

SUEZ AT SIXTY

Remembering the Suez Crisis and War of 1956

FRIDAY, October 21 — Harbor Room, University Center, UCSB

1:30–1:45 pm — Introductory remarks

1:45–3:30 pm — Session One: Within Egypt

Jennifer Derr, University of California, Santa Cruz

“A Dam, A Canal, and the Material Lives of a Colonial Past”

Professor Derr explores the relationship between the construction of the Aswan High Dam and the landscapes of the Nile River that were carved during the decades preceding Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir’s rise to power. She further examines how the radical politics of Suez interacted with the material realities surrounding the dam’s construction.

Joel Gordon, University of Arkansas

“Suez Dramas: Popular Cultural Memory over Six Decades”

Professor Gordon considers how the Suez Canal has been depicted as contested territory in Egyptian popular culture, mainly in movies and television dramas, since the Suez War. The principal themes of these portrayals have been sacrifice and self-aggrandizement, humility and hubris, and resistance to retreat.

Dwight Reynolds, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Music and the Suez Canal”

Professor Reynolds discusses the musical traditions created by the multiethnic work force that built the Suez Canal and the cities on its banks. He shows how, from this remarkable mixture of backgrounds, unique musical traditions emerged that came to symbolize the new regional identity of “the Canal.” In the wake of the 1956, 1967, and 1973 wars, this music acquired social and political significance for all Egyptians.

3:30–3:45 — Refreshments

3:45 pm–5:30 pm—Session Two: Beyond Egypt

Sherene Seikaly, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Suez and Palestine: Sixty Years On”

Professor Seikaly explores the legacies of the Suez War for the history and present of Israel/Palestine.

Salim Yaqub, University of California, Santa Barbara

“Containing Arab Nationalism: The United States and the Middle East After Suez”

Professor Yaqub examines the U.S. government’s response to the challenge of pan-Arab nationalism in the aftermath of Suez. He shows how Washington tried to fold that response into a broader strategy of combating Soviet influence in the Middle East.

Muriam Haleh Davis, University of California, Santa Cruz

“What was ‘Arab’ about ‘Arab Socialism’? Algerian Nationalism and Visions of Suez”

Professor Davis considers how the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company reverberated through the politics of post-independence Algeria. She shows that the secular nationalism of Nasir’s Egypt deepened a fault line within Algeria, between the government’s socialist and Third Worldist commitments and Muslim clerics’ conservative critiques.

About the Presenters



Muriam Haleh Davis is Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz. During the 2015-2016 academic year she was a Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. Her research interests focus on development, decolonization, and race. She is currently working on a manuscript that studies how the postwar reinvention of a market economy influenced prevailing ideas of race and national identity in Algeria.



Jennifer L. Derr is Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she specializes in the history of the modern Middle East, post-colonial politics, and critical geography. Professor Derr's research explores the intersections among science, medicine, political economy, and the environment in the modern Middle East. Her first manuscript, "A New Nile: The 1902 Aswan Dam and the Remaking of the Environment of the Nile River," chronicles the multifaceted history of the 1902 Aswan dam. Her second manuscript project examines the history of the hepatitis C epidemic in Egypt.



Joel Gordon is Professor of History and Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas, and a Faculty Research Affiliate of the Center for Middle East Studies at Denver University. He is the author of three books about modern Egypt and writes about film, music, the media, and popular culture. A new edition of his 1992 book *Nasser's Blessed Movement: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution* is forthcoming with American University in Cairo Press.



Dwight F. Reynolds is Professor of Arabic language and literature in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* and of *Arab Folklore: A Handbook*, as well as editor and co-author of *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* and *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Arab Culture*. He has authored numerous other publications on Arabic literature, music, folklore, and culture.



Sherene Seikaly is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the editor of *Arab Studies Journal*, the cofounder and co-editor of *Jadaliyya* ezine, and an editor of *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Her book *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford University Press, 2016) explores how Palestinian capitalists and British colonial officials used economy to shape territory, nationalism, the home, and the body. Seikaly has published in academic journals such as *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, as well as in online venues like *Jadaliyya*, *Mada Masr*, and *7iber*.



Salim Yaqub is Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Director of UCSB's Center for Cold War Studies and International History. He is the author of *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (University of North Carolina, 2004) and of several articles and book chapters on the history of U.S. foreign relations, the international politics of the Middle East, and Arab American political activism. His second book, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s*, was published by Cornell University Press in September 2016.