

Program in Near & Middle Eastern Studies / the Graduate School of Social Sciences (G3S) University of Basel
Swiss National Science Foundation Research Project “Ottoman Afterlife in Jordan and Iraq”

Call for Applications

10th Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies in Basel

30 September – 1 October 2022

Palestine Versus the Palestinians? Writing Palestinians into History

with

Prof. Dr. Beshara Doumani

Mahmoud Darwish Professor of Palestinian Studies, Brown University
President, Birzeit University



Palestinian Arabs in 1936. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-18053

Organized and hosted by

Dr. Alexander E. Balistreri
Prof. Dr. Maurus Reinkowski
Prof. Dr. Aline Schlaepfer

About

The Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies is a **two-day workshop in Basel, Switzerland**, designed for international doctoral students conducting research on the Near and Middle East. The workshop consists of a two-day, intensive program in which select students work closely with invited experts. Successful completion of the workshop entitles students to 3 ECTS credits.

This year, we are thrilled to host **Prof. Dr. Beshara Doumani** of Brown University in Rhode Island and Birzeit University in Palestine to lead our 10th annual workshop on the topic of **“Palestine Versus the Palestinians? Writing Palestinians into History.”** For more information on the content of the workshop, see below. The 2022 workshop will be held **in person** between **30 September (12:00 p.m.) and 1 October (13:00 p.m.) at the University of Basel.**

Application

Currently enrolled Ph.D. students who wish to attend the workshop should write an email to Alexander Balistreri (alexander.balistreri@unibas.ch), with a **short text** summarizing their academic background and explaining how this workshop fits in to their research interests (max. 400 words, in third-person singular, in English). Applicants should also provide a **CV** (in English), sent as a PDF. Up to 15 applicants will be selected for participation in the workshop, based on relevance of their research project and a demonstrated ability to contribute constructively to the discussions.

The deadline for applications is 28 August 2022. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation by 1 September 2022, at the latest. The workshop is **free of charge**. Unfortunately, funding for travel and lodging is currently unavailable. We will provide successful applicants with information about more affordable accommodation in Basel.

Requirements for Successful Participation

Participants are entitled to 3 ECTS points for successful participation. Participants will receive in early September a list of readings to be completed prior to the workshop. Successful participation at the workshop is subject to the mandatory completion of the required readings in advance and active participation in the workshop discussions.



Palestine Versus the Palestinians? Writing Palestinians into History

Course Description

There is a tremendous tension between the historical evolution of the concept of “Palestine” as a territorial unit and of the concept of “Palestinians” as a people. Consider, for example, the irony that the establishment of a state called Palestine by the British after World War One was predicated on the erasure of Palestinians as a political community. Consider also the irony that the destruction of Palestine in 1948 became the seminal moment in the constitution of modern Palestinian peoplehood.

The paradox of Palestine versus the Palestinians cannot be fully explained by the three dominant paradigms that dominate knowledge production: national, relational, and settler-colonial. The *national paradigm* structures historical narratives as that of the conflict between two peoples over the same land; assumes a natural fit between territory, identity, and sovereignty; and focuses on national movements and states as the engines of historical change. The *relational paradigm* explores the ways that Palestinians and Israelis constituted each other, highlights internal contradictions, and recognizes the asymmetrical balance of power between them. The *settler-colonial paradigm* frames the destruction of Palestine and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948 not as an event, but as global structural process of territorial dispossession, demographic displacement, and political erasure of indigenous societies. Each of these paradigms represents a different way of understanding the modern world, yet they share a common space/time/agency architecture that focuses primarily on the struggle over Palestine, not the experiences of Palestinians; that organizes time in a linear series of externally imposed ruptures (1917, 1948, 1967, 1982, 1993), not along developments within Palestinian society; and that locks Palestinians in a binary: either as victims of, or resisters to, forces beyond their control.

This workshop considers the politics and ethics of writing Palestinians into history and how that might reveal a rich archive of everyday agency that broadens our imagination of potential futures. Ultimately, it asks: What does it mean to be a Palestinian? What can the Palestinian condition teach us about the modern world? And why has it become a global symbol for ongoing struggles for justice, equality, and dignity?

Workshop Sessions:

- 1 | Palestinians Before Palestine
- 2 | 1948 and the Shadow Years
- 3 | Exile, Occupation, and Settler Citizenship
- 4 | Potential Futures



Prof. Dr. Beshara Doumani



Beshara Doumani is professor of history and the inaugural holder of the Mahmoud Darwish Professorship of Palestinian Studies at Brown University. His research focuses on peoples, places, and time periods marginalized by mainstream scholarship on the early modern and modern Middle East. He also writes on academic freedom and the Palestinian condition. His books include *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* and *Family Life in the Ottoman Mediterranean: A Social History*. He is currently working on a history of the Palestinians through the social life of stone. Doumani was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University; and the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. He is the founding director of the Palestinian Museum, of the New Directions in Palestinian Studies network, and of the Center for Middle East Studies at Brown University. He is currently serving as president of Birzeit University in Palestine.

Selected Works

Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900 (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995). <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft896nb5pc/>

Family Life in the Ottoman Mediterranean: A Social History (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.1017/9780511989605>

Family History in the Middle East: Household, Property, and Gender, ed. Beshara Doumani (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2003).

Academic Freedom after September 11, ed. Beshara Doumani (New York: Zone Books, 2006).

“Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History.” In: *The Israel/Palestine Question: Rewriting Histories*, ed. Ilan Pappé (London, Routledge, 2007).

“Palestine Versus the Palestinians? The Iron Laws and Ironies of a People Denied,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36:4 (Summer 2007), 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2007.36.4.49>

(with Chris Gratien) “Writing the History of Palestine and the Palestinians.” *Ottoman History Podcast*, No. 170 (15 August 2014) <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2014/08/writing-history-palestine.html>



Further Information

For more information on the MUBIT program, including reports on previous workshops, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/phd/mubit/>

For more information on the Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Basel, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/>

Previous MUBIT Workshops

2013: *Turkish Nationalism: Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism*, with Prof. Dr. Erik J. Zürcher and Prof. Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz.

2014: *Arab Nationalism: From Ottoman Empire to Colonial Mandates*, with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasan Kayali and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Michael Provence.

2015: *A Modern World in Flux. Studying Migration, Refugees, and Settlement Regimes from the Middle East and Beyond*, with Prof. Dr. Isa Blumi.

2016: *The Main Intellectual Currents in the Late Ottoman Empire*, with Prof. Dr. M. Şükrü Hanioglu.

2017: *From Unionism to Kemalism: Social and Political Transformation of Turkey*, with Prof. Dr. Asım Karaömerlioğlu and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kuyaş.

2018: *Digital Media, Islam, and Politics in the Middle East*, with Dr. Akın Ünver.

2019: *Values and Status Negotiation: Media in the Middle East and North Africa*, with Dr. Roxane Farmanfarmanian.

2020: *Arab Marxism: The Global History of Revolutionary Movements in the Middle East in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, with PD Dr. Manfred Sing and Miriam Younes.

2021: *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, with Dr. Berk Esen

Contact

Alexander Balistreri
MUBIT Coordinator
Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies
Maiengasse 51 / 4056 Basel
alexander.balistreri@unibas.ch
+41 61 207 28 62



MUBIT

SUK-Doktoratskooperation Islamwissenschaft
Inter-University Doctoral Cooperation in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
Basel | Bern | Zürich