



# METU ARCH PROG GRADUATE SEMINARS

**CONS 504 & 604 Fall Semester 2025-26**

This is the official document prepared for the graduate seminar courses of CONS 504 and CONS 604.

Fall 2026 Semester

Date of the Meeting: **12.01.2026**  
at Kubbealtı, Faculty of Architecture

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09:50 – 10:10 504	<b>Conservation of Multi-Layered Rural Settlements in The Context of Archaeological Sites: The Case of Karahöyük</b> Kübra Yalçınkaya
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		Ceren Kara
14:00 – 14:30	<b>604</b>	<b>Developing a Methodology for Flood Adaptation and Heritage Conservation under Climate Change</b>
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14:30 – 15:00	<b>604</b>	<b>Memory-linked Placemaking: An Integrated Framework for Urban Heritage Conservation</b>
		Eda Vardar

09:30 – 09:50

504

## **From Agro-Pastoral Rural Landscape to Urban Fringe: Tracing Character Change Through Transformation in Kevenli (Şuşanis), Van**

**Ekin Bakkalbaşı**

Supervisor: **Özgün Özçakır**

Jury Members: **A. Gülist Bilgin Altınöz**  
**Menelaos Gkartzios**

Kevenli(Şuşanis), once a self-sufficient agro-pastoral settlement in Van, has undergone rapid cultural landscape transformation shaped by environmental decline and state-led urban development. The drying of irrigation channels weakened the ecological system that supported crop cultivation and livestock production. This shift intensified with the construction of mass TOKİ housing, which absorbed the village into Van's expanding urban fabric and created an abrupt transition from a rural landscape to a fragmented urban fringe. These changes disrupted long-standing relations between daily practices, land, water and local social life. This thesis aims to understand how such externally driven restructuring has altered Kevenli's cultural landscape and what this transformation means for the conservation of rural character. The study uses a combined methodology: field surveys to document existing structures and spatial patterns; photographic and morphological analysis to track landscape change; interviews to gather local memory and knowledge; and archival and planning document review to reveal policy-related shifts. Using these methods together allows the thesis to evaluate Kevenli's ecological, built and social components as interconnected parts of a cultural landscape. By identifying key values, challenges and potentials, the thesis aims to propose strategies that mitigate character loss, support small-scale practices such as herding and cultivation and encourage community involvement in future conservation efforts.

**Keywords:** Cultural landscape, Top-down development policies, Character loss, State-mandated structural change, Kevenli village

**Conservation of Multi-Layered Rural Settlements in The Context of Archaeological Sites: The Case of Karahöyük****Kübra Yalçınkaya**

Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**  
Jury Members: **Neriman Şahin Güçhan**  
**Fuat Gökçe**

The coexistence of archaeological and rural settlements presents a major challenge in conservation studies. In most cases, archaeological sites are prioritized over the rural layer in planning and conservation decisions. Consequently, rural settlements become depopulated and eventually abandoned, causing the loss of tangible and intangible values. In this context, Karahöyük, an abandoned rural settlement located within the boundaries of Kaniş-Karum, one of the most significant archaeological sites in Anatolia, is selected as a case study representing the tensions between the conservation of archaeological heritage and the continuity of rural life. Unlike many similar examples, the upper (rural) layer of Karahöyük reflects attractive architectural and aesthetic characteristics. Therefore, this thesis aims to explore creative strategies to support and strengthen the coexistence of rural and archaeological layers, focusing on the potential reconnection of the inhabitants with the site while archaeological studies continue, and developing alternative approaches to preserve and integrate the rural layer without erasing its identity, ensuring the coexistence of both layers. The research methodology combines literature and archival studies on rural and archaeological heritage and legal frameworks with on-site survey and documentation of Karahöyük, providing a basis for further studies on the conservation of its multilayered structure and rural heritage.

**Keywords:** **Rural settlements, Archaeological sites, Multilayered heritage, Abandonment, Karahöyük**

## Rural Mountain Heritage in Transformation: The Case of the Historic Core of Gul-e-Gulmit, Hunza

Saleha Sundas

Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**  
Jury Members: **Neriman Şahin Güçhan**  
**Fuat Gökçe**

Gul-e-Gulmit, the administrative center of Gojal (Upper Hunza) in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, is a historic Wakhi-Ismaili mountain settlement located along the ancient Silk Route at approximately 2,465 meters above sea level. As a key center of Wakhi culture in Pakistan, Gulmit reflects cross-border cultural continuity with Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Xinjiang (China) through its vernacular architecture, settlement morphology, and socio-cultural practices shaped by extreme high-altitude conditions. The settlement's spatial organization, traditional construction systems, irrigation infrastructure, and community institutions embody long-term environmental negotiation and cultural transmission.

