



## AMED Studies

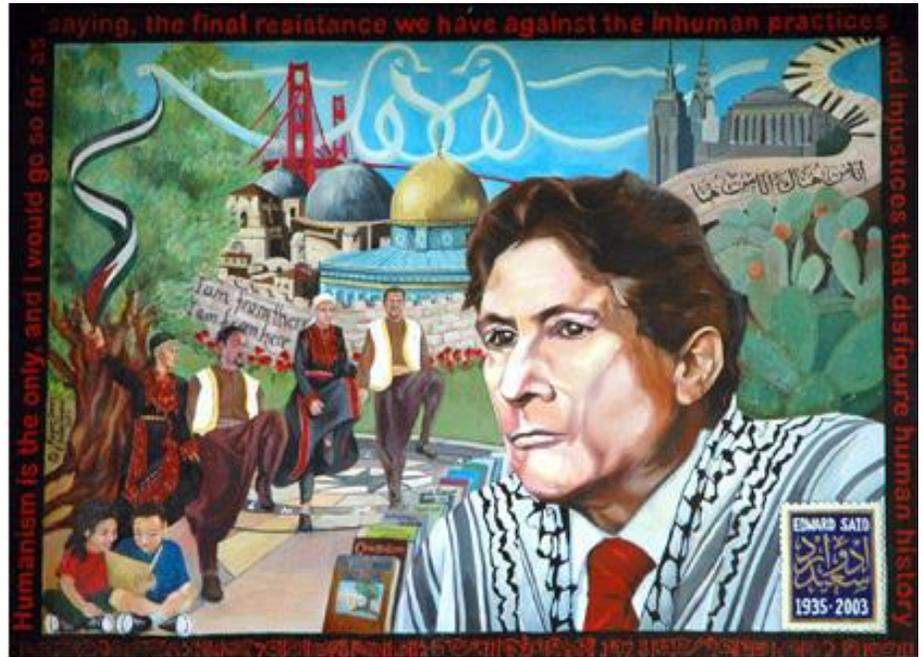
@ WOCMES

World Congress of Middle East Studies

Seville, Spain  
July 16-22, 2018

Call for Proposals!

Deadline: January 15, 2018



The Palestinian Cultural Mural on the Cesar Chavez Student Center celebrates Palestinian culture and the life of scholar Edward Said.

## Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice An International Symposium

### Genealogy and Concept:

Initiated by the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies (SFSU) and co-sponsored by several Palestinian and international academic and intellectual institutions (list is in formation; please contact [teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com](mailto:teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com) or [amed@sfsu.edu](mailto:amed@sfsu.edu)), the international symposium on *Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice* will be convened during the World Congress of Middle East Studies (WOCMES), in Seville, Spain, July 16-20, 2018.

The symposium is part of AMED Studies' multi-site and multi-year project on *Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice*. It builds on fall 2016-spring 2017 *Conversations on Palestine: Colonialism, Racism and Justice*, held at and in collaboration with the Center for Place, Culture and Politics at CUNY Graduate Center; spring 2017 *Teach-in on Palestine* at the Left Forum in New York City on June 3, 2017; the *Thematic Conversation* at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) on November 19, 2017; the international conferences at Birzeit, An-Najah National and other Palestinian universities and research centers in Palestine in March 2018 (<https://amed.sfsu.edu/content/teaching-palestine-pedagogical-praxis-and-indivisibility-justice>); as well as several other symposia, conferences, and seminars at other international locations. For updates, please visit <https://amed.sfsu.edu/> or email [teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com](mailto:teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com) or [amed@sfsu.edu](mailto:amed@sfsu.edu).

