



Afternoon Talks on Islamic Law

Thursday, 25 May 2023 – 4:00 p.m. (CEST)

Hybrid Lecture
at the Institute and via Zoom

**“Intersectionality Matters:
New Perspectives on the Study of Islamic Legal Sources”**

*Prof. Dr. Serena Tolino
(University of Bern)*

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

Nadjma Yassari and Shéhérazade Elyazidi



About the Speaker

Serena Tolino is associate professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies and co-director of the Institute for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Societies at the University of Bern, where she also leads the project *TraSIS: Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies. Three Concepts from Islamic Legal Sources*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Before moving to Bern, she was an assistant professor at the University of Hamburg, a postdoc at the University of Zurich and a visiting fellow at the Program in Islamic Law at Harvard Law School. She studied in Naples, Halle and Cairo. Her main research interests include the history of gender, sexuality and LGBTQI+ rights in the Middle East, Islamic law, and the history of slavery in the Middle East.

About the Topic

Intersectionality has been at the center of many public discussions in recent years, extending well beyond feminist circles. However, the concept itself is not new: as early as 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw argued for the necessity of an analytical approach that would consider the intersecting axes of race and gender to make the discrimination faced by Black women visible. Since then, intersectionality has been expanded to include additional axes of analysis, such as for example (dis)ability, sexual orientation, class, age, and more, and has been applied by numerous scholars in Middle Eastern Studies, particularly those working on gender. However, its potential in Islamic legal sources remains under-investigated. Building on Marion Katz's work, who has shown how the category of woman in early Islamic law always intersected with other factors like age and enslavement (Katz 2014), this talk reflects on how intersectionality can enhance our conceptualization of gender in Islamic law, focusing in particular on legal discussions on slavery.