Following the completion of the Karakoram Highway in 1978 and its intensification under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Gulmit has undergone rapid socio-economic and physical transformation. Infrastructure expansion, tourism growth, and development initiatives led by institutions such as the Aga Khan Development Network have reshaped everyday life and the built environment. Despite increasing visibility and local initiatives such as the Gulmit Organization for Local Development, the settlement lacks legally recognized heritage status and integrated conservation frameworks. Concurrently, climate-induced hazards including glacial lake outburst floods, landslides, and seismic risks intensify vulnerability, threatening vernacular construction knowledge, communal spatial practices, and traditional resource management systems.

This thesis conceptualizes Gulmit as a transitional mountain landscape in which vernacular settlement systems are being reconfigured by development pressures and environmental change in the absence of coordinated governance mechanisms. Employing morphological mapping, architectural documentation, stakeholder interviews, and policy analysis, the study develops a place-based conservation framework for Gulmit's historic core. It proposes spatial, institutional, and risk-responsive heritage management principles aimed at sustaining living rural settlements under conditions of accelerated transformation.

**Keywords:** Rural Mountain heritage, Wakhi culture, Conservation management, Heritage policies, Climate vulnerability, Adaptive strategies, Pakistan

**Place Branding as A Tool to Reveal the Unrecognized Values of Heritage Places: The Case of Afyonkarahisar****504****Onur Balmahmut**Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**Jury Members: **Neriman Şahin Güçhan****Fuat Gökçe**

Cultural heritage places consist of the traces of the past and socio-cultural values. However, they can also produce economic values as well. An important part of the economic values is highly interrelated with tourism, fuelled by the demand of people. Because of this situation, the economic values of the heritage places become the focus of the local and national authorities, so that the values can be benefited more. The economic benefits and the intent to gain from them creates a competitive relation between different cultural heritage places. Therefore, the interventions made to brand these places and make them more visible, can be focused too much on the economic gains and this could lead to a situation in which the heritage places are considered as commercial products. When the heritage places become too branded, instead of taking their tangible and intangible values into careful consideration, it can result with the degradation and commodification of them. At this point, it is possible to state that conservation and branding are perceived as two opposing concepts. However, if the place branding process is managed appropriately, it has the potential to create awareness of a heritage place with its tangible and intangible values. Afyonkarahisar is a settlement which is located at the junction of popular touristic areas and the roads are positioned at the periphery of the settlement. Most people pass from this very periphery, yet do not experience a significant portion of Afyonkarahisar. The settlement is already branded with the main focus being on gastronomic and thermal tourism, which is what the passersby consume mostly. However, the central historic settlement includes important cultural heritage assets which are unrecognized by the people who pass from Afyonkarahisar. The fact that these overlooked cultural heritage assets are not included in the branding of Afyonkarahisar, results in the prevention of the place being over-consumed but, at the same time, they are closer to being forgotten. Therefore, this thesis aims to construct a common ground between conservation and place branding practices. It discusses introducing a non-destructive approach by understanding and evaluating the cultural heritage place and subsequently developing suggestions for place branding strategies accordingly. By taking the case of Afyonkarahisar, the thesis discusses the pros and cons of the approaches and proposal options while providing hints to construct a balanced relation between place branding and conservation. In order to do so, the thesis establishes dialogues with a variety of stakeholders including the users and decision makers. Similarly, the thesis retains the inclusive approach regarding the physical and socio-cultural aspects of Afyonkarahisar.

**Keywords:** Place Branding, Cultural Heritage Conservation, Afyonkarahisar, Urban Heritage, Sustainable Development

10:50 – 11:10

504

## **Conserving the Water Heritage of METU: How the Modern University Campus forms an Aquatic Interface Between Nature and Human**

