history of West Asian

36 A B M Hussain, *Moddhopraccher Itihas: Ottoman Samrajjo Thake Jatisotta Rasto* [*History of the Middle East: From the Ottoman Empire to Nation State*] (Dhaka: Bangladesh Bishobidyalay Munjori Commission [University Grants Commission of Bangladesh], 2011).

37 Yahya Armazani, *Middle East-Past and Present*, Trans. Dr. Enam-ul Haque (Dhaka: Jatiyo Grantho Prokasan [National Book Publisher], 2008).

38 Golam Muhammad Rasul, *Moddhopraccher Itihas* [*History of the Middle East*] (Dhaka: Jatiyo Grantho Prokasan, punomurdon, 2012 [Dhaka: National Book Publishing, reprinted, 2012]).

39 Syed Mahmud Hasan, *Adhonik Muslim Bisso: Turosko-Iran-Afghanistan* [*Modern Muslim World: Turkey-Iran-Afghanistan*] (Dhaka: Novel Publishing House, Reprinted 2014).

40 K. Ali, *Moddhopraccher Itihas* [*History of Middle East*] (Dhaka: Azizia Book Dipo., Reprinted 2012).

countries has been presented in which Turkish Republican history depicted. After the end of the Caliphate, how a nation-state was emerged by the leadership of *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* and his state doctrine, Turkish democracy, and military engagement in Turkish politics have been analyzed in this book.⁴¹ The utmost book on Ottoman history in Bangla has been written by Dr. Mohammad Siddiqur Rahman Khan, Professor, Department of Islamic History and Culture, the University of Dhaka, jointly with M. A. Kawser, Associate Professor of History at the same university as “*Osmani Saltanat Rajniti, Somaj o Sonskriti*” (*Osmani Sultanate Politics, Society and Culture*) in 2019. This book is a bulky volume of Ottoman history in which political discourses and socio-cultural phenomena have been presented. Readers can get a vivid idea about Ottoman history from the foundation to the fall of the Caliphate in 1924, which has been designed within a framework of 16 chapters.⁴²

Besides these books, some historians of Bangladesh have undertaken higher research in Ottoman history in Bangla, English, and Turkish. Professor Muhammad Moezul Islam, Department of History of Rajshahi University, accomplished his coveted Ph.D. from the Department of History, the Ege University of Turkey, in 1994. Under the keen supervision of Professor Tuncer Baykara, Social Science Institute, Ege University, Professor Moezul wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on “*Türkiye’de Yüksek Öğretimin Gelişmesi:1923-1960*” (The Development of Higher Education in Turkey: 1923-1960). Mahmudur Rahman, Associate Professor of the Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka, completed his M Phil on *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* and his research title was “Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Rajnoitik Dorshon” (Political Philosophy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) under the supervision of Professor Dr. Mohammad Tawfiqul Haider in 2011. The medium of instruction of his research was in Bangla. Besides this, he wrote some research articles on Turkish history in Bangla.⁴³ Recently some young scholars have also undertaken research in modern Turkish history, for example, Sajib Kumar Banik, lecturer of History, University of Dhaka, has written an article about political Islam in modern Turkey.⁴⁴ However, Bangladeshi historians have a good fascination with Ottoman history. The first woman National Professor of Bangladesh and Professor of the Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka; Dr. Sufia Ahmed, who had expertise in 19th and 20th centuries Turkish history, served as Visiting Professor at Bosphorus University, Istanbul from October 1984 to July 1985. In March 1997, the visiting Turkish President, his Excellency Suleiman Demirel, honored her with a personally signed photograph of himself and a citation read by the President at the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka for promoting friendly relation and intellectual contact between Bangladesh and Turkey. She also served as the founder President of the Turkey-Bangladesh Friendship Society (TBFS). The continuation of cooperation can bring a good prospect of exchanging of intellectual discourses between Turkey and Bangladesh.

41 . M. A. Kawser, *Adhonik Juge Poschim Asia [West Asia in Modern Times]* (Dhaka: Itibritto Prokason, 2019).

42 . Muhammad Siddiqur Rahman Khan-M A Kawser, *Osmani Saltanat Rajniti, Somaj o Sonskriti [Ottoman Sultanate Politics, Society and Culture]* (Dhaka: Itibritto Prokashan, 2019).

43 University of Dhaka (DU), “https://www.du.ac.bd/faculty/faculty_details/IHC/1321” (Access 01 July 2021.)

44 Sajib Kumar Banik, “The Rise of Political Islam in Modern Turkey, 1923-1980: Trends and Characteristics”, *Jagannath University Journal of Arts* 8/2 (July-December 2018), 187-206.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An endeavor has been taken to determine the present status of Ottoman studies in Bangladesh. In conducting this research fundamental sources like the government documents, syllabus, curriculum of the universities, and published works of Bangladeshi academicians regarding Ottoman history have been used. As a result of the presence of Ottoman history in the syllabus and curriculum of Bangladeshi universities, students of the Department of Islamic History and Culture and the Department of History can get a good idea about the contribution of Ottomans in the historical discourses of the human civilizational journey. Statistics show that approximately more than five thousand student graduate from the different universities of Bangladesh with having good knowledge of Ottoman history in every year. To assimilate the knowledge of Ottoman history, Bangladeshi professors and intellectuals from Islamic History and Culture and History Department are keeping vital contributions. The syllabus and curriculum of these departments cover the most significant phases of Ottoman history and modern Turkey. The contribution of Bangladeshi scholars in composing books on Ottoman history has created an opportunity for readers to know Ottoman history in Bangla. Ottoman history, day by day, is going to be a developing interested field by academicians of Bangladesh. However, some limitations can be traced, and in that case, some suggestions would be plausible to increase the further scope of the Ottoman studies in Bangladesh.

