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DOCUMENT Course Description
ISSUED 8 October 2026

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cultural Heritage: Istanbul

Explore Istanbul's iconic heritage sites and turn them into digital classroom resources, in this 5-day course.

DURATION **5 days · 25 hours**	LANGUAGE **English (B1+)**	GROUP SIZE **Max 20 participants**
DAILY SCHEDULE **09:30–15:00** Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch	AUDIENCE **All school levels** No prior knowledge required.	CERTIFICATE **Attendance + Europass Mobility**
COURSE CENTRES **İstanbul** Dates and cities of the scheduled sessions are listed on the course page.		

01 Overview

This week you read Istanbul district by district — an imperial core, a modern waterfront and an old multi-ethnic neighbourhood — with one observation guide, and turn what you record into a digital activity for your own students.

- **Monday** — you name a heritage site near your own school, look at your curriculum needs, and learn the field observation guide the week is built on.
- **Tuesday** — you work in the imperial core, reading Hagia Sophia and Topkapı Palace from the outside, visiting the Blue Mosque and ending at the Grand Bazaar.
- **Wednesday** — you move to Karaköy and Galata, gathering “old and new side by side” material along the waterfront.
- **Thursday** — you walk Fener and Balat’s streets, study the Chora Church from the outside, and adapt the observation guide into a fieldwork exercise for your own students.
- **Friday** — you compare the three districts against the same guide, then build a digital trail, quiz or mini virtual exhibit from your own material with peer feedback.

You go home with a digital heritage activity built from your own Istanbul material, a fieldwork exercise ready to use with your students, and your own record of three field days. Flat-soled shoes, a phone or tablet, and modest dress for Tuesday’s mosque visit are all that is worth bringing.

02 Course description

Istanbul is not a single-era city. More than sixteen centuries of Byzantine, Ottoman and contemporary history are layered across it. Each era has its own district, so the city has no single walkable core.

Participants work at real historical sites. They range from Hagia Sophia, whose 1,500 years of adaptive reuse can be read from the building itself, to the working trade halls of the Grand Bazaar. At these sites, participants build first-hand material on the history, art and architecture they'll bring back to their students.

Across the five days, participants move from a general framework on European cultural heritage and identity (Day 1) into three field days across Istanbul's own layered districts (Days 2–4). These are the Byzantine and Ottoman imperial core around Sultanahmet, the modern waterfront at Karaköy and Galata, and the historic residential streets of Fener and Balat. On Day 5 participants turn what they've seen into a digital, classroom-ready resource. The course is built for teachers of any subject — history, art, citizenship, languages — who want a concrete European example to bring into cross-curricular teaching, rather than an abstract discussion of "heritage" in general.

03 Learning outcomes

01 Explain how Istanbul's Byzantine, Ottoman and contemporary heritage — from imperial monuments to everyday neighbourhood architecture — reflects Europe's complex and interconnected cultural history.

02 Integrate cultural heritage topics into lesson plans, using digital tools and interactive resources built from a real multi-era case study.

03 Design classroom activities that build students' intercultural awareness and appreciation for cities and heritage shaped by more than one civilisation.

04 Connect teaching to the EU's cultural-heritage priorities using a concrete European example rather than an abstract one.

05 Reflect on how the Istanbul experience can build students' intercultural awareness and active citizenship, and plan how to transfer it into their own school context.

