



MACALESTER

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND
SEXUALITY STUDIES

Layla Zbinden
they/them/theirs

Contact Information

Layla Zbinden, Ph.D.
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Education

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY | May 2025 | University of Southern California

- American Studies and Ethnicity (ASE)

MASTERS OF ARTS | 2022 | University of Southern California

- American Studies and Ethnicity
- Exams: Arab American Studies | Arab Genealogies of Memory | Narratives of Medicine | Auto-Theory and Creative Non-Fiction as Anti-Colonial Methods

MASTERS OF ARTS | 2018 | San Diego State University

- Women's Studies
- Master's Thesis: "Path to Self, Path to Home: Arab Diasporic Reflections on State Violence, Authenticity, and Belonging"

BACHELORS OF ARTS | 2016 | University of California, San Diego

- Psychology and Critical Gender Studies

Dissertation

"Butterfly Affect: Arab Feminist Worldmaking in the Wake of Pain and Illness"

- Dissertation Chair: Evelyn Alsultany, she/her (American Studies and Ethnicity)
- Dissertation Committee: Sarah Gualtieri, she/her (American Studies and Ethnicity), Nayan Shah, he/him (American Studies and Ethnicity), David Truer, he/him (English-Creative Nonfiction)

Fellowships

Wallin Postdoctoral Fellow

Macalester College
Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies
2025-2027

Association of American University Women (AAUW)

American Dissertation Fellowship
\$25,000

2024-2025

Dornsife

Summer Research Grant

\$3,000

2022

Teaching Interests

Arab American Studies
Transnational Feminisms
Disability Studies
History of Medicine
Feminist Theories and Methods
Narrative Medicine
Science and Technology Studies
Indigenous Methodologies
Queer Theory
Islamic Feminisms

**Teaching and TA/RA
Experience**

Instructor of Record: Macalester College

August 2025 - December 2025

WGSS 294: Health and Power: Disability and Debility in a Globalized World

What is “health” in both a globalized world and a world shaped by legacies of colonialism, transatlantic enslavement, climate change, and forced migration? How do we understand disability - chronic or short term - as not just a biological experience, but a social one? In this interdisciplinary class we will look at case studies to try to answer these questions. Through these examples, we will discuss the ways that health, medicine, and disability become used to uphold US/European power and white supremacy, and become the gauge for deciding who is worth the classification of “human” and who is deemed not worthy of life.

January 2026 - June 2026

WGSS 200: Feminist/Queer Theories and Methods

January 2026 - June 2026

WGSS 394: Anti-Colonial Feminisms: Palestinian and Arab Women’s Resistance

Instructor of Record: University of Oregon

March 2023 - June 2023

IRES 101: Introduction to Ethnic Studies

This course served as an introduction to the theories, vocabulary, and areas of inquiry in the field of Ethnic Studies. Some of the topics covered included immigration laws, histories of sterilization, racialized epidemics and endemics, eugenics, gender and sexuality, media representations, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and mass incarceration.

January 2023 - March 2023

IRES 385: Critical Whiteness Studies

This course explored the social construction of race by investigating and historicizing “whiteness” as a racial category in the U.S. Topics included: how and why whiteness was invented; how this category excluded and then included various European immigrants; how whiteness (and white privilege) have been sustained through social, political, economic and legal practices; and how whiteness has been contested by whites and non-whites.

Instructor of Record: University of Southern California

January 2022 - May 2022

AMST 200: Introduction to American Studies: Race, Science, and Health

Students in this course acquired knowledge about the histories of scientific and medical racism and their impacts on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color). We covered specific events - the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women and Black mothers on welfare, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, medical exams conducted at Ellis and Angel Island, Gaza as a weapons testing site, militarized policing of mental health services in Black and Muslim communities, etc. - through racial, feminist, and disability justice frameworks. This course exposed students to the fields of History of Medicine, Public Health, Science and Technology Studies, Genetics and Biology, Disability and Gender Studies.

Teaching Assistant / Dr. Evelyn Alsultany

August 2021 - December 2022, USC

AMST 200: Introduction to American Studies: Race in America

Teaching Assistant / Dr. Viet Than Nguyen

January 2021 - May 2021, USC

AMST 150: The American War in Vietnam

Teaching Assistant / Dr. Evelyn Alsultany

August 2020 - December 2020, USC

AMST 200: Introduction to American Studies: Race in America

Graduate Research Assistant / Dr. Evelyn Alsultany

June 2020 - August 2020, USC

Instructor

August 2017 - December 2017, SDSU

Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)

Graduate Research Assistant / Dr. Doreen Mattingly

May 2017 - June 2017, SDSU

Teaching Assistant / Dr. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh

August 2016 - May 2017, SDSU

WMST 310: Global Cultures, Women's Lives

Publications

(Forthcoming) Zbinden, L. (2025). "A Methodology of Grandmothers: Arab Feminist Offerings to Narratives of Pain and Illness" in *Reimagining the Field of Arab American Studies*, eds. Mahdi, Waleed and Haque, Danielle. University of Texas Press.

