

**Constitution of  
“Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Studies Student Association at the U of T” [OPSA]**

**1. Article One – Name and Purpose**

- 1.1. The official name of the recognized student group is “**Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Studies Student Association at the U of T.**”
- 1.2. The official acronym or abbreviation of the group is “**OPSA.**”
- 1.3. The purpose, objectives, mission and/or mandate of the organization is to:
  - 1.3.1. Foster an Interdisciplinary Community: Provide a collaborative platform for students, faculty, and researchers interested in the multi-layered history of Anatolia, spanning from ancient civilizations through the Ottoman era to the post-Ottoman transition. The Balkans, Anatolia (Asia Minor), and the Ottoman East (with a specific focus on the Arabic-speaking majority provinces) will be geographical specializations, aligning with the histories of various ethno-religious communities.
  - 1.3.2. Promote Academic Excellence: Support the study of history, archaeology, art history, literature, and linguistics relevant to the region through guest lectures, reading groups, and workshops. The reading group, comprising graduate students from various programs, will foster academic collaboration among participants and enhance their scholarship.
    - 1.3.2.1. Several reading groups may be functioning to promote academic excellence with the support of undergraduate and graduate students.
  - 1.3.3. Bridge the Past and Present: Explore the cultural and historical continuities of the Anatolian landscape, highlighting its role as a global crossroads of civilizations.
  - 1.3.4. Engage with Material Culture: Organize visits to museum collections (such as the ROM) and facilitate discussions on archaeological findings and architectural heritage. Collaborations with the museums, research centers, and universities located in the post-Ottoman countries are crucial in this regard.
  - 1.3.5. Facilitate Dialogue: Provide a non-partisan, academic space for students from diverse backgrounds to engage with the complex historical legacy of the Ottoman and post-Ottoman world by hearing different perspectives from communities in the region.

**2. Article Two – Membership and Membership Fee**

- 2.1. The group shall maintain a list of group members.
- 2.2. Voting membership is open to all registered students of the University of Toronto.
- 2.3. Voting membership is open only to registered students of the University of Toronto.
- 2.4. Non-voting membership is open to University of Toronto staff, faculty, alumni, and to persons from outside the University. Unless otherwise stated, non-voting members do not hold any rights awarded to voting members.
- 2.5. The membership fee will be \$ 0 per year.
- 2.6. Donations from the members and outside from the association are welcome and should be promoted by the executive members.

### 3. Article Three – Rights of Members

- 3.1. All members may apply for a full refund of their membership fee within one (1) month of becoming a member.
- 3.2. All voting members have a right to attend all general meetings of members.
- 3.3. All voting members have a right to cast votes at all general meetings of members.
- 3.4. All voting members have a right to stand for election unless otherwise stated in this document.
- 3.5. All voting members have a right to cast votes in all group elections and referenda.
- 3.6. All voting members have a right to propose and vote on amendments to this constitution.
- 3.7. The rights prescribed in Article Three are not awarded to non-voting members as described in Article Two.

### 4. Article Four - Executive Committee

- 4.1. The term for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be from May 1st to April 30th.
- 4.2. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of (Number of Executives **four (4)**) voting members.
  - 4.2.1. The Executive Committee can be comprised of three (3) voting members at the discretion of the voting members.
  - 4.2.2. The maximum number of executives permitted is ten (10). However, if the President of the Executive wishes to increase this number, it may be raised to eleven (11).
- 4.3. All voting members of the Executive Committee must be currently registered students of the University of Toronto.
- 4.4. Non-voting members may hold only non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.
- 4.5. The maximum amount of non-voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be one (1) position or ten per cent (10%) of the positions on the Executive Committee, whichever is greatest.
- 4.6. Persons holding non-voting positions on the Executive Committee cannot serve as an officer, financial authority, signing authority, primary contact, or secondary contact.
- 4.7. No person may serve as a financial authority or signing authority for the group if they are currently serving as a financial authority or signing authority for another recognized student group at the University of Toronto.
- 4.8. The Executive may appoint Directors or Coordinators for various committees who do not hold executive decision-making authority and are not eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee.
- 4.9. At the discretion of the President and upon approval by the Executive Committee, an officer may hold two positions simultaneously, provided that the roles of President and Treasurer are always held by two different individuals to maintain financial accountability.

