



Max Planck Institute for  
Comparative and International  
Private Law | Hamburg

# AFTERNOON TALKS ON ISLAMIC LAW

*Dr. Lena Salaymeh*

Associate Professor of Law, Tel Aviv University

Senior Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Comparative and Intl Private Law

"Imperialist Feminism and Islamic Law"

Thursday, 12 December 2019 – 4 pm

Conference Room 1, 1<sup>st</sup> floor

All employees and guests of the institute as well as other interested parties are cordially invited to the lecture.

Nadjma Yassari

### About the Speaker:

Lena Salaymeh is Associate Professor of Law at Tel Aviv University. She is currently a Guggenheim fellow and a senior research scholar at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and Private International Law (Hamburg). She is a scholar of law and history, with specializations in Islamic jurisprudence, Jewish jurisprudence, and critical historiography. Her scholarship on law and religion brings together legal history and critiques of secularism. A frequent public speaker and prolific scholar, she emphasizes interdisciplinary heuristics to ask historical, historiographic, and jurisprudential questions about Islamic law.

### About the Topic:

The talk will be a discussion of Lena Salaymeh's article "Imperialist Feminism and Islamic Law" which presents three arguments about defects in imperialist feminism. First, Lena shows that imperialist feminists engage in decontextualized comparisons: they consistently compare Western women to the *Muslimwoman*, without comparing Muslim men and women or comparing non-Muslim men and women. These inconsistent comparisons are the source of significant misrepresentations of Muslim women. Second, she proposes that imperialist feminists view Muslim women through the heteronormative male gaze. That is, when imperialist feminists assess Muslim women's practices, they implement the normative assumptions of heterosexual males in the West. Third, she argues that imperialist feminists incorrectly presume that Western women enjoy full autonomy or fail to recognize that women everywhere do not enjoy full autonomy. She presents medieval Islamic legal ideas about a wife's right to sexual fulfillment as evidence that the liberal myth of autonomy is not translatable to orthodox Islamic jurisprudence.

**Prior reading of the article "Imperialist Feminism and Islamic Law" is encouraged, but not required. It can be downloaded at [https://www.academia.edu/40808052/ Imperialist Feminism and Islamic Law](https://www.academia.edu/40808052/Imperialist_Feminism_and_Islamic_Law).**