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"BEFORE FERGUSON AND GAZA: HOW BLACK-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY IMPACTS SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK TODAY"

DATE: Thursday, October 25, 2018

TIME: 4:30pm - 6:00pm

LOCATION: L-115

PRESENTED BY DR. MAHA NASSAR



Dr. Maha Nassar is an Associate Professor in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Arizona, where she specializes in the cultural and intellectual history of the modern Arab world. She holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago. Her book, which has been shortlisted for the 2018 Palestine Book Awards, is titled *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* (Stanford University Press, 2017). In it, Dr. Nassar examines how Palestinian intellectuals in Israel have connected to global decolonization movements through literary and journalistic writings. Dr. Nassar is also a 2018 Public Voices Fellow with the OpEd Project and a Policy Member of Al-Shabaka - The Palestinian Policy Network. Her scholarly articles have appeared in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *Arab Studies Journal*, and the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. Her analysis and opinion pieces have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The Forward*, *The Hill*, and elsewhere.

In summer 2014, social justice activists noticed striking similarities in the use of state violence against Black American protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, and against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Those parallels have led to a growing transnational movement between Black Americans and Palestinians to push back against dispossession, state violence, and exclusionary nationalism in both contexts. Yet Black-Palestinian solidarity has a much richer history that goes back nearly a century. Dr. Nassar argues that the historical circumstances and legal statuses of different groups of Palestinians have led them to draw on various streams of Black American thought. These streams include radical leftist and internationalist discourses, calls for non-violent resistance, and assertions of cultural pride. Today, with the rise of right-wing governments in the United States and Israel, Palestinians continue to draw on the experiences of Black Americans to point out the similarities—and crucial differences—in the systems of oppression they each face. Understanding these dynamics helps us see the potential benefits and limitations of transnational social justice work today.