



### PRO GED: *Kick-Off Meeting* February 22, 2019

14:30 – 18:45 University of Zurich, Room KO2-F-152 (main building)

14:30 **Welcoming Notes**

14:45 – 15:15 **Presentation of PRO GED**

Bettina Dennerlein & Sarah Farag (University of Zurich)

15:15 – 17:00 **Roundtable Discussion: Gender Equality, Diversity and Critique  
Transnational Perspectives**

„Promoting Gender Equality and Diversity through Shared Knowledge Production“ (PRO GED) is an international Consortium for Education and Research (COFER) funded by [swissuniversities](#) and devoted to fostering research-based exchange in the field of gender and diversity. It is a joint cooperation between three Swiss Institutions of Higher Education and four partners in the Middle East and North Africa coordinated by the Chair of Gender Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Zurich. The roundtable invites the PRO GED partners to discuss current challenges posed by the global circulation of terminologies of gender and diversity and the different ways in which they are understood and put into practice. How can a transnational perspective contribute to selfcritically evaluating the adjustments and transformations these concepts undergo? How can they remain productive as tools of analysis and critique in specific contexts?

#### Participants

Nathalie Amstutz	(University of Applied Sciences and Art Northwestern Switzerland)
Connie Christiansen	(Lebanese American University, Beirut)
Hoda El Sadda	(Cairo University)
Moha Ennaji	(University of Fez)
Marylène Lieber	(University of Geneva)
Fatima Sadiqi	(University of Fez)
<b>Chair:</b> Bettina Dennerlein	(University of Zurich)

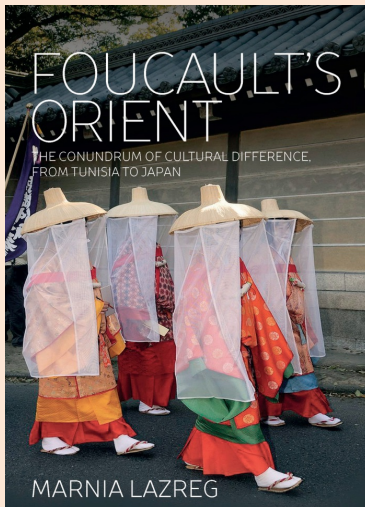
# PRO GED: Kick-Off Keynote Lecture: February 22, 2019

University of Zurich, Room KO2-F-152 (main building)

17:15 – 18:45

**Foucault and the Challenge of Cultural Difference: An Interpretation**

Marnia Lazreg (City University New York)



Although he was not an “orientalist,” Foucault thought of the Orient as a “limit experience” to Western rationality. What did he mean by this? In living and traveling in countries of the “Orient,” Tunisia, Iran and Japan, Foucault faced a philosophical, methodological, and personal challenge. How did he meet this challenge? Did he re-orient his work to take into account cultural difference? Drawing on archival research supplemented by interviews with key scholars, this talk traces the genealogy of Foucault’s view of the Orient, and cultural difference generally, as he faced the challenge of the Iranian Revolution and the 1968 Tunisian students’ revolt. It further examines the short-lived effort he made to amend his conception of revolution and religion. It concludes with a reflection on the reasons for which Foucault’s thought, although culturally circumscribed as well as

largely gender-blind, made inroads in feminist theory, which has typically sought to be culturally inclusive.

Marnia Lazreg is a professor of sociology at Hunter College and at the CUNY Graduate Center. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Bunting Institute (Harvard University); the Pembroke Center for Research and Teaching on Women (Brown University); the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center (Italy); and the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Prof. Lazreg has written extensively on human rights, social class inequality, cultural movements, and gender in the Middle East and North Africa. Her books include *Foucault’s Orient: The Conundrum of Cultural Difference From Tunisia to Japan* (Berghahn 2017); *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton, 2008), *Questioning the Veil: Open Letters to Muslim Women* (Princeton, 2010) and *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (Routledge, 1996).