



## YEAR OF TURKEY AT KSU

This week kicks off our Year of Turkey program; I invite you to take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about Turkey throughout the academic year.

Turkey, by its location and history, has been at the crossroads of cultures and civilizations. Like Janus, Turkey sees and perceives the world through various lenses. Turkey is as European as it is Asian, as Western as it is Eastern. It is an Islamic country that prides itself also as a secular and democratic state. Turkish society features islands of wealth and poverty, and of modernity and tradition. In other words, Turkey is a perfect laboratory for learning more about religion and politics, ethnic and cultural diversity, historical connections and intersections, gender issues and social relations, economic growth and development, and the challenges of modernity in a land still viewed by many with mysticism and exoticism. During the year, our community will learn about Turkey's long and checkered history, its strategic location, the contemporary political dynamics, relations with the EU and the U.S., and its regional leadership and influence.

As the twenty-third "year of..." in the series, the Year of Turkey is undoubtedly our most ambitious undertaking yet. It promises also to be the most exciting and educative. Emphasizing the importance of the Year of Turkey in our global learning efforts, this past July, President Papp led a delegation of KSU faculty and administrators to Turkey to secure support for many of the projects. The result was a surge of interest in our program among the Turkish people, officials and institutions, thereby furthering our vision of a robust and epochal year-long study. The planning for the Year of Turkey has included input from many Turkish cultural groups, governmental agencies, consular representatives, business associations, non-governmental organizations, and the media. KSU faculty, staff and students who served on the planning committee, along with representatives of the sponsoring organizations (see list below), have made the program richer, the academic content stronger, and its cultural events more authentic and relevant. Our appreciation goes to these people and organizations.

In addition to weekly lectures, performances, art exhibition and installation, and film shows, highlights of the year-long program include the following:

- **October 8, 2008, 12-2 p.m.:** Grand opening of the Year of Turkey at the Gazebo, featuring performance by the Mehter (Ottoman Military Band), Turkish food, the KSU Players, and several goodwill messages by and from Turkish dignitaries;
- **October 11, 2008, 7:00 p.m.:** Encore performance by the Mehter (Ottoman Military Band) in Stillwell Theater;
- **January 29-31, 2009:** International conference on "Alliance of Civilizations: Turkey at the Crossroads of Cultures" in our Social Sciences Building, proposals are currently being accepted;
- **February 10-11, 2009:** Performance of Konya Sema Whirling Dervishes, in the Stillwell Theatre, 8:00 p.m. on both nights;

- **March 19-April 30, 2009:** Exhibition of “ATA.TÜRK: Chantal Zakari/Mike Mandel in Collaboration,” in the Fine Arts Gallery, curated by Dr. Will Hipps;
- Demonstration and serving of Turkish cuisine, including coffee, tea, desserts, etc.; and
- Several community trips, study abroad, and faculty development programs to Turkey.

Of immediate importance and relevance is the installation in the Institute for Global Initiatives' gallery (WH 230) of a Turkish prayer room. Conceived by Dr. Sandra Bird and Dr. Anne Richards, with artistic design by students in Professor Carol Mauge-Lewis' class, and installed in collaboration with the KSU Muslim Students' Association, this installation provides a glimpse into the art of Turkish living and prayer rooms. It also has a utilitarian value: the room will be used throughout this month (which is also the month of Ramadan when Muslims all over the world are expected to fast during the daylight hours) for prayers and to break the fast. You are invited to see this installation.

The first event in the Year of Turkey is a panel discussion tomorrow, Thursday, September 4, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. in SO 1021. I look forward to seeing you at as many of these events as possible. For further information, please see <http://www.kennesaw.edu/yearofturkey/> or contact Dr. Dan Paracka at [dparacka@kennesaw.edu](mailto:dparacka@kennesaw.edu).

#### Year of Turkey Co-sponsors

- Confederation of Businessmen & Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON), Istanbul
- GSU Middle East Institute, Atlanta
- Honorary Consulate General of Turkey in Atlanta
- Institute of Turkish Studies, Washington DC
- Istanbul Center, Atlanta
- Kennesaw State University [Institute for Global Initiatives, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of the Arts, Coles College of Business, University College, Bagwell College of Education, CETL, Office of the President, Division of Academic Affairs, KSU Foundation]
- Turkish American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast United States
- United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Project



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