04 Methodology

Byzantine to Contemporary, Across Three Districts	Days 2–4 trace Istanbul's heritage across three separate parts of the city, each a short transfer apart rather than one continuous walking route — Day 2 stays within the Byzantine and Ottoman imperial core, from Sultanahmet and Gülhane (Hagia Sophia, the Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque, Topkapı Palace and the Istanbul Archaeology Museums) to the Grand Bazaar a short walk uphill in Beyazıt, Day 3 moves to the modern waterfront at Karaköy and Galata, including Istanbul Modern, and Day 4 moves again to Fener and Balat, a historic multi-ethnic neighbourhood anchored by the Chora Church (Kariye) — so participants can teach continuity and change, not a single frozen period.
Fieldwork as Structured Observation, Not Passive Sightseeing	across the three field days, participants use the same field observation guide — photographing, noting and briefly comparing how each site's original function, worship, administration or trade, has persisted or changed — building a personal record they can adapt for fieldwork with their own students later.
Digital Tools Workshop, Built From What You've Seen	a hands-on session where participants turn photos and notes from Days 2–4 into a real digital output — a short digital storytelling piece, a simple interactive quiz, or a mini virtual exhibit — using straightforward tools they can realistically use with their own students.

Heritage in Context, Not Just in the Past

sessions connect what participants experience — from Hagia Sophia's active conservation work to Fener and Balat's civil wooden architecture — with the responsibility of preserving multi-layered heritage, including everyday neighbourhood fabric and not only landmark monuments, for future generations. Sustainability becomes something participants can observe and reflect on — not simply a concept explained in theory.

05 Daily programme

Day 1

Cultural Heritage and European Identity

- **Opening round and introductions:** each participant names a heritage site near their own school and what their students already believe about it — the first use of the field observation guide the week is built on
- Introducing participants' schools and the course
- The EU's role in and commitment to cultural heritage, and Europe's shared cultural diversity and identity
- Analysing participants' own curriculum needs and student profiles
- **Digital tools workshop:** interactive mapping platforms and QR-code-based instructional tools
- Introducing the field observation guide used across Days 2–4 and compared on Day 5: on every site you record what it was originally for — worship, administration or trade — and whether that use has persisted or changed

Day 2

Field Study I: Istanbul's Imperial and Religious Core

- **Hagia Sophia from the outside:** 1,500 years of adaptive reuse read from the building itself — the buttresses, minarets and additions that record each change of use
- **Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque:** Ottoman religious architecture, still an active place of worship — and the one place of worship the group enters
- **Topkapı Palace (closed to visitors on Tuesdays):** Ottoman administrative philosophy through courtyard design, worked through from the Imperial Gate and along the outer walls of the freely accessible First Courtyard
- **Istanbul Archaeology Museums from the Gülhane side:** how a late-Ottoman state built a museum to claim a past as its own — the institution read from its setting and its founding story — and what changes when objects are moved out of the buildings they belonged to and into one a state built to hold them
- **Grand Bazaar, a short walk uphill in Beyazıt:** the guild system, trade and the everyday survival of intangible heritage
- **Field reflection:** connecting today's sites to classroom practice

Day 3

Field Study II: Istanbul's Modern Waterfront

- **Karaköy and the Galata Tower:** 19th-century trade architecture and cosmopolitan urban life
- **Istanbul Modern and the Karaköy waterfront:** how a working port edge became a cultural quarter — reading the new museum building against the warehouses, terminal and galleries around it
- **Field task:** gathering "old and new side by side" material for a digital exhibit

- **Field reflection:** connecting today's sites to classroom practice

Day 4

Field Study III: Fener, Balat and Multicultural Neighbourhood Life

- **Chora Church (Kariye) from the outside:** Late Byzantine brick masonry, domes and later Ottoman additions — with the mosaic and fresco programme studied in detail from high-resolution digital archives
- **Fener and Balat's streets:** civil wooden architecture, urban renewal and everyday neighbourhood memory
- **Field task:** adapting the field observation guide into a simple fieldwork exercise participants can use with their own students at home
- **Field reflection:** connecting today's sites to classroom practice

Day 5

From Cultural Heritage to Classroom Practice

- **Bringing the three field days together:** comparing the Sultanahmet core, the Karaköy waterfront and Fener–Balat against the same field observation guide — and naming the question that comparison raises
- Designing a digital heritage-based classroom activity — a digital trail, quiz or mini virtual exhibit — using material gathered during the Istanbul site visits
- Peer feedback and discussion
- **Course evaluation:** discussion and reflection on acquired skills, feedback and course content
- Sharing course documents and records
- Awarding the Certificate of Attendance

PLEASE NOTE

Sessions run from 09:30 to 15:00, Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch. Timings can shift a little to suit the venue and the group.