**Doğa Dolay**

Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**

Jury Members: **Funda Baş**  
**Fuat Gökçe**

Modern cultural landscapes are intermediaries between nature and human activity, in which water exists as part of a site's natural context as well as in the form of designed architectural elements. Water, moreover, is a component that is both effective in and affected by environmental, socio-cultural, and architectonic activities within the built environment. Although highly integrated into the urban context, water is prone to degradation due to human actions that are incompatible with the existing context, as well as the environmental realities of the climate crisis. This thesis aims to decode the spatiotemporal existence of water within modern cultural landscapes through the example of the METU campus. Firstly, strategies adopted regarding natural water resources prior to the foundation of the campus are examined, and the design and use of architectural water elements are highlighted. This is followed by an analysis of the character of the campus's water elements and the values related to METU's water heritage. The current state of the campus's water layer is then evaluated, considering both natural and human-made resources and their relationships with the built environment and living communities. The study concludes by defining a vision for the conservation of the campus's water elements and related cultural and ecological values, in conformity with the contemporary needs of the campus as well as the conditions imposed by the climate crisis.

**METU Archaeology Museum as A Modern Heritage: Future Vision with Conservation Strategies****504****Bilge Esra Şahin**Supervisors: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz, Pınar Aykaç Leidholm**Jury Members: **Bilge İmamoğlu****Fuat Gökçe**

Today, the definition and function of museums are evolving with the changing conditions of contemporary age. Museums are becoming more than just buildings where tangible and intangible heritage is exhibited; they are becoming inclusive and accessible, dynamic spaces where visitors become active participants rather than passive observers. Furthermore, with changing climate conditions, the exhibition practices of artifacts in museums are evolving, which also highlights issues of microclimate and energy efficiency. Especially, architectural features such as wide openings and exposed concrete facades, particularly common in modern heritage buildings, pose significant challenges that should be considered within the context of microclimate.

The METU Archaeology Museum, initially designed as a library, stands out as both a modern heritage building and the first university museum in Türkiye. The museum, which houses artifacts from the Yalıncak and Koçumbeli excavations within the campus and tumulus findings, needs to strengthen its spatial and contextual relationships with these excavation sites, the campus and the alle and to continue its function as a contemporary university museum and a modern heritage.

Therefore, this thesis aims to define conservation principles for the METU Archaeology Museum, conserving its architectural characteristics while adapting it to contemporary museum principles and new presentation techniques. In this context, the aim is to understand the historical development, current condition and assess the values of the METU Archaeology Museum. In this context, a conceptual framework will be developed, with the help of examples from university museums worldwide, and international approaches with a literature review. This conceptual framework will offer a holistic assessment that considers the museums' academic and educational functions along with spatial, environmental, and climatic conditions. Afterwards, the establishment process and historical development of the museum and the campus with the archaeological sites will be examined through archival research. The current situation will be assessed using on-site observations and findings, as well as in-depth interviews with museum staff and visitors related to the museum. Subsequently, based on the findings, recommendations for the museum's future will be developed that integrate both the conservation of modern heritage building and contemporary museum presentation techniques.

**Future of the Information Center At METU: Rethinking The Library Building As A Modern Heritage****504****Birgül Duman Fillik**Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**Jury Members: **Bilge İmamoğlu****Fuat Gökçe**

Libraries have continuously evolved in response to changing social, cultural, and technological conditions, which transformed them from being knowledge repositories into dynamic learning and social environments. This transformation is especially evident in university libraries, where such changes are required to sustain their academic and social roles. As a result, many modern university libraries face the challenge of adaptation to contemporary needs and conditions while preserving their architectural and cultural significance as modern heritage. Among these university libraries, the Central Library of Middle East Technical University (METU) in Türkiye, represents a significant example, which was designed and constructed in 1960s as being the hearth of the campus, with its modernist architecture. Besides its modernist features, and architectural values, it also has cultural, social, and symbolic meanings within the university's collective memory. However, during the years, due to the newly emerged requirements, the building has undergone several renovations, many of which were implemented in an isolated and problem-oriented manner, causing risks to its authenticity and integrity, which might be even more in the future as both the educational and environmental conditions are changing rapidly.

The main aim of this thesis is to reconsider the Central Library of METU as a modern heritage asset, which is an integral component of the whole campus, and to develop proposals for the library by forming a comprehensive framework that balances its preservation with adaptation. While doing so, different stakeholders and their future expectations are considered. As methodology, qualitative case study methods are applied, hence, the study combines literature review, on-site architectural analysis, and interviews with the library users and staff. By identifying the Library's architectural, spatial, social and cultural values, in addition to its existing problems and potentials, the thesis proposes a guiding principles for its future conservation and adaptation strategies.

Ultimately, the thesis aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the conservation of modern university libraries by demonstrating how adaptation to contemporary developments can be achieved without losing heritage values, so that a reference framework can be offered for similar modern library buildings.

