

The Labour of Hope:

meritocracy and neoliberal disconnection in post-revolutionary Egypt



This talk will sketch out the argument of a book I am working on at the moment, which interrogates the everyday practices through which young educated Egyptian men cope with an inability to locate stable work and durable love/marriage. I argue that activities which produce fleeting distraction and sustain a vital sense of hope for a good future, constitute a form of emotional labour in the realm of social reproduction that enables these precarious workers, and perhaps precarious workers in other contexts, to keep investing in exclusionary labour markets. By retaining focus on individuals as the determinant of success instead of structural constraints and inequalities, I also argue that these practices are crucial in legitimising the reproduction of precarity and disconnection in contemporary economies.

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Thursday 25 February 1-2pm

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**Presentation followed by commentary,
Q&A.**

Discussant: Dr. Sally Lloyd Evans

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