



MICHAELMAS TERM 2017

Women's Rights Research Seminar

*Dancing with Words:
Subverting the Master Narrative in Saudi Women's Literature*

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(School of Oriental and African Studies)

Chair:
Soraya Tremayne



Wednesday, 25 October– 2pm
The Board Room, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College

As in other parts of the world, women's empowerment has gained prominence in today's Saudi Arabia, with a surge in initiatives and leadership projects – all seeking to address the themes of 'reform', 'renewal' and 'change.' Drawing on Michel Foucault's 'counter memory' theory, I examine women's discourse as a space of identity, power and agency that counters the 'master narrative' of a patriarchal and religious culture. Surveying women's literature between 1960 and 2015, this seminar which is based on my forthcoming book *Saudi Women Writers: Gender, Identity and Resistance*, examines how women writers are challenging their male-dominated culture and responding to the institutionalization of their womanhood. It begins by discussing women's struggle for rights in the kingdom, and how the 'woman issue' has been used as political bargaining chip by both religious/national and Western discourses. Subsequent chapters discuss themes born out of these women's work, which are 'Breaking Taboos', 'Globalization, Women and the City', 'Violence and Gender' and 'Incarcerated bodies.'



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