## **The Socio-Cultural Core Zone of a Modern Campus: Conservation and Sustainable Adaptation of METU's Socio-Cultural Core Zone**

**Müge Yengüner**

**Supervisor: A. Güлиз Bilgin Altınöz**

**Jury Members: Bilge İmamoğlu**

**Fuat Gökçe**

This thesis aims to explore the conservation and adaptation processes of the socio-cultural core zones within modern heritage campuses, identifying both the tangible and intangible elements that sustain these vital spaces. Beyond their primary function as educational environments, university campuses serve as places for social interaction, intellectual exchange, and collective memory. These zones, often emerging organically through students' daily practices and political or cultural expressions, represent the living heart of the campus culture.

The focus of this research is the central complex at Middle East Technical University (METU), comprising the U-Auditorium (Üçlü Amfi), the Physics Faculty Building, and the Physics Lawn. Strategically located at the intersection of the "Alley" and the administrative region of the campus, this complex transcends its formal role as an academic unit to become a symbolic landmark and a vessel for the university's socio-cultural identity. The thesis argues that the value of this area lies not only in its modern reinforced concrete structures but in the "experiential spatial memory" and "sculptural presence" it maintains within the campus's visual and social landscape.

The research methodology employs a multi-scalar approach, examining the site from its role within the overall campus down to technical architectural details. Using laser and lidar scanning for precise documentation, the study compares the current state of the structures with original Behruz & Altug Çinici designs to identify physical alterations. Furthermore, social surveys and assessments within the campus community are integrated to address the intangible values and contemporary needs of the users.

The proposed conservation and adaptation model seeks to avoid the weakening of spatial relationships, partially worsened by the post-pandemic era, by addressing technological requirements, safety regulations, and climatic effects. By integrating tangible architectural preservation with the sustainability of socio-cultural practices, this study aims to ensure that one of the METU's central cores remains a vibrant center for the future.

**Keywords:** Modern University Campus Heritage, Socio-Cultural Core, Spatial Memory, METU, Sustainable Adaptation, Tangible and Intangible Heritage

**Reconsidering Sports Heritage in A Modern University Campus: The METU Sports Precinct****504****Zehra Dağıstan**Supervisor: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**Jury Members: **Bilge İmamoğlu****Fuat Gökçe**

In modern settlements, including university campuses, sport plays a significant role as both a spatial and cultural generator of everyday life and as an indicator of modernization and modern ways of living. Accordingly, sports spaces -whether open or enclosed- have been integral elements of modern planning and architectural design. The Middle East Technical University campus, designed during the modern period, positioned sports and sports facilities as one of the fundamental components of its original planning and spatial organization. However, changes in sports culture and evolving user expectations since the 1960s have exposed functional and spatial limitations in many modern sports facilities. Within modern settlements, iconic sports buildings are therefore among the most vulnerable architectural typologies, frequently facing neglect, loss of use, or demolition despite their contribution to shaping institutional identity, collective memory, and sense of belonging.

Within this framework, despite its architectural, symbolic, and social significance, the METU sports precinct faces multiple challenges, including problems in fire safety, accessibility, and spatial adaptability, as well as its limited capacity to respond to evolving user expectations. These issues create risks both to the functional performance of individual structures and to the integrity of the sports core as a lived and experienced heritage environment.

This study uses a methodology that integrates literature review, site and spatial analysis, architectural and structural documentation, and historical and archival research to understand the development and transformation of the METU sports core. In addition, the social life is examined through user-centered tools such as surveys and interviews to understand how the sports core contributes to social interaction and collective experiences.

This thesis aims to develop an integrated approach to understanding how places contribute to forming a shared sports heritage while preserving and adapting both the tangible and intangible dimensions of modern heritage sports places within a contemporary higher education campus.

**Keywords:** Sports heritage, Modern heritage, Sports architecture, Modern university campuses, Adaptive/sustainable reuse strategies

13:30 – 14:00

604

## **Characterization of Masonry Walls and Spolia in Ottoman Bergama (14th–16th Centuries)**

**Ceren Kara**

Supervisor: **Neriman Şahin Güçhan**

Jury Members: **A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz**  
**Ayça Özmen**

This study aims to analyse and assess the construction technology of masonry walls of Ottoman buildings built in between 14th to 16th centuries in Bergama, based on the façade arrangements and when possible their crossections. For this purpose the study identifies the original materials and their possible sources, unit/block forms and dimensions, joints, order and configurations of blocks forming the wall, and their repetition. The methods used in this research are: (1) a literature review; (2) a field survey to make visual analyses based on exterior observation and documentation of wall surfaces and sections; and (3) comparative analysis to make classification of wall types according to construction technique and material characteristics. The parameters to be used in this comparison are used materials and spolia, block dimensions, joints, and configurations, and these will be used to define masonry typologies.