Course activities and content may vary depending on participants' needs and the trainer leading the session; any changes are at the trainer's discretion. If there is a specific topic you would like included, please let us know — content-related requests must reach us at least 3 weeks before the course start date so we can confirm them in time.

06 Materials

- Virtual-tour, digital-archive and interactive-map tools for studying Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace and the Chora Church's mosaic programme in detail the group programme cannot reach on site
- Digital image and archive resources for building heritage-based lesson materials
- A printed and digital course pack covering Istanbul's Byzantine, Ottoman and contemporary heritage
- A simple observation guide for documenting and comparing heritage sites across the three field days
- A heritage-based classroom activity template, completed using material gathered during the Istanbul site visits and finalised on Day 5

07 How to prepare

- A tablet or smartphone is useful for the Day 1 digital-tools workshop, and for collecting your own photographs and notes on Days 2–4.
- Comfortable, flat-soled shoes: the three field days cross cobbled streets and gentle hills.
- Modest dress (shoulders and knees covered, headscarf for women) is required for the Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque on Day 2, where shoes are removed at the door. It closes to visitors for around an hour and a half at each prayer time, and on Fridays does not admit visitors until the early afternoon, so the day's route is built around those times.
- The group programme works at sites that are free to enter; ticketed sites — Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace, the Istanbul Archaeology Museums, the Galata Tower, Istanbul Modern and the Chora Church (Kariye) — are studied from the outside. If you would like to go inside any of them, tell us beforehand: we will buy your ticket for you and you pay us what it cost — and we try to leave time in the day's route for it.
- Topkapı Palace and Hagia Irene are closed on Tuesdays. Day 2 falls on a Tuesday, so that day reads Topkapı from the Imperial Gate (Bâb-ı Hümâyun) and the outer walls of the First Courtyard; if you would like a full interior visit, tell us beforehand and we can book it for another afternoon of the week.

08 After the course

- Participants will receive their Certificate of Attendance and the co-signed Europass Mobility document.
- Participants will complete a general course evaluation and event survey.
- Participants will receive course materials, videos, photos, and PDF documents in both digital and print formats.
- Follow-up support: self-evaluation materials are provided. Depending on the group, an email group may be set up so that participants can keep exchanging ideas.
- Use the classroom activity developed on Day 5 as the basis for a short staff-room briefing, sharing how Istanbul's layered heritage can support cross-curricular teaching in history, art and citizenship — and provide a concrete input for the school's Erasmus+ objectives.

09 Why this is Erasmus+ eligible

This mobility supports the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 School Education objective of "promoting knowledge about shared European heritage and diversity", and the horizontal priority on participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement, which highlights participants' understanding of "their social, cultural and historical heritage". Through structured sessions and three trainer-led field days across Istanbul's Byzantine, Ottoman and contemporary districts — the imperial core at Sultanahmet, the Karaköy waterfront and the multi-ethnic neighbourhoods of Fener and Balat — participants gain first-hand material to bring intercultural dialogue and Europe's layered cultural identity into their own classroom.

10 What the course fee covers

INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE

- 25 hours of training and course materials
- Certificate of Attendance + Europass support
- On-site local support throughout the week

ARRANGED SEPARATELY BY THE PARTICIPANT

- Travel to the host city — invitation letter on request
- Accommodation — we share recommended options
- Travel & health insurance

ISSUED BY

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COURSE PAGE

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ABOUT ERASMUS MOBILITY ACADEMY

Erasmus Mobility Academy (OID: E10304561) is an Erasmus+ training provider offering professional development courses for educators, school staff and youth workers across Europe. Our courses are designed for international mobility — open to participants travelling from a country other than the host country — and support schools in building lasting institutional capacity. We provide structured learning, logistical guidance and certification with Europass.