Remembering or Forgetting? A Comparative Approach to Violent Pasts in Morocco and Lebanon

a talk by

Dr. Sonja Hegasy

Sonja Hegasy will introduce the circumstances of coming to terms with violent pasts of the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1989) and the mass human rights violations under Hassan II of Morocco (1961-1999). These countries have taken diametrically opposed approaches; while the Lebanese state wants to wipe the slate clean, Morocco's monarchy only recently started to implement the recommendations of the 2004 “Equity and Reconciliation Commission.” In Lebanon, we encounter a *de jure* impunity for perpetrators, in Morocco a *de facto* impunity. What does this mean for the social life of memory? How have Memory Studies addressed the question of amnesia versus remembrance for societal reconciliation? This lecture will shed light on the normative claims behind both countries’ approaches of remembering and forgetting.


Alexander E. Elinson will be the discussant. He is Associate Professor of Arabic at Hunter College. His book Looking Back at al-Andalus: The Poetics of Loss and Nostalgia in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature was published by Brill. He has recently completed a translation of Moroccan novelist Youssef Fadel's A Beautiful White Cat Walks with Me, to be published by the AUC Press in 2016.