

Program in Near & Middle Eastern Studies / African Studies/ The Graduate School of Social Sciences (G3S) University of Basel

Swiss National Science Foundation Research Project “Futures Interrupted”

Call for Applications

14th Annual SWANA Doctoral Workshop in Late and Post-Ottoman Studies in Basel

18 - 19 September 2026

A Global History of Palestine

with

Prof. Dr. Sherene Seikaly

Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara



Cotran family papers

Organized and hosted by
Prof. Dr. Falestin Naïli (Near and Middle Eastern Studies)
& PD Dr. Lorena Rizzo (African Studies)

About

The Annual SWANA 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. Formerly called the MUBIT workshop, it consists of a two-day, intensive program in which select students work closely with invited experts. Successful completion of the workshop can entitle students to 3 ECTS credits.

This year, we are thrilled to host **Prof. Dr. Sherene Seikaly** of the *University of California, Santa Barbara* to lead our 14th annual workshop on the topic of “**A Global History of Palestine.**” For more information on the content of the workshop, please see below. The 2026 workshop will be held **in person** between **Friday, 18 September 2026 (13:30 p.m.)** and **Saturday, 19 September (14:30 p.m.)** at the University of Basel.

Application

Currently enrolled Ph.D. students who wish to attend the workshop should write an email to Falestin Naïli 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** (PDF, in English). Up to 15 applicants will be selected for participation in the workshop, based on the relevance of their research project and a demonstrated ability to contribute constructively to the discussions.

The **deadline** for applications is **5 June, 2026**. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation by 30 June 2026 at the latest. The workshop is **free of charge**. All participants will have lunch and dinner together as part of the programme.

Applicants based outside of Switzerland might also apply for some financial support for travel costs (maximum 100 CHF). We will provide successful applicants with information about accommodation options in Basel.

Requirements for Successful Participation

Participants are entitled to 3 ECTS points for successful participation, if registered correctly. Participants will receive a list of **readings** by **10 July 2026** 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.

A Global History of Palestine

Course Description

This course explores Palestine not only as a national territory but as a site where global histories of race, empire, capital, and displacement converge. Moving from the late Ottoman period to the present, the course follows the life of a Palestinian doctor whose journey across Acre, Baltimore, Omdurman, and Beirut illuminates the entangled histories of colonial medicine, slavery and its afterlives, racial formations, and imperial governance across the Mediterranean, the United States, and Africa. Through archival fragments, family histories, and critical historiography, students will explore how Palestinians moved through and shaped wider imperial worlds while also confronting the structures that produced statelessness and dispossession. By situating Palestine within global processes—from the Jim Crow United States and the Indian Ocean slave trade to British imperial rule and the inception of the Nakba in 1948—the course invites students to center Palestine as an anchor of global history and to explore how personal archives, historical method, and political struggle reshape the writing of the past.

Workshop sessions:

1. Baltimore
2. Omdurman
3. Acre
4. Archives and Historical Writing



Prof. Dr. Sherene Seikaly

Sherene Seikaly is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She received her PhD in History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University and a Masters in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. She held the Qatar Postdoctoral Fellowship at Georgetown University and the Europe in the Middle East Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

Seikaly's *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (2016) explores how Palestinian capitalists and British colonial officials used economy to shape territory, nationalism, the home, and the body. It received the Middle East Political Economy Book Prize. Her second book, *From Baltimore to Beirut: On the Question of Palestine* (forthcoming), focuses on a Palestinian man who was at once a colonial officer and a colonized subject, an enslaver and a refugee. His trajectory from nineteenth-century mobility across Baltimore and Sudan to twentieth-century immobility in Lebanon places the question of Palestine in a global history of race, capital, slavery, and dispossession. Seikaly is the recipient of the Harold J. Plous Award at UCSB (2016-2017); Distinguished Teaching Award from the Academic Senate, UCSB (2017-2019); the UC President's Faculty Research Fellowship (2018-2019); the UCSB Faculty Diversity Award (2019-2020); the National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship (2023-2024); and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship (2024-2025). She is the Editor of *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UCSB, co-editor of the Stanford Studies Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures Series, and co-editor of *Jadaliyya*.

Further Information

For more information on the SWANA 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 Workshops

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

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

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

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

2017: From Unionism to Kemalism: Social and Political Transformation of Turkey, with Prof. Asım Karaömerlioğlu and Prof. 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 Farmanfarmaian.

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.

2022: Palestine Versus the Palestinians? Writing Palestinians into History, with Prof. Beshara Doumani.

2023: States and Statelessness in the Post-Ottoman Middle East, with Prof. Laura Robson.

2024: The Ottoman Governance of Diversity, with Dr. habil. Nora Lafi

2025: Writing contemporary Algeria into the History of the Middle East, Africa and the World, with Prof. Dr. Malika Rahal

Contact

Prof. Dr. Falestin Naili

Workshop Co-Organizer, 2026

Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies

Maiengasse 51 / 4056 Basel

falestin.naili@unibas.ch

+41 61 207 1272