



Nora Elizabeth Barakat

Assistant Professor of History

Bio

BIO

I am a historian of the late Ottoman Empire and the Modern Middle East. My research focuses on people, commodities and landscapes in the interior regions between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I have a particular interest in how legal categories of population, property and economy shaped and were shaped by the everyday experiences of social life. I am also committed to bringing both the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East into discussions of world history, especially narratives about capitalism and modern state formation. I teach courses on modern Middle East history, capital and crisis, Islamic law, and environmental history.

My current book project, *Bedouin Bureaucrats: Nomads and Property in the Ottoman Empire*, examines the ways tent-dwelling inhabitants of the Syrian interior contributed to and contested attempts to transform the desert fringe into a grain-exporting breadbasket in the second half of the nineteenth century. The project locates the experience of the Ottoman Syrian interior in a global context of commercial and administrative expansion into landscapes deemed underproductive, examining similarities and divergences with the American West and the Russian steppe. Using court and land registers, I uncover the stories of specific tent-dwelling individuals and communities involved in struggles over property, commerce, and the forms of modern governance. My other ongoing project combines my interests in the histories of Islamic law and capitalism. It explores the twentieth-century legacies of late Ottoman economy-making efforts in the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, particularly the codification of civil law. My research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Mellon Foundation, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Center for American and Overseas Research Centers.

Before coming to Stanford, I completed my PhD at the University of California, Berkeley and taught in the Persian Gulf for five years, first at Qatar University and then at New York University Abu Dhabi. At NYU Abu Dhabi, I co-founded OpenGulf, a set of interconnected digital projects focusing on historical documentation about the Gulf region.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, History

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D, University of California, Berkeley

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- History, Urbanity, and Landscape in the Contemporary Middle East: OSPGEN 70 (Sum)

2024-25

- Development and Dispossession: HISTORY 82N (Spr)
- Graduate Research Seminar in Ottoman and Middle East History: HISTORY 481, JEWISHST 481 (Spr, Sum)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 181B (Win)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 81B (Win)
- Readings in the Historiography of the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 381 (Win)

2023-24

- Development and Dispossession: ESF 25 (Aut)
- Development and Dispossession: ESF 25A (Aut)
- Graduate Research Seminar in Ottoman and Middle East History: HISTORY 481, JEWISHST 287S, JEWISHST 481 (Spr, Sum)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 181B (Aut)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 81B (Aut)
- Readings in the Historiography of the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 381 (Spr)

2022-23

- Capital and Crisis in the Middle East and the World: HISTORY 383F (Win)
- Graduate Research Seminar in Ottoman and Middle East History: HISTORY 481, JEWISHST 287S, JEWISHST 481 (Spr)
- Introduction to Islamic Law: HISTORY 281D, HISTORY 381D (Spr)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 181B (Aut)
- Making the Modern Middle East: HISTORY 81B (Aut)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Salma Alkhoudi, Lee Bagan, Federico Cortigiani, Emre Can Daglioglu, Makena Mezistrano, Ozgul Ozdemir, Merve Tekgurter

Orals Chair

Alfred Jeffrey Naddaff

Orals Evaluator

Karventha Kuppusamy, Makena Mezistrano, Ozgul Ozdemir

Undergraduate Major Advisor

Jana Gomri

Doctoral (Program)

Mustafa Emre Gunaydi, Anwar Haneef