

Workshop in a Nutshell as part of the Teaching Assistantship Programme 2020

Toward Prison Studies for the Middle East and North Africa

Organizational details

Instructor: Mina Ibrahim

Date: November 5, 2020, from 2–6 pm

Location: Online (link will be sent after registration via info@ggs.uni-giessen.de)

Content

When the term "prison" is used, such labelling should not only be referring to a public institution that has been given the task of punishing offenders. Instead, our use of this term should have implications that are far more global in nature. In this case, the term includes not only everything we believe has been added to the broader concept of "prison," but also elements that may not be recognized immediately, such as "preventive detention" (enacted under any of a variety of pretexts), debasing human dignity, torture, forms of arrest and imprisonment that fall outside legal norms, and enforced disappearance. Other topics follow along that same tangent, such as acts taken to share "prison expertise" together with the memories of scars and/or trauma carried by former prisoners. This is in addition to discussions focused on prisons and works of art, and literature produced either within or outside prison walls. Incredibly and infamously, the Middle East and North Africa region not only inherited this sad legacy, but also perpetuates it, generation after generation, sometimes in bulk and other times in fragments.

Against this backdrop, the workshop is imagined to last for four hours each of which will cover one theme as noted below. We will look into supplemental resources divided into relevant art works, films, novels, songs/music, academic readings, and examples of prisoners and prisons carefully chosen to reflect the themes of present in each hour. The aim is to put these pieces in conversation with each other, and to use them as objects of analysis and criticism.

Part I: Histories and Roots of a Complex Present

Part II: Daily Lives and Intimacy

Part III: (Un-)placing Prisons

Part IV: Healing Scars, Oppressing the Memories, and Strategies of Survival

Learning Targets

- To **create collaborative and supportive learning environment** that encourages critical engagement, a responsibility to contribute, and mutual accountability based on the principal of respect for all
- To combine **artistic productions** on traumas and sufferings of incarceration **with relevant historical, sociological, and anthropological writings** about prisons in order to allow for analysis and exchange of themes and trends between these sources

- To grasp **different historical roots of MENA region** beyond the hegemonic colonial and nationalist narratives, and to understand the significance and role of prison for people of the MENA region and beyond, through the **lived experiences** and expressions of those affected by the prison system
- To **investigate how individuals survive their traumas** and heal their wounds and scars, and how **victims shape memories of their oppression** while struggling with dominant authorities and ruling powers.
- To come up with **further themes, topics, and contents** about cultures of incarceration in the MENA region that can help in developing this field of study in the future.

Target group

Students, Doctoral Candidates and Postdocs of all Faculties

Course language

English

Registration

Please register **by Monday, November 2, 2020** via e-mail at info@ggs.uni-giessen.de.