### Historical Context: Palestine and Justice

*Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice* is launched to coincide with significant anniversaries in Palestinian history during the 2017-2018 academic year: The 50th

anniversary of the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Sinai and the Golan Heights (June 5, 2017); the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the imposition of the Israeli blockade of Gaza in 2007; the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon (June 6, 1982) and the Sabra and Shatila Massacre (September 17, 2017); the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 2017); the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1987 Intifada (December 7, 1987); and the 70<sup>th</sup> of the UN Partition of Palestine (November 29, 2017), Deir Yassin Massacre (April 9, 2018) and the Nakba (May 15, 2018).

The current political and historical moment is particularly significant. Israeli colonialism, racism and occupation is deepening and entrenching. By contrast, Palestinian resistance to the Zionist project is appropriately taking multiple/different shapes and forms in all the geographies of dispossession, displacement and precarious existence. Shaping Palestinian politics is a regional and international context that is characterized by deepening poverty, civil wars, imperialist interventions, unrestrained neoliberal economic policies, hostile alliances, and the recolonization of previously decolonized nations. Rooted in xenophobic, Orientalist, Zionist, and other supremacist Ideologies, the consolidation of global and regional alliances under the guise of the so-called “war on terror” has fueled an alarming rise in Islamophobic and anti-Arab racism as well as the violent escalations targeting marginalized communities.

These political, social, economic and socio-cultural dynamics shape the learning environment within and outside the classroom and extends beyond campus grounds. The rise of the neoliberal corporate university has shrunk the emancipatory spaces expanded by the radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s in both the Global North and South, including anti-colonial national liberation movements. Epistemological and pedagogical transformations were particularly significant in challenging Eurocentric and colonial education as well as claiming community control over the curriculum. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1968 movements around the world coincides with similar developments in the U.S., particularly in Oceanhill-Brownsville in New York City and at San Francisco State University where the 1968 Student Strike, led by the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), demanded a college for Third World Studies. The 1968 SFSU student strike went beyond the liberal demand for free speech to produce a radical transformation of the curriculum, leading to the creation of the historic College of Ethnic Studies with departments in Africa, American Indian Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latinx (originally Raza) studies. The spirit of '68 opened spaces for initiating and building the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies in 2007 as a pedagogical, scholarly and communal site that challenges colonial, Islamophobic, Orientalist and Zionist hegemonic knowledge on Arab and Muslim communities, in general, and Palestine, in particular.

The emergence of Palestinian autonomous universities, their accreditation, and standards of excellence and innovation has been part and parcel of the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle and liberation movement that impacted Palestinian education under Israeli colonial rule in both the '48 and the '67 areas as well in refugee camps and the Palestinian exilic Diasporas. Palestinian struggle for decolonizing the curriculum for future generations resonates with similar struggles elsewhere, such as the South African uprising against Bantu Education in 1976, the rejection by the American Indian Movement of Boarding schools in North America, and the insistence on resisting the “English Only” instruction in Puerto Rico and other colonized sites in the Western Hemisphere. Similar intellectual projects, theoretical frameworks, strategies and movements have sprung up around the world insisting on breaking the university-community boundaries, validating the pedagogy of the oppressed and demanding the decolonization of the intellect. The 1968 uprisings around the world bring to focus earlier and later such struggles and call for revisiting and reimagining peoples-, resistance- and liberation-centered curriculum and approaches.

### **Pedagogical Praxis/Decolonizing the Curriculum:**

Decolonizing the curriculum was effected by and contributed to the emergence of social movements that were in turn harshly suppressed by state apparatus. Examples are abound from Latin America to the Philippines, Indonesia to Mexico, and Central and South-West Asia to North, East, Central, West and Southern Africa. Palestine was not an exception. Throughout Palestinian history, Israel has targeted and harshly suppressed campus activism as well as the infrastructure of Palestinian education. For example, during the 2002 reinvasion, Israel destroyed several schools and educational institutions, including the buildings of the Palestinian ministries of Education and Higher education. During the 1987 Intifada, Israel closed Palestinian universities and schools for several years and proceeded to ban popular clandestine education and punish educators and parents who violated this ban. The gravity of Israel's colonial rule and its assault on Palestinian education is evident in the fact that not a single commencement at any of the Palestinian universities has ever enjoyed a full graduating class.

