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The Arab revolutions as an object of history: Moral economy, archives of the present, and revolutionary emotions (1950-2011)

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Wednesday, November 07, 2018 at 6:00 PM
Auditorium B1, College Hall

ABSTRACT
When speaking of revolution in the Arab world, two periods tend to cloud the historical horizon: the movements of 2010-2011, whose status as a revolution, or revolutions, has of late been tangled up in various discussions of Springs and Winters; and the revolutions tied to decolonization and the national emancipation struggles of the 1930s-1960s. Most of these revolutions are confined to national frames of reference, and were turned into instruments of authoritarian regimes – the Algerian Revolution, the Ba’athist coup d’état in Syria, the Libyan Revolution of the “Popular Democratic Republic”, the Nasserite Revolution in Egypt. Between these two periods, we are made to believe that nothing happened. This presentation seeks to forge the way to explain and understand by inviting expression rather than relying on “surprise” and the discourse of suddenness used to speak of revolution. To achieve this outcome, one has to rely on archives (intended as collections of documentation) that can address not only the question of the state and its dealing with threats, but also the people in their own social organization and the moral economy of their struggle.

BIO
Leyla Dakhli is a full-time researcher in the French Center for National Research (CNRS), presently settled in the Marc Bloch Center in Berlin. Her work focuses particularly on the study of Arab intellectuals and social history of the South Mediterranean region. She is the Principal Investigator of the European research grant founded "DREAM - Drafting and Enacting the revolutions in the Arab Mediterranean". She is a member of the editorial committee of the International Review of Social History (Amsterdam) and of Le Mouvement Social (Paris), both prominent journals in social history, and she contributes regularly to other journals. She is also part of the "Open Jerusalem" research team. Her recent publications include Histoire du Proche-Orient contemporain (Paris, La Découverte, 2015) and Le Moyen-Orient (fin XIXe-XXe siècle) (Éditions du Seuil "Points Histoire", Nov. 2016).