There is no Turkish Cultural Centre in Bangladesh in which students, researchers, intellectuals and general people can get excess to know Turkish culture, civilization, and heritage. In that respect, it would be a great leap; the Turkish government can establish a cultural center in Bangladesh to enhance its collaborations as many other countries, e.g., Iran, France, Britain, India, Russia, United States of America, and Germany have been operating their cultural center for disseminating and promoting own language and culture as well. These cultural centers play a vital role in more ways than one to enhance the cultural exchange. Almost all of the general public universities of Bangladesh have a language center in which different language diploma is offered, and in that respect, subsequent embassies always keep direct assistance. The Turkish embassy in Dhaka can take the initiative to open a permanent Turkish language center at any public university in Bangladesh. Knowing Turkish language students and researchers of Ottoman history can be more benefited from utilizing the fundamental sources. Despite having a long tradition of study and research on Ottoman history and civilization in the higher educational institution of Bangladesh, It seems, no research and intellectual exchange collaboration between the countries' universities has existed. In that case, an intellectual exchange program could significantly enhance research and understanding of deeply-rooted relations between the two nations that are largely overlooked. A center of Ottoman studies could be established at the Department of Islamic History and Culture of the any University of Bangladesh through which the academicians of both countries can generate a scope of broad research. Finally, I would suggest a project could be implemented to translate some books of renowned Turkish historians in Bangla that would be conducive to mitigate growing interest on Ottoman understanding.



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APPENDIX:**A Statistic of the Courses on Ottoman History in Bangladesh Universities**

NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY	NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT	COURSE TITLE	PROGRAM
University of Dhaka	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottomans	Undergraduate
		Turkey and Balkan Muslim States since 1774	Graduate
		Socio-cultural and Economic History of the Muslim World: Arab World, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia (Since 1517)	Graduate
		Development of Muslim Architecture in West Asia, Turkey, North Africa and Spain (Since 14th century)	Graduate
		Development of Muslim Painting outside South Asia (Ottoman miniature painting: themes and style, famous Turkish artists is taught here)	Graduate
	History	West Asia in Modern Times	Undergraduate
		West and Central Asia in Modern Times (Select Topics)	Graduate
	University of Rajshahi	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Afghanistan (1258-1919 A.D.)
Arab States in Asia			Undergraduate
Modern Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian Muslim States Since 1919 A.D.			Undergraduate
Physical and Social Geography of the Middle East			Graduate
European Imperialism and Diplomacy in the Middle East till 1914 A.D.			Graduate
Nationalist Movements in the Middle East			Graduate
Political and Socio-Economic Changes in the Middle East.			Graduate
History		History of West and Central Asia, 1258-1774	Undergraduate
		History of West and Central Asia, 1774-1945	Undergraduate
		West Asia and World Politics since 1945	Graduate

NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY	NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT	COURSE TITLE	PROGRAM
University of Chittagong	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottoman Turks (1288-1788 A.D.)	Undergraduate
		History of the Ottoman Turks (1789-1924 A.D.)	Undergraduate
		Contemporary History of Turkey, Palestine and Jordan	Graduate
	History	History of West Asia (1258-1919)	Undergraduate
		History of West Asia in Modern Times	Graduate
Jahangirnagar University	History	History of West Asia (From 1453-1945 A.D.)- Selected Topic	Undergraduate
		West Asia and Contemporary World- Selected Themes	Graduate
Islamic University	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottoman Turks till 1924	Undergraduate
		Turkey and Balkan Muslim States in Modern Times	Graduate
Jagannath University	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottoman Turks (1300-1924)	Undergraduate
		Turkey and Balkan Muslim States since 1774	Graduate
		Development of Muslim Architecture in West Asia, North Africa and Spain	Graduate
	History	History of West Asia (Selected Topics)	Undergraduate
		West and Central Asia in Modern Times (Selected Topics)	Graduate
Khulna University	History and Civilization	History of the Ottoman and Modern Turkey since 1299 A.D.	Undergraduate
National University	Islamic History and Culture	History of the Ottomans up to 1924	Undergraduate
		History of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan	Graduate
		History of Muslim Architecture in West Asia, Europe and Africa (13th -18th Century)	Graduate
	History	History of West Asia 1560-1914	Undergraduate
		West and Central Asia in Modern Times	Graduate
Bangladesh Open University	History	History of West Asia (1453-1945)	Undergraduate
		History of West Asia Since 1453	Graduate
		History of West Asia Since 1945	Graduate
Asian University of Bangladesh	Islamic History and Civilization	History of the Middle East 1200-1777	Undergraduate
		History of the Modern Muslim World	Undergraduate
		History of Contemporary Islamic Movement in the World	Graduation