Targeting Palestinian education has been a strategic goal of the Israeli state and its research and academic institutions. *Teaching Palestine* --its history, geography, colonization, generations, and resistance--as an emancipatory pedagogical and advocacy project outside of Palestine has also been targeted. At San Francisco State University and elsewhere in the academy, scholarship and education about and advocacy for justice in/for Palestine have been subjected to relentless campaigns that seek to silence, intimidate and bully teachers and students who study, research and engage in the praxis of Palestine. Aimed at creating a chilling effect of new McCarthyism, these campaigns are launched by a well-funded and politically connected Israel lobby network intent on stemming the expanding tide of support for justice in/for Palestine on US college campuses. These attacks are not divorced from similar campaigns in the U.S. academy that target dissenting and critical voices of neoliberalism, the rise of Trump administration and the legitimization of the Alt-right and white supremacy.

Targeting Palestinian education has also been increasingly evident in pressures applied by U.S. and other international donor agencies, such as the World Bank, to impose revisions in Palestinian curriculum in return for funding Palestinian Authority institutions. The goal is to reverse the anti-colonial grounding of Palestinian education that accompanied the rise of the Palestinian liberation movement. Similarly, in its attempts to re-write history, the U.S. white supremacist industry has intensified its campaign to reinstate the pre-1960s Eurocentric and colonial education to normalize as "neutral" genocide, slavery, racism, exclusion and exploitation. In both cases (and many others) the goal is to erase resistance legacies, de-educate future generations and produce docile citizenry that does not question, but normalizes, the unjust status quo.

*Teaching Palestine* will therefore bring together participants who will historicize and contextualize the praxis of Palestine in its multiple manifestations and nuanced dialectics. It will provide a much needed space to think through how to move between the inside of the classroom and the outside of campus, and above all hold ourselves accountable to a complex, nuanced and exciting intellectual line of inquiry. Building on multi-site conversations inside and outside the academy, scholars, advocates and activists will weave theory and praxis in pedagogical, intellectual and community imaginaries, teaching about justice-centered knowledge production on Palestine.

At Birzeit and An-Najah as well as other Palestinian universities and intellectual institutions, *Teaching Palestine* will insure reciprocity in intellectual/community exchange and deepen the sense of solidarities. Participants will spend 1-2 days at each of the sites of the sponsoring universities in a formal conference setting *and* informal interaction with communities on and off campus (villages, refugee camps and town as well as faculty, students and staff). In the process, conference participants will visit geographies of

Palestinian anti-colonial indigenous resistance. The format and programs of other international locations will reflect the context and the collaborating partners.

At WOCMES 2018 in Seville, the plans will include visits and discussions with colleagues and institutions who study 1492 as a founding moment in the settler colonial project in the Americas with its devastating impact on Indigenous communities in the Western Hemisphere as well as the destruction of Andalusian Muslim and Jewish communities and the subsequent transformation of Europe, European colonial projects in Africa and Asia, and the Euro-Mediterranean societies and communities.

We invite international participation that is historically contextualized and currently relevant to discuss justice-centered knowledge production in ways that intentionally invoke and take into account opportunities and limitations of comparative analysis. We particularly seek participants from the global North and South with the understanding that the North exists in the South and vice-versa to challenge the boundaries of what teaching and learning mean, in settings including but not limited to scholarly associations, university classrooms, other classrooms, prisons, formal and informal union/labor settings, social movement and activist contexts, and informal and formal teaching and learning spaces.

Please submit a **300 word** abstract of individual presentations or **500 word proposals (along with individual abstracts)** of pre-organized panels, roundtables, workshops or other creative format by **January 15, 2018**. **Bios of 250** words of all participants are required by the time of submission.

For more information please email [amed@sfsu.edu](mailto:amed@sfsu.edu) or [teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com](mailto:teaching.palestine.amed@gmail.com).