



CEDEJ Tuesday Seminar

On July 1st, 2025 – 2pm

The Postcolonial Politics of Remembering and Forgetting: Dr. Arthur Cecil Alport and the Afterlives of Colonial Medicine

Soha Bayoumi

Since the late 1960s, feminist historiography has become one of the most innovative and transformative fields within Middle East Studies. Its contributions go beyond recovering women's voices from historical silence; by introducing gender as a critical category of analysis, it has reshaped understandings of power and generated a paradigm shift in the discipline.

In the Egyptian context, the growth of feminist historical inquiry has sparked vital debates on the politics of knowledge production, including questions of researcher positionality, access to sources, and the creation of archives that

document women's political and intellectual contributions. This paper draws on over two decades of research into the history of feminism in Egypt, engaging with women's intellectual production, archival material, and oral histories. My book, *Biography of a Revolution*, situates the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the subsequent counter-revolution within a *longue durée* perspective, placing women's activism at the center of the analysis. Rather than viewing the revolution and Tahrir Square as spaces that enabled women's participation, I argue they are the outcomes of sustained feminist labor across generations.

By reframing categories such as temporality, memory, and subjectivity through a feminist lens, I propose an alternative historiographical approach—one in which women are not peripheral actors but central subjects of revolutionary history. Drawing on Italian, Egyptian, and Aboriginal Australian feminist traditions, I challenge linear notions of time and individual-centered narratives, reimagining the history of feminism in Egypt as both revolutionary and collective biography.

Dr. Soha Bayoumi is a political theorist and historian whose work addresses the questions of health and social justice and the medicine-politics nexus, with a regional focus on the Middle East and a particular interest in postcolonial and gender studies. With a BA from Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Political Science (filière francophone) and a Master's and PhD from Sciences Po Paris, she taught at Harvard University's Department of the History of Science for ten years before joining Johns Hopkins University in 2021 where she is a Teaching Professor in the Medicine, Science, and the Humanities program and an affiliate faculty member of the Department of the History of Medicine. She is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* (JMEWS) and associate editor of the *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* (JIMS). Her research and teaching focus on medicine and authoritarianism; medicine and political resistance; gendered aspects of the practice of medicine; and the visual cultures of medicine, science, and technology (including, among other things, cinema and comics). She is working on a book manuscript on the roles played by doctors in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Egypt since 2011, and her next book project is an examination of the social and political roles played by doctors in semi-colonial and postcolonial Egypt, with a focus on cinematic depictions of medicine and physicians.