### 5. Article Five - Executive Committee Composition and Duties

- 5.1. The (Position One **President**) shall:
  - 5.1.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,

- 5.1.2. Oversee the operations, management, and success of the group,
  - 5.1.3. Serve as spokesperson for the group,
  - 5.1.4. Hold signing and financial authority along with the Treasurer,
  - 5.1.5. Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee and/or members,
  - 5.1.6. Ensure a transition of office from one year to the next.
- 5.2. **The (Position Two (Vice-President)) shall:**
- 5.2.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
  - 5.2.2. Assume duties of the President in their absence,
  - 5.2.3. Ensure activities of the club comply with policies of the University of Toronto,
  - 5.2.4. Coordinate organizational recruitment efforts.
  - 5.2.5. The Executive Committee can decide to have two Vice-Presidents at the same time at the discretion of the elected President.
    - 5.2.5.1. The Executive Committee determines the duties of Vice-Presidents upon the President's suggestion, and the President has the authority to recommend that their assigned duties be reassigned to the Executive Committee.
- 5.3. **The (Position Three (Secretary)) shall:**
- 5.3.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
  - 5.3.2. Maintain a list of group members,
  - 5.3.3. Maintain the group website and member contact list,
  - 5.3.4. Record notes and motions for meetings,
  - 5.3.5. Notify all members of general meetings.
  - 5.3.6. The secretary can also hold the position of Vice-President.
- 5.4. **The (Position Four (Treasurer)) shall:**
- 5.4.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
  - 5.4.2. Record all financial transactions of the group,
  - 5.4.3. Hold signing and financial authority along with the President,
  - 5.4.4. Maintain a budget of income and expenses,
  - 5.4.5. Advise members on financial position of the group,
  - 5.4.6. Prepare an annual budget for the group.
  - 5.4.7. Promoting sponsorships and donations from the University of Toronto members and the outside community.
  - 5.4.8. The secretary can also hold the position of Vice-President, only at the discretion of the President.
- 5.5. **The Other Members of the Executive Committee:**
- 5.5.1. The creation of these positions may be initiated by the Executive Committee, guided by the President's recommendation and in consideration of the current organizational needs.
  - 5.5.2. **The Director of Communications and Media shall:**
    - 5.5.2.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
    - 5.5.2.2. Manage all social media platforms and digital outreach for the association,
    - 5.5.2.3. Design promotional materials, including posters and digital assets, ensuring they meet the university's branding guidelines,
    - 5.5.2.4. Liaise with other student organizations and university departments for promotional collaborations.
- 5.6. **The Director of Academic Programming (Archaeology & Art History) shall:**

- 5.6.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
- 5.6.2. Lead the planning of guest lectures, museum visits (e.g., to the ROM), and symposia,
- 5.6.3. Ensure that the archaeological and art-historical components of the Anatolian and Ottoman regions are represented in the group's curriculum,
- 5.6.4. Maintain contact with relevant academic departments (NMC, Art History, Archaeology).
- 5.7. The Graduate Student Liaison (Reading Group Coordinator) shall:**
  - 5.7.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
  - 5.7.2. Act as the primary point of contact for graduate students across various programs,
  - 5.7.3. Oversee the coordination and curation of the Graduate Reading Group,
  - 5.7.4. Facilitate academic cooperation and networking events specifically tailored to senior researchers and faculty.
- 5.8. The Language and Literature Coordinator shall:**
  - 5.8.1. Be eligible to cast votes at meetings of the Executive Committee,
  - 5.8.2. Organize workshops or study circles focused on the languages of the region (e.g., Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, etc.),
  - 5.8.3. Facilitate the discussion of literary texts within the association's programming.

## **6. Article Six – Elections**

- 6.1. All voting positions on the Executive Committee shall be filled through an annual election.
- 6.2. All voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination to and cast a ballot for each voting position.
- 6.3. All non-voting group members shall be eligible to seek nomination only for non-voting positions on the Executive Committee.
- 6.4. Non-voting group members shall not be eligible to cast a ballot for any elected position.
- 6.5. The nominee winning the plurality of votes cast in the election for each position shall be deemed the winner.
- 6.6. On the condition that multiple candidates are to be elected for a single position, the nominees winning the largest share of the votes cast shall be deemed the winners until all positions are filled.
- 6.7. The elections must be held in a nonbiased manner. No individual who is seeking election may participate in planning or administering the election.
- 6.8. For all unfilled positions, the remaining officers will share the duties and responsibilities until someone can be found to fulfill the positions(s) through a by-election and vote of simple majority (50% + 1)
  - 6.8.1. The Vice-President(s) assign these duties and responsibilities to the remaining officers at the discretion of the President.

## **7. Article Seven – Finances**

- 7.1. The Treasurer shall keep an active record of income and expenses.
- 7.2. The Treasurer shall present the group's updates on the group's financial position at annual general meetings.

