By the end of this class, I’m hoping you’ll understand how one mutually beneficial relationship, between the Venetians and the Ottomans, led to two really big deals: the European Renaissance and Christopher Columbus.

1. About Venice:
   a. Venice = city made up of hundreds of islands at the northern tip of Adriatic Sea
      i. Feels like the city is a collection of floating buildings tied together by
         some canals.
      ii. Venice was literally built for ocean-going trade.
      iii. Not a lot of natural resources — except for fish and mustaches — so if
         they wanted to grow, they had to rely on trade.
   b. Venetians became experts in shipbuilding
      i. Remember when crusaders needed ships for their crazy Fourth Crusade?
         1. They headed to Venice, because Venetians = famous for ships
      ii. Not only build ships; could also sail them to pleasant locales like
         Constantinople and the Levant (Israel, Palestine, etc.)
            1. so Venetians formed trade treaties, sometimes called concessions,
               with the Byzantines,
            2. When Constantinople fell to the Ottomans and became Istanbul,
               Venetians quick to make trade treaties with their new neighbors
   c. even before Ottomans, Venice had experience trading with Islamic world
      i. Established itself as biggest European power in the Mediterranean thanks
         to trade with Egypt’s sultan in the outlandishly lucrative pepper business.
         1. Pepper masks taste of spoiled meat
         2. which most meat was in the days before refrigeration
      ii. Due to Crusades, Egyptian merchants weren't terribly welcome in Europe
         (AWKWARD)
         1. But they had all the pepper!
         2. Egyptians imported it from India and controlled both overland and
            oversea access to the Mediterranean
         3. When others cited moral or religious opposition to trade, the
            Venetians usually found a way.
iii. To avoid awkwardness, Venetians employed a handy story.
   1. Piazza San Marco = #1 Destination in the Entire World for People Who Like to Be Pooped on by Pigeons
   2. Also home to this church (Basilica de San Marco), which includes some bronze horses that were looted from Constantinople
   3. And contains body of St. Mark, author of Gospel according to St. Mark, who had once been bishop of Alexandria, Egypt
   4. Died/buried in Alexandria, but Venetians claimed him as own
      a. apparently once visited Venice
      b. 2 merchants hatched a very clever plan
         i. Went to Alexandria + stole St. Mark’s body
         ii. hid it in a shipment of pork (which the Muslims didn’t check very carefully because, you know, they were disgusted by it)
         iii. Version of this on mosaics in Basilica of St. Mark, complete with Muslims shouting an Arabic version of “ewww gross.”
         iv. “Listen, we HAVE to trade with these guys. We use it as a secret way to ferry saint bodies out of Egypt. We don’t WANT to become fantastically wealthy. It’s just a necessary by product of our saint-saving.”
   d. So what did Venice import?
      i. Lots, but most important = grain, because not much ground for farming
      ii. Ottomans = abundant grain, even before they conquered Egypt and its oh-so-fertile Nile River in 1517
      iii. Venice also produced things like textiles and glass
         1. Venice is still known for its glass,
         2. couldn’t produce it without a special ash used to make colors
         3. That ash came from… the Ottomans.
   e. One last = Venice was a republic, not a monarchy or an empire.
i. leaders were elected and had to answer to the citizens… at least property-owning male citizens

ii. Ruler = doge
   1. got to live in a very nice house
   2. wear a funny hat

iii. Sultan of Ottoman empire also got to live in a nice house and wear a funny hat, but there the similarities end

2. The Ottomans
   a. empire that lasted from around 1300 CE until 1919
      i. one of the longest-lasting + richest empires in world history
         1. Ottomans managed to blend pastoral nomadic roots
         2. with some very un-nomadic empire building,
         3. and some really impressive architecture
      ii. Ottoman expansion reached its greatest extent under Suleiman the Magnificent (ruled from 1520-1566)
         1. Took valuable territory in Mesopotamia + Egypt
         2. secured control over the western parts of the Asian trade – both overland and oversea
         3. Defeated king of Hungary and laid siege to Vienna in 1526
         4. turned Ottomans into a huge naval power
         5. (also, judging from his hat, he had largest brain in human history)
   b. basically controlled half of what Romans controlled, but much more valuable because of all Indian Ocean trade going on at this time
   c. New form of government some historians call the slave aristocracy
      i. if you are a King, one of your main problems is hereditary nobles
         1. because they always want to replace you
         2. don’t want to pay taxes
         3. and they want their ugly sons to marry your gorgeous daughters
      ii. How to solve this problem:
         1. make them part of government so they feel included and shut up
2. Another way is to kill them. (Whisper: That’s what they usually do in Russia)

iii. Ottomans just bypassed problem of hereditary nobles by creating both an army and bureaucracy from scratch so they would be loyal only to the Sultan.

1. How? The devshirme (Dev-shirm): program where they kidnap Christian boys, convert them to Islam, raise them either to be members of an elite military fighting force called the Janissaries, or to be government bureaucrats
   a. Incidentally, which of those gigs would you prefer?
      Because I think that says a lot about you as a person.
   b. Either way, they were not allowed to have kids, which prevented the whole hereditary nobles

2. This system eventually broke down as Janissaries (who had guns) lobbied to be allowed to have families
   a. But before that happened, this system worked awesomely

3. Venice + Ottomans Relationship is born
   a. After Ottomans captured Egypt, controlled flow of trade through Mediterranean
   b. but Venetians = centuries of experience as mariners + lots of boats
      i. So Ottomans = content to let Venetians do all the trading/carrying of goods+ they just made money from taxes
      ii. Mutually beneficial relationship

4. Results of Relationship
   a. Venice became super rich and eventually set the spark for the Renaissance
      i. super rich allowed for European Renaissance because all that art and learning required money
      ii. which is why Venice was a leading city at the beginning of the European Renaissance before being eclipsed by Florence and Rome
   b. established firm connections between Europe and Islamic world
      i. allowed ideas to flow again after the Crusades
      ii. especially old Greek ideas that were preserved and built upon by Muslims
iii. Those connections had existed for a long time, but crusades aren’t a great way to exchange ideas

c. Most crucial result of the Venetian and Ottoman control of trade: forced other countries to look to exploration for riches
   i. it forced other Europeans to look for different ways to get rich
   ii. fueled huge investments in exploration
   iii. Portuguese sailed south and east around the southern tip of Africa
   iv. Spanish went west, believing that the Indies and China were much closer than they turned out to be