



Titel:

English Title:

'No Friends but the Mountains': Kurdish Histories, Politics and Society in the Middle East and beyond

VAK: 09-50-M7-3

Veranstalter: Dr. Ulrike Flader

Kurzbeschreibung:

The ongoing war in Syria, the struggle against the self-proclaimed Islamic State and the authoritarian politics of the Turkish State have over the past years pushed the *Kurdish Question* back onto international agenda. And indeed, these current issues are impossible to understand without engaging with the political history of the Kurds in the Middle East (and beyond). Kurdish history is fundamentally entangled with the end of the Ottoman Empire, colonialism in the Middle East and the development these four separate modern nation-states, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. It is also a story about the denial of citizenship rights, racism and assimilation policies, which led to fierce conflicts, oppression and forced migration as well as political and social movements and resistance against these state politics.

Taking the struggle for citizenship rights, equality and democracy in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies as its starting point, the seminar attempts to broaden our knowledge on key issues of Kurdish history, politics and society. It will address crucial aspects of colonial history in the Middle East, 'westernization' and orientalism, assimilation politics as well as the struggle against them, highlighting the diversity of social groups and actors, their experiences, perspectives and politics. In doing so, we will discuss e.g. the Kurdish Women's Movement, politics and experiences of certain faith and identity groups such as Yezidis and Alevis, party politics, as well as music, film and literature. We will address questions of past and present, and take into consideration the cross-border and globalized character of Kurdish life and politics allowing for substantial insights into debates and issues relevant to the region more generally. The seminar will encourage you to engage with empirical material and first hand sources, academic literature, films as well as discussing with scholars themselves.

Knowledge of Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish or Farsi is obviously helpful, but *not* a requirement for this course.

This seminar will be conducted in English. There are also no requirements regarding the level of language proficiency for English. However, participants should be interested in working, speaking and doing the assignments in English.

This seminar is also open for MATS-students.

Literatur:

- Çaglayan, H. (2019). *Women in the Kurdish Movement. Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses*, Palgrave MacMillan
- Gunes, C. & Zeydanlioğlu, W. (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 21–46). London; New York: Routledge.
- Hamelink, W. (2016). *The Sung Home: Narrative, Morality, and the Kurdish Nation*. Brill.

- Koçer, S. & Candan, C. (eds.). (2016). *Kurdish Documentary Cinema in Turkey: The Politics and Aesthetics of Identity and Resistance*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- McDowall, D. (2004). *A modern history of the Kurds*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Omarkhali, K. and Kreyenbroek, P. (eds.) (2016). Special Issue: *Yezidism and Yezidi Studies in the Early 21st Century, Kurdish Studies 4 (2)*
- Schmidinger, Thomas. (2018). *Rojava: Revolution, War and the Future of Syria's Kurds*. (Pluto Press).
- Stansfield, Gareth. (2018). *Islamic State, the Kurds and the Future of Iraq*. (Hurst).
- Tugdar, E. Elif and Al, Serhun. (eds.). (2018). *Comparative Kurdish Politics in the Middle East: Actors, Ideas, and Interests*. Palgrave.
- Van Bruinessen, M. (1992). *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed Books.
- Vali, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. Costa Mesa (CA): Mazda Publishers.
- Watts, N. F. (2010). *Activists in office: Kurdish politics and protest in Turkey*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.