

Human Rights – a Recurrent History

Five summer schools at the SRII, 2013–2018

The idea to arrange a summer school in Human Rights was developed and realised by Andrea Karlsson, head of the Section for Turkish-Swedish Development Cooperation at the Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul 2015–2018, and Marianne Boqvist, deputy director of the SRII 2011–2013. Taking place in June 2013, the first summer school on the topic *Human Rights – a Recurrent History* set a successful example that was to be repeated in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018.

Bringing together students from Turkey with students from the Nordic countries, the aim of the five summer schools has been to tell the history of human rights in a way that puts the Ottoman Empire rather than Europe at the centre of attention, and to show the importance of a human rights discourse in the lands it has left behind. Both teaching teams and students have been multidisciplinary in composition, consisting of historians, human rights scholars, political scientists and practitioners in the field of human rights and cultural heritage.

Minorities and cultural pluralism in and after the Ottoman period has formed the main core of the course contents. In addition to dealing with such themes in fact and theory, students have met with people and NGOs devoted to questions of historical justice, cultural heritage and human rights in Turkey and beyond. Examinations have consisted of individual or group projects in which students have put forward their own ideas for NGO projects with the aim of advancing collaboration and new approaches to the interplay of culture and human rights.

The venue of the SRII has offered many opportunities to connect the course topic with the living city and heritage of Istanbul – with city walks to historically significant places or areas testifying to the continuous pluralism of the city – as well as to build lasting friendships.





Lesson with Ayşegül Altınay (Sabanci University) at the SRII auditorium (2013)

City walk with SRII director Johan Mårtelius, (2015)



Study visit and workshop at the Hrant Dink Vakfı (2018)

Working with final presentations, Swedish Consulate General (2017)