Examples from different periods and functions (such as religious, bath, and commercial buildings) will be compared in terms of their material composition and wall organisation. Façade and section analyses will be carried out to support the classification and comparison process. This comparative analysis reveals the continuity and transformation of construction traditions in Bergama, demonstrating how different masonry practices developed and adapted within the Ottoman architectural framework. Ultimately, the study contributes to understanding regional masonry practices and the role of spolia in the architectural identity of Bergama.

14:00 – 14:30

604

## **Developing a Methodology for Flood Adaptation and Heritage Conservation under Climate Change**

**Tuğçe Halıcı**

Supervisor: **A. Gülez Bilgin Altınöz**  
Jury Members: **Meltem Şenol Balaban**  
**Sibel Yıldırım Esen**

Cultural heritage structures are becoming more vulnerable to the intensifying effects of climate change. It is essential to evaluate historical structures' vulnerability to these hazards and create adaptation strategies to maintain their historical relevance. Thus, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the flood vulnerability of the historic Mithatpaşa Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School in Izmir, Turkey, and to create replicable adaptation options for disaster risk reduction using a stakeholder-focused, practical approach.

Two field surveys (2022), archival research, user and staff interviews, and expert consultations are all included in the methodology. Also, a Geographic Information System (GIS) was utilized by overlaying the school's location with the flood hazard map obtained from Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. An indicator-based qualitative approach was adopted by considering heritage value, present condition, and indicators related to architectural characteristics and adaptive capacity.

The findings revealed that the school has a high flood vulnerability level. Basement openings at ground level, intensive use of basement spaces, and deficiencies in the roof and courtyard drainage systems are factors affecting the school's flood vulnerability. Based on these findings, feasible adaptation strategies- temporary flood barriers to prevent water ingress through basement windows, drainage improvements, and training to raise user awareness -were proposed, while the architectural and cultural significance of the school was conserved.

The indicator-based methodology in the research and the results of the case study provide valuable insights for future studies related to climate change adaptation in cultural heritage and offer a replicable framework for other heritage buildings.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Climate Change Adaptation, Vulnerability Assessment, Flood Risk, Preparedness

## Memory-linked Placemaking: An Integrated Framework for Urban Heritage Conservation

604

Eda Vardar

Supervisor: Özgün Özçakır, A. Güliz Bilgin Altınöz

Jury Members: Neriman Şahin Güçhan

Pınar Aykaç Leidholm

**Purpose** – Urban heritage places are lived environments where memory is both inherited and rearticulated through everyday use. In the İstiklal (Jewish) Quarter of Ankara, Türkiye, long-term social and physical change has reshaped how memory is carried and negotiated within the built environment. These temporal transformations ground memory-linked placemaking (MLP) as a conservation approach in the lived use of inherited fabric where memory forms through practice alongside formal heritage designation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The research combined literature review, archival research, and fieldwork based on observations and in-depth interviews. Memory was addressed through three connected forms: what was narrated, what was documented, and what continued through practice. The data were compiled on a memory map that traced how these forms coexisted within the İstiklal Quarter and informed context-specific inputs for the memory-linked placemaking (MLP) approach.

**Findings** – The findings revealed that memory does not inhabit place in a single form in the İstiklal Quarter; rather it manifested simultaneously through use, narrative, and absence. Memory mapping identified thirty memory places, classified into four categories reflecting different degrees of continuity and loss: places that remained in use, places with decreasing use, places that had lost their use despite the physical existence, and places that had disappeared entirely. In parallel, ordinary uses within the existing fabric were found to generate new, often unnoticed memory places.

**Originality** – The research advances MLP both as a conceptual and context-sensitive model for urban heritage conservation. In the conceptual level, MLP foregrounded memory as a generative component in the formation of place. In the contextual level, MLP translates this perspective into context-specific guidance for addressing social and physical disconnection in urban heritage places.

**Keywords:** Memory, Memory Places, Placemaking, Urban Heritage, Conservation; İstiklal (Jewish) Quarter, Ankara

