



Galata Bridge towards Eminönü at the end of the 19th century. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Atatürk Library

### 48 373: Istanbul/Constantinople. An urban history

Units: 9

Instructor: Francesca Torello

A dynamic metropolitan area, with a burgeoning population and rapid urbanization, Istanbul is at the same time a finely woven tangle of historical layers. In this class we will introduce urban history and its methods as we focus on key moments of Istanbul's history. We will delve deeply into the city's powerful and at times competing historical narratives. We will trace the growth and transformation of the urban fabric, discussing Istanbul's role as imperial capital of the Romans, the Byzantines, the Ottomans, its changing fortunes in the twentieth century and the historical roots of the present-day world city. We will discuss cultural specificity and reactions to international models, the challenges of preservation and transformation of the urban fabric and the political making and re-making of its cultural identity. We will also take into account the power of this city to fascinate and inspire through the centuries – the imagined city as a layer of the physical one.