Zbinden, L. (2023). "Mitochondrial Agency: Towards a Host/Guest Theory of Co-Immunity", *Spontaneous Generations: Journal of the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology* Volume 11, Issue 1 (Spring/Summer 2023)

doi.org/10.4245/spongen.v11i1.12925
<https://spontaneousgenerations.com>

Zbinden, L. (2021). "Slow Death and Labored Breath: Listening to, Listening Through Inheritance", Mizna Special Issue: I Want Sky. Asian American Writers Workshop and Mizna.

Zbinden, L. (2018). *Path to Self, Path to Home: Arab Diasporic Reflections on State Violence, Authenticity, and Belonging* (Master's thesis).

Zbinden, L., Schlauderaff, S., & Rothblum, E.D. (2017). Review of *Psychology and Gender Dysphoria: Feminist and Transgender Perspectives*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 41, 535.

Professional Development

2021-2022. Graduate Student Coordinator: USC Critical SWANA Studies Research Cluster.

2021. Certificate in Future Faculty Teaching Institute. USC Center for Excellence in Teaching.

2021. Oral History Center Workshop. UC Berkeley.

Conferences

(upcoming) 2025. American Studies Association
Panel: Insurgent Ruptures and Infrastructures of Memory: Community Museums, Digital Resistance, and Post-Imperial Futures
Paper: The Center for Arab Narratives: Arab American Health Research at the End of the World

2023. Middle East Studies Association
Panel: Arab Memory Beyond Nationalism
Paper: Collective Body, Collective Memory: Oral Histories Through Shared Illnesses and Pain

2022. American Studies Association
Roundtable Moderator: #FreeThemAll: Do Terrorists Count as All?

2022. USC Department of Comparative Studies on Literature and Culture
Annual Symposium
Panel: Illness: Getting Sick In/Of Colonial Empires and Post-Colonial
Worlds;
Paper: “Potentials of Chronic Pain: ‘Cripistemologies of Pain’ and
Intimacy Across Empires”

2021. Making Sense: A Humanities Symposium; Rice University School
of the Humanities.
Paper: “Silence and Death: An Inherited Archive”

2020. American Studies Association (canceled due to COVID)
Moderator: Unimaginable Insurgencies: Creative Arab Dissent

2020. Arab American Studies Association (postponed due to COVID)
Paper: Pathologizing Resistance and Mental Health: Anti-Black Racism
and CVE

2019. National Women’s Studies Association; San Francisco, CA.
Moderator, Roundtable: “LivingDying/DyingLiving - On the Practices of
Becoming Extinct Otherwise”

2019. National Women’s Studies Association; San Francisco, CA.
Participant, Roundtable: “Are Love and Healing Accessible to US?:
Intimacy, Care and Crip Kinship Beyond Nationalisms”

2019. American Studies Association; Honolulu, HI.
Paper: “Surveillance Technologies and Questions of Futurity: Decolonial
Arab, Crip, and Queered Possibilities for Liberatory Potentials”

2019. Gender, Bodies, and Technology; Virginia Tech, VA.
Paper: “Stripping for the State and Other Queer Acts: Technologies,
Surveillance, and Questions of Objectivity”

2018. QGRAD; University of California, Los Angeles, CA.
Paper: “Decolonization is not a Metaphor: Sustainable Muslim Fashion,
#becauseweveread, and Cyber Activism as (Web)sites of Radical
Decolonization.”

2018. 14th Annual James A. Rawley Conference in the Humanities;
Lincoln, NE.
Paper: “On the Margins: Disrupting Narratives of Muslim Women”

Memberships

Consortium for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine,
2023-present
American Studies Association (ASA), 2019-present

Middle East Studies Association (MESA), 2018-present
Arab American Studies Association (AASA), 2017-present
Association for American University Women (AAUW), 2023-present

Faculty References

Evelyn Alsultany, evelyn.alsultany@usc.edu

Professor, Department of American Studies and Ethnicity; University of Southern California

Sarah Gualtieri, gualtier@usc.edu

Professor, Department of American Studies and Ethnicity, Middle East Studies; University of Southern California

Nayan Shah, nayansha@usc.edu

Professor, Department of American Studies and Ethnicity; University of Southern California