This course presents a diachronic history of Istanbul, one of the world’s great metropolitan centers. From its foundation and then growth in the late Roman era, through nearly one-thousand years as the majestic capital of Byzantium and its almost five centuries as seat of the formidable Ottoman Empire, we will trace the history of urbanism and architecture in this important continental nexus. While the focus of the course will be on the architectural traditions of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, we will also examine modern architectural developments in Istanbul including contemporary architectural and urban globalization and the 2013 Gezi Park protest movement. Through the city’s topography, urbanism and individual monuments, we will look at the social, political and cultural programs of the societies that have all contributed to the development of this city on two continents. The image (in cartography, prints and photography) and idea of the city will be considered, making use of materials in UIUC’s Rare Book and Manuscript Collections, as well as the place of Constantinople/Istanbul in the global and interconnected Middle Ages and modernity.

4 credits. The mixed lecture/seminar format of this course demands ample participation by students; the course is designed for undergrads and grads in Architecture, Art History and related fields such as History, Medieval Studies or Middle Eastern Studies. No prior knowledge is assumed at the outset, though those with relevant coursework are welcomed. Assessment is through class participation/discussion, presentation of readings and research, writing assignments (including a longer research paper) and a few brief quizzes.

Heather Grossman earned her Ph.D. in the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, and has previously taught there and at UI-Chicago. She specializes in the architectural history, archaeology and art history of the Mediterranean region, particularly of the interconnected “global” Middles Ages. She has extensively researched and excavated in Turkey, Greece, France, Tunisia and the UK. In 2005-6, she was a Senior Fellow at Koç University’s Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations in Istanbul, where she researched the relationships between architecture and photography in Turkish and Greek nation-building movements of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century.