

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

2019 Annual Undergraduate

# History Conference



International Law and Colonialism in Africa  
at the Turn of the 20th Century: The Ottoman Case

## Dr. Mostafa Minawi

Associate Professor of History, Director of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Initiative, Cornell University

Friday, April 5, 2019  
5–7 pm • Founders Hall 232

This talk reflects on the implications of “juridical colonialism”—the legalistic justification of European colonization of non-European lands—on the Ottoman Empire’s own imperial project. Tracing the involvement of the Ottoman Empire in multi-lateral agreements which affirmed or assumed Ottoman sovereignty, I show how European Powers increasingly marginalized Ottoman legal rights through extra-legal methods. Using the challenges to Ottoman sovereignty along the Somali Coast, this paper argues that the legalistic justifications for usurping Ottoman sovereignty in Africa can only be fully understood if we think of late-19th-century International Law as a system of beliefs rooted in a history of