- 7.3. The Executive Committee must approve all expenditures over \$100.00 through a majority vote at a meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 7.4. The group may not engage in activities that are essentially commercial in nature.
- 7.5. The group will not have as a major activity a function that makes it an on-campus chapter of a commercial organization.
- 7.6. The group will not provide services and goods at a profit when that profit is used for purposes other than those of the group.
- 7.7. The group will not pay salaries to any of its officers.

## **8. Article Eight – Meetings**

- 8.1. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly. The quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be 50%+1 of the voting members of the Executive Committee.
- 8.2. The group shall hold general meetings at least twice per year to provide the general membership an opportunity to review the group's annual activity plan, financial health, and propose or vote on constitutional amendments.
- 8.3. The Executive Committee must announce the date of a general meeting to the general membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

## **9. Article Nine - Termination of Membership**

- 9.1. The Executive Committee may revoke the membership of any member of the club who commits an act negatively affecting the interests of the club and its members, including non-disclosure of a significant or continuing conflict of interest.
- 9.2. A vote to revoke membership must be held at a meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 9.3. A two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee is required to approve any motion to revoke membership.
- 9.4. Any member facing removal shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Executive Committee to the general membership.
- 9.5. In the case of an appeal, a simple majority vote at a meeting of the general membership shall be required to sustain the revocation of membership.
- 9.6. Following a termination of membership, the member will be removed from the club's membership and will lose any privileges associated with being a member of the club.
- 9.7. Executive Committee members are subject to the same termination of membership process as general members.

## **10. Article Ten – Amendments**

- 10.1. All constitutional amendments shall require a 2/3 majority vote to be passed at a general meeting.
- 10.2. All voting members may propose and vote on amendments to the constitution.
- 10.3. The Executive Committee shall submit the revised constitution to staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto within two (2) weeks.
- 10.4. Amendments to the constitution shall take effect only once the revised constitution has been approved by staff in the Division of Student Life at the University of Toronto.

## **11. Article Eleven – Advisory Council**

- 11.1. The Advisory Council shall serve as a non-voting body, providing academic guidance, professional mentorship, and strategic advice to the Executive Committee.
- 11.2. Composition:
  - 11.2.1. The Council shall ideally consist of at least two (2) faculty members or recognized researchers from the University of Toronto (e.g., from NMC, History, or Art History departments or other programs).
  - 11.2.2. Membership may also be extended to distinguished alumni or external subject-matter experts.
- 11.3. Appointment: Members of the Advisory Council shall be invited and appointed by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee.
- 11.4. Term: Members shall serve a term of two (2) years, which may be renewed indefinitely upon mutual agreement.
- 11.5. Responsibilities:
  - 11.5.1. Provide feedback on the academic integrity of the group’s programming and reading groups.
  - 11.5.2. Assist in identifying potential guest speakers or collaborative opportunities with academic departments.
  - 11.5.3. The Council holds no legal or financial authority over the association and cannot cast votes in Executive Committee meetings.

## **12. Article Twelve – Supervisory Board**

- 12.1. The Supervisory Board is an internal oversight body responsible for ensuring the Executive Committee adheres to this Constitution and remains transparent in its operations.
- 12.2. Composition:
  - 12.2.1. The Board shall consist of three (3) members. It may consist of up to 6 members.
  - 12.2.2. To avoid conflicts of interest, members of the Supervisory Board cannot concurrently hold a position on the Executive Committee.
  - 12.2.3. The Chair of the Board is elected among the members.
  - 12.2.4. At least one (1) member should ideally be a senior student or a former executive member to provide institutional memory.
  - 12.2.5. The former President and Vice-President(s) are natural members of this supervisory board for one year, and the President may wish to continue this duty for one additional year, for a maximum of three years in total, at the discretion of the supervisory board.
- 12.3. Duties:
  - 12.3.1. Constitutional Review: Review the group’s activities annually to ensure they align with the "Purpose" stated in Article One.
  - 12.3.2. Financial Oversight: Review the Treasurer’s year-end financial report before it is presented at the Annual General Meeting.
  - 12.3.3. Dispute Resolution: Act as a neutral third party in the event of serious internal disputes within the Executive Committee.

12.3.4. Vote of Confidence: Call an election in times of upheaval and crises. This call should be decided upon the decision with a qualified majority (2/3 of the Supervisory Board).

12.3.4.1. If the Chair opposes the vote of confidence, another discussion should be held in the Board, and it will then be performed.

12.4. Meetings: The Supervisory Board shall meet with the Executive Committee at least once per semester.