



**University of  
Zurich<sup>UZH</sup>**

**Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chair of Gender Studies  
and Islamic Studies  
University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe  
Swiss Society for Gender Studies**

# **Feminism and Theory in the Arab World**



**International Workshop  
Zurich, March 18–19, 2016**

# Workshop Outline

The question of women's rights, and by extension of feminism, is a highly debated topic in the Arab World. Not only does it touch upon the controversial issue of gender equality but also on questions of identity, ideology, power and politics. Organizations and actors with different – and often opposing – ideological backgrounds that claim to have a women's rights agenda have been amongst the most active in the region in the past decades. Studies of their work and trajectories have led to substantial scholarship, both in the fields of academic research and of activist grey literature. These works have shed light on processes of political advocacy and negotiations, and have described ensuing legal and social changes. They have further contributed to producing typologies of different forms of feminism, and to highlighting the interrelation between diverse currents.

Starting from the different historical experiences and political as well as intellectual trajectories of feminisms (understood as both feminist movements and ideologies) in the MENA region, the workshop focuses on how scholars who have long been observing feminist endeavors, while being themselves women's rights activists, interpret the present situation beyond ideological fault lines. What are the relevant concepts for understanding current debates and evolutions inside Arab feminisms? What is the potential of feminism(s) as both a set of critical theoretical tools as well as an ensemble of movements in the region? How does one theorize Arab feminisms from within while taking account of their historical entanglements as well as their current transnational connectivities?

# Program

Friday, March 18, 2016

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- 9:30–10:00 Bettina Dennerlein & Yasmine Berriane**  
Short Introduction by the Organizers
- 10:00–11:00 Marnia Lazreg (City University of New York)**  
Theorizing the Median Space between Power and Feminism: The Case of Algeria
- 11:00–11:15 Coffee Break**
- 11:15–12:15 Fatima Sadiqi (University of Fez)**  
The Centre: A Post-‘Arab Spring’ Space for a New Moroccan Feminist Discourse
- 12:15–14:30 Lunch Break**
- 14:30–15:30 Amel Grami (Manouba University)**  
Male Feminism in Post-Revolution Tunisia
- 15:30–15:45 Coffee Break**
- 15:45–16:45 Zeina Zaatari (University of California, Davis)**  
A Fourth Wave of Feminism: The Body as Core, the Story as Voice
- 16:45–17:15 Coffee Break**

**17:15–19:00 Roundtable**  
**“Women’s and Gender Studies in Arab and Swiss Universities”**

Participants: Hoda Elsadda (Cairo University), Amel Grami (Manouba University, Tunis), Fatima Sadiqi (University of Fez), Marylène Lieber (University of Geneva), Regina Wecker (University of Basel).

Chair: Bettina Dennerlein (University of Zurich)

*Open to the public*

**19:30 Apéro and Dinner (by Invitation)**

Saturday, March 19, 2016

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**10:00–11:00 Hoda Elsadda (Cairo University)**

Traveling Critique: Anti-imperialism, Gender and Rights Discourses

**11:00–11:15 Coffee Break**

**11:15–12:15 Raja Rhouni (University of El Jadida)**

Fatema Mernissi and the Decolonization of Feminism: Islamic  
Feminism as a New Paradigm and Beyond

**12:15–13:30 Lunch Break**

**13:30–15:30 Final Discussion**

Discussants: Katrin Meyer (University of Basel) and Nadia Al-  
Bagdadi (Central European University).

# General Information

- Location** University of Zurich  
Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies  
Room RAA G-01 (Aula)  
Rämistrasse 59  
CH-8001 Zurich
- Convenors** Dr. Yasmine Berriane (URPP Asia and Europe)  
Prof. Dr. Bettina Dennerlein (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies – Chair of Gender Studies and Islamic Studies)
- Contact** Dr. Yasmine Berriane  
University of Zurich  
URPP Asia and Europe  
Rämistrasse 66  
CH-8001 Zurich  
yasmine.berriane@uzh.ch
- Registration** Please register by March 10, 2016: [yasmine.berriane@uzh.ch](mailto:yasmine.berriane@uzh.ch)  
(limited number of participants)
- Internet** [www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/feminism](http://www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/feminism)

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