



International Wednesdays



Dr. Hilary Falb Kalisman, University of Colorado Boulder

Development, Control and Belonging: Standardized Testing in the Mid-Century Middle East

International Lecture Series

Wednesday, January 21st, 5 pm, Hörsaal 1
Sensengasse 3A, 1. OG

From the mid-1940s through the late 1950s, British control over its Mandatory territories in the Middle East ended. The inhabitants of Britain's former Mandates, with the prominent exception of Arab Palestinians, gained independence. The new governments of Jordan, Iraq and Israel increased the importance and prevalence of standardized exams, as did, albeit reluctantly, the United Nations Reliefs and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) which was responsible for Palestinian education. In this talk I argue that content-based, high-stakes academic tests which began during the Mandate-era persisted, despite a global cold-war context of modernization and economic development which prioritized vocational education. This two-part talk discusses how tests intersected with narratives of and funding for development. It then analyzes how states sought to use testing to promote national belonging, and to control their populations.

Hilary Falb Kalisman is an Associate Professor of History and Endowed Professor of Israel/Palestine Studies in the Program in Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her research interests include education, standardization, colonialism, state and nation building in Iraq, Israel, Jordan and Palestine. Her first book, *Teachers as State-Builders: Education and the Making of the Modern Middle East* received the annual History of Education Society Outstanding Book Award in 2023.

This event is organized by the Department of Education and the Doctoral School in Education of University of Vienna. It will be followed by an open reception.