

Associate Professor Kent Schull introduces a new faculty line at SUNY Binghamton's department of History, which was established, with significant ITS Seed funding:



- What are the goals of the Ottoman/Turkish Studies Program at SUNY Binghamton's Department of History? How do you believe this new position will advance these goals?
 - The Department of History's Ottoman/Turkish Studies Program has four main goals. First is to continue and expand the long tradition of Ottoman/Turkish studies at Binghamton University, SUNY. It has been a core-identity program at SUNY Binghamton training undergraduates and graduate students in Turkish and Ottoman studies since the 1980s and placing many of its PhD graduates throughout academia in North America and Turkey. Its second goal is to expand Ottoman and Turkish studies beyond just Anatolian-Sunni-Turk to incorporate other ethno-religious communities within the empire and Turkish Republic and to look at interactions with neighboring empires and states throughout the region and globally. Third is to support broader MENA programs across campus by cooperating with other departments to provide an interdisciplinary approach to Ottoman and Turkish studies and integrate this field into Eurasian and global studies. Fourth is to continue to support programming related to Ottoman and Turkish studies on campus, in our community, and throughout academia through panels and roundtable discussion on current events, hosting speaker series, conferences, and workshops, and supporting the Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association (JOTSA) currently edited and housed in Binghamton University's Department of History.
 - This position provides instructional and programmatic continuity, in addition to expanding the courses taught at Binghamton University related to Ottoman and Turkish history, thus doubling the number of history courses offered each year related to Ottoman and Turkish history to undergraduate and graduate students. These courses will also reflect the research expertise of Dr. Baltacıoğlu-Brammer regarding minority communities within the early-modern Ottoman Empire and the relations between the Ottomans and Safavids. Additionally, Dr. Baltacıoğlu-Brammer is offering courses on women's history and gender studies within Ottoman and Turkish studies. Something not previously done at Binghamton University. This position also continues to build synergy across the campus with other departments, programs, and disciplines, particularly related to the early-modern world. We anticipate that this new faculty position will teach approximately 150 students a year. Combined with the courses to be taught by Binghamton University's current and other new hires, Turkish Studies related classes at the graduate and undergraduate levels will take a prominent academic position on campus.
- What role has ITS played in helping to add to and facilitate these goals? How, in your opinion, do you believe ITS has supported the development of Ottoman/Turkish Studies throughout the United States?
 - ITS has played an instrumental role in facilitating the abovementioned goals by providing seed funding for this position. Additionally, over the years, ITS has also awarded other grants to Binghamton University including library acquisition grants to strengthen our holdings related to Ottoman and Turkish studies; support for speaker series and workshops; and publication subventions for JOTSA. ITS executive directors have also come to Binghamton over the years to participate in roundtable discussions and to give public lectures related to Turkey hosted here at the university.
 - Not only has ITS been instrumental in supporting Ottoman/Turkish studies at SUNY Binghamton, but it has played a central role in promoting the study of Turkey in the United States and thus expanding this country's understanding and relations with Turkey through academic and policy related channels. ITS's support for Ottoman and Turkish studies in the US is unrivaled, particularly in terms of the number of academic positions it has seed-funded and the number of grants it's given to support programming (workshops, symposium, conferences), research for young and established scholars, publication subventions, library grants, etc. ITS has made it possible for this critical field of research and study to expand and thrive.
- What distinguishes Binghamton's Ottoman and Turkish Studies program from other initiatives? What will be the primary focus of this position's research interests?

- Expanded vision of what Ottoman and Turkish studies represents to include the various territories, ethno-religious communities, peoples, and religions contained within the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey. To also incorporate Ottoman and Turkish studies within regional and global studies, particularly in relation to neighbors, rivals, allies, borderlands, global trends and movements.
- Binghamton University's Ottoman and Turkish studies program is world renowned, particularly its Ottoman history graduate program, which competes with the most prestigious schools to recruit the top students each year.
- Another distinguishing factor of this program is how well it is integrated into Middle East and North African (MENA) and Eurasian Studies across campus.
- Binghamton University's Ottoman and Turkish studies program also benefits greatly from the university's Dual Diploma Program which brings hundreds of Turkish citizens to campus each year as part of our student body. Binghamton's name recognition in Turkey is unrivaled for North American academic institutions, because of this program.
- Binghamton University's library has rich holdings in Ottoman and Turkish studies related materials to include the Vera Beaudin Saeedpour Kurdish studies collection. The library's primary and secondary source holdings enrich our research and classroom environments and help to support robust research agendas for our faculty and students related to Ottoman and Turkish studies. The university continues to provide excellent support for this vital part of Binghamton's program.
- Binghamton University's new position in Ottoman and Turkish studies is held by Dr. Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer. A recent PhD from Ohio State University, Dr. Baltacıoğlu-Brammer is a specialist in early modern Middle Eastern history with a specific focus on the formation of sectarian identities and conflicts within the early Ottoman and Safavid Empires. The questions surrounding the Sunni-Shi'ite conflict between the 14th and 17th centuries and its enmeshment with the issues of political, religious, and fiscal legitimacy in inter-confessional and inter-imperial contact zones is at the core of her research. Drawing upon extensive research in Turkey and Iran, she explores the Sunni-Shi'ite divergence in the early modern period, not merely as religiously derived, but as a meticulously conducted geo-political and fiscal battle that formed the base of the sectarian identities, policies, and conflicts in the region today. Breaking away from the traditional narratives, she examines varying Ottoman and Safavid state policies, the formation of Ottoman and Safavid Shi'ite communities, and the importance of pro-Safavid religious and political propaganda activities in the context of state and identity formation and confessionalization. Her overall goal is twofold: while she aims to shed light on the often-neglected socio-political and fiscal aspects of religious policies and decisions, she also examines the applicability of the notions of confessionalization and social disciplining to Ottoman and Safavid state formations between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries.