Focus: Istanbul

August 31 to September 8, 2016

“It was amazing how much we saw with the main program and still had time for optional activities of our choosing.”

—Jim Mehring, ’81, PhD ’83, Focus on Berlin, 2015
BYZANTIUM. CONSTANTINOPLE. ISTANBUL. Crossroads of the East and the West. Stay in the heart of this historic city for seven nights and, with Professor Shahzad Bashir, delve into Istanbul’s ever-fascinating past and present on a uniquely crafted program that both highlights the most significant architectural and archaeological vestiges of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires and provides access to some of the city’s less-visited sites and exclusive special events. Visit the Hagia Sophia, Basilica Cistern, Topkapi Palace and Blue Mosque, and meet with the director of the Archaeological Museum and a local modern artist. Taste your way through the Spice Market and learn to make baklava. Discuss the role of women in today’s Turkey with representatives from the Women’s Solidarity Foundation and attend a guest lecture by a local journalist (pending). Enjoy plenty of free time for independent exploration of Istanbul, whose unique architectural, artistic and culinary culture as well as its persistent influence on regional and global geopolitics are every bit as fascinating today as they were in its antiquity.
Faculty Leader

Shahzad Bashir, the Lysbeth Warren Anderson Professor in Islamic Studies in Stanford’s department of religious studies, grew up in Pakistan and came to the United States in 1987 to attend college. Professor Bashir’s research is concerned with the intellectual and social history of Islamic societies from the 14th century to the present. He is currently finishing a book entitled *Islamic Times: Conceptualizing Pasts and Futures*, for which he has received an Andrew F. Carnegie Fellowship. “My constant interest in the different projects I have worked on,” says Professor Bashir, “has been the issue of the relationship between human ideas and historical development. The city of Istanbul is a fantastic case for such exploration because of its long history as a capital city and the vibrant cultural environment abundantly visible on its streets today.” During our program, Professor Bashir will lecture on the culture of the Ottoman empire and its neighboring civilizations.

— Professor, department of religious studies, Stanford University, since 2007
— BA, Amherst College; PhD, Yale University

“Professor Bashir was the perfect faculty leader—intellectually brilliant, engaged, and profoundly enthusiastic.”

Itinerary

Wednesday & Thursday, August 31 & September 1
U.S. / Istanbul, Turkey
Depart the U.S. on overnight flights, arriving in Istanbul on Thursday and transferring to our hotel, centrally located in the heart of Old City, within walking distance of Istanbul’s main attractions and with easy access to metro and tram lines for exploration further afield. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA

Friday, September 2
Istanbul: The Byzantine City
After an orientation meeting, walk to the Hagia Sophia, first a Byzantine patriarchal basilica, later an imperial mosque and today a museum. Known for its massive domed roof and colorful mosaics, this structure is widely regarded as the world’s finest example of Byzantine architecture. A short walk away is Yerebatan Sarayi or the Basilica Cistern, a vast subterranean structure built by Justinian in the 6th century. This afternoon meet with Mrs. Zeynep Kiziltan, director of Istanbul’s Archaeological Museums that house over a million ancient objects originating in all parts of the Mediterranean region. These include the Alexander sarcophagus, said to have been created for Alexander the Great; remnants of the Ishtar Gate in Babylon; and the 8th-century-B.C.E. Siloam inscription from Jerusalem—among the oldest existing records of its kind written in Hebrew. Enjoy a welcome reception and dinner this evening. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA (B,L,D)

Saturday, September 3
Istanbul: The Ottoman City
Walk to Topkapi Palace this morning. Built by Mehmet the Conqueror, this was the primary residence of the Ottoman sultans for almost 400 years. The vast palace’s treasury contains the famous Topkapi Dagger, as well as collections of jewels, porcelain, weapons and miniature paintings. Our visit includes the Harem, where the sultan’s wives and concubines lived. Continue exploring Ottoman Istanbul at the majestic Sultan Ahmet Camii, better known as the Blue Mosque for its dazzling cobalt-blue Iznik tiles, and at the Hippodrome, the center of civic life in the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the site of speeches, chariot races, and riots. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure, perhaps to explore the vast Grand Bazaar. Dinner this evening is on our own. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA (B,L,D)

Sunday, September 4
Istanbul: Mosques and Markets
Admire colorful displays of spices, fruit and nuts during a tasting tour through Istanbul’s 350-year-old Spice Market, then drive to the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque, located on top of the fifth hill of Istanbul overlooking the Golden Horn. The mosque is the second-oldest imperial mosque in Istanbul and was commissioned by the Ottoman sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, in memory of his father, Selim I. Divide into smaller groups to enjoy a special wine tasting of various local vintages, learn about the traditional Turkish painting art of ebru or take a class in the Islamic calligraphy known as Diwani that was developed during the early Ottoman period. (Everyone will have the opportunity to participate in all of these activities on subsequent days). Both lunch and dinner are on our own today. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA (B)

Monday, September 5
Istanbul: Constantine the Great and Suleiman the Magnificent
Take a hands-on class to learn the quintessentially Turkish art of making baklava and observe a short performance of Karagöz-Hacivat, a shadow play popularized during the Ottoman period that has been designated “Intangible Cultural Heritage” by UNESCO. At the small, yet lavishly decorated, Chora Church,
which is part of a Byzantine monastery complex (now a museum) originally built outside the city walls of
Constantine the Great, view the many frescoes and mosaics depicting the beginnings of Christianity. Drive
to the Süleymaniye Camii, largest mosque in Istanbul, which was built on the order of Suleiman the
Magnificent and combines Byzantine and Ottoman architectural elements to dramatic effect. Dine
independently this evening. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA (B,L)

Tuesday, September 6

Istanbul: Along the Bosphorus—a Pasha’s Life
Explore the Beylerbeyi Palace, an Imperial Ottoman summer residence built in the 1860s, then take a
private cruise on the Bosphorus to visit an Ottoman yalı, or private waterside house. Meet one of the
mansion’s residents, whose family has lived there since his ancestor, Hekimbaşi Salih Efendi, head
physician for three different sultans, built his rose-colored home there in the 19th century. Divide into
smaller groups for private wine tasting, ebru or calligraphy. (See the Sunday, September 4 entry for
details). Spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring Istanbul independently. Dinner this evening is
on our own. LEVNI HOTEL AND SPA (B,L)

Wednesday, September 7

Istanbul: Modern Art and Society
Drive to Eyüp Sultan Camii, a mosque complex located near the Golden Horn that houses a mausoleum
built where Eyüp al-Ansari, standard bearer of the prophet Muhammad, is thought to have been buried.
Explore Istanbul Modern, the city’s first private modern and contemporary art museum, and meet with a
local sculptor. Stroll along Istiklal Street, a two-mile-long pedestrian avenue, to Taksim Square, considered
the heart of modern Istanbul. After an independent lunch, meet with representatives from the Women’s
Solidarity Foundation (pending). Enjoy a festive farewell reception and dinner this evening. LEVNI HOTEL
AND SPA (B,D)

Thursday, September 8

Istanbul / U.S.
Transfer to the airport for return flights to the U.S. (B)

What to Expect

We consider this program to be a moderately active one that is at times physically demanding. All
participants must be physically fit, active and in good health. Although we use motorcoaches on occasion,
all of our daily programs involve walking from one to three miles over slippery, cobblestoned streets and
standing for extended periods of time, rain or shine. Participants must be able to stand outside with
limited shelter and no available seating for up to three hours. Significant walking and climbing of
hills and stairs, sometimes without handrails, will also be required at historic buildings and museums. Mornings
are busy, usually beginning with a lecture followed by an extensive walking tour. Many afternoons are
free for individual pursuits; to facilitate exploration we will provide each traveler with a transit pass that
allows access to Istanbul’s comprehensive public transportation network including subway, tram, bus and
ferry, as well as information about how to use the pass and directions to some of the sites not on our
itinerary. As many meals are independent in order to allow program participants greater freedom to
experience Istanbul’s culinary offerings, we will provide a detailed list of recommended restaurants and
assist travelers in making reservations. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.
Information

Dates
August 31 to September 8, 2016 (9 days)

Size
This program can accommodate 30 participants. Single accommodations are limited; please call for availability.

Cost*
$5,495 per person, double occupancy
$6,495 per person, single occupancy
*Association nonmembers add $300 per person

Included
- 7 nights of luxury hotel accommodations
- 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 2 dinners
- Welcome and farewell receptions
- Public transit pass
- Gratuities to porters, guides, drivers and wait staff for all group activities
- All tours as described in the itinerary
- Group transfers and baggage handling on program arrival and departure days
- Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance
- Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
- Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program

Not Included
- International and domestic airfare
- Passport and visa fees
- Immunization costs
- Meals and beverages other than those specified as included
- Independent and private transfers
- Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance
- Excess-baggage charges
- Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services

Air Arrangements
International and U.S. domestic airfare is not included in the program cost. Round-trip, economy-class airfare on Turkish Airlines between San Francisco and Istanbul is approximately $1,145 as of December 2015 and is subject to change without notice.
Terms and Conditions

Deposit and Final Payment
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold space on this program. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?istanbul2016 or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

Cancellations and Refunds
Deposits and any payments are refundable, less a $500-per-person cancellation fee, until 120 days prior to departure. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case a $1,000-per-person cancellation fee will apply.

Insurance
Stanford Travel/Study provides all travelers who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with minimal medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group-travel insurance policy. Our group policy is intended to provide minimal levels of protection while you are traveling on this program. You may choose to subscribe to optional trip-cancellation and baggage insurance. Information offering such insurance will be provided to travelers with their welcome materials. The product offered includes special benefits if you purchase your policy within 14 days of written confirmation of your participation on the trip.

Eligibility
We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $300 more than the member’s price. A person traveling as a paid guest of a current member will not be charged the nonmember fee. Call (650) 725-0692 or visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/membership for more information or to purchase a membership.

Responsibility
The Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University and our operators act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motorcoach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not onboard their plane or conveyance. Neither the Alumni Association, Stanford University nor our operators accept liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable ticket connected with the tour. Program price is based on rates in effect in December 2015 and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs or fuel charges.

California Seller of Travel Program Registration #2048 523-50

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Contact Information

Visit us online to reserve space:

Questions? Call us at (650) 725-1093 or email us at travelstudy@alumni.stanford.edu

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