Anglo-Turkish Society online lecture, 11 May 2026, 6.00 pm (UK time)

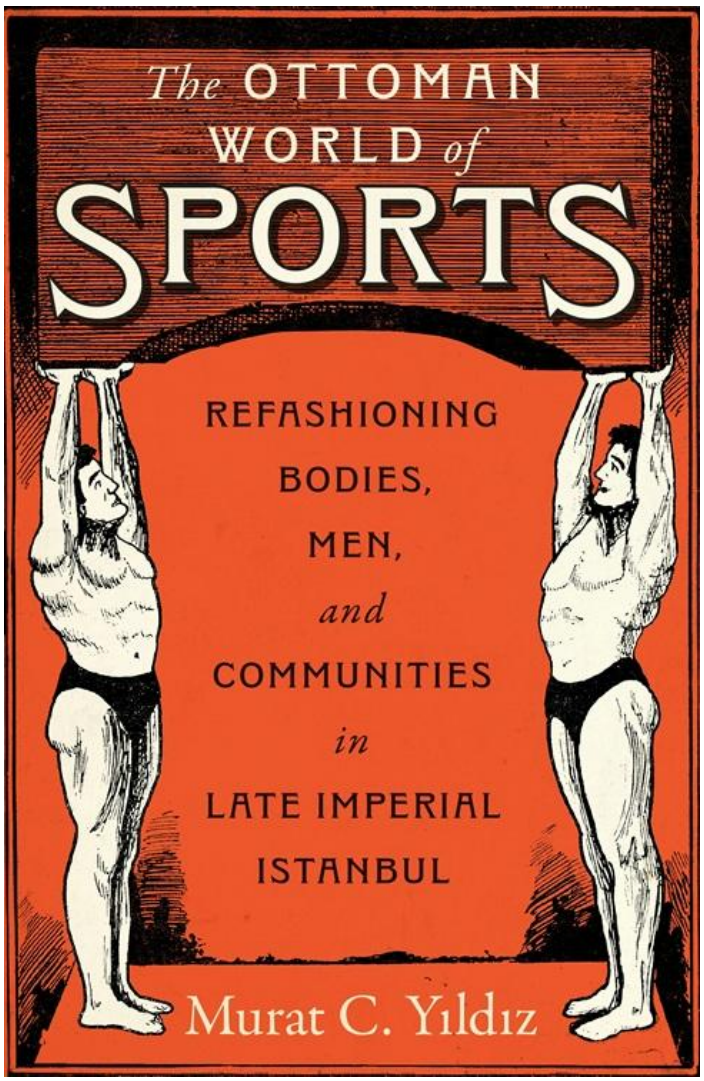
Speaker: Prof Murat C. Yıldız

Title: 'The Ottoman World of Sports: Shared Activities and Exclusive Bonds in Late Imperial Istanbul'

This talk reconsiders the history of late Ottoman Istanbul and its lived urban space through a focus on modern sports. "Sports enthusiasts" from a plethora of ethnoreligious backgrounds living in the imperial capital created the Ottoman world of sports, a gendered civic project that promoted gymnastics, athletics, and team sports, namely football (soccer), as educational, moral, and leisure activities for young men from an expanding middle class. This talk explores how exercising in schools, working out at the sports club, competing on the pitch, and narrating physical fitness in the columns of periodicals served as sites of encounter between Muslims, Christians, and Jews that facilitated the cultivation of shared experiences, norms, and embodied knowledge for an entire generation of Istanbulites. Mapping the ways in which educators, experts, athletes, and students engaged a global physical movement, created a multilingual civic vision of exercise, and treated sports as a site for ethnoreligious mobilization, the talk uncovers the intersection of different visions of self and community that undergirded the world of sports in late Ottoman Istanbul.

Booking essential: https://murat-yildiz-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk



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Dr Murat C. Yıldız is Associate Professor of History at Skidmore College. His book *The Ottoman World of Sports: Refashioning Bodies, Men, and Communities in Late Imperial Istanbul* (University of Texas Press, 2026) tells the story of the role played by Muslim, Christian, and Jewish sports aficionados in the making of a shared sports culture in Istanbul during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. He's an assistant editor of the *Arab Studies Journal* and an editorial board member of the *International Journal of the History of Sport*.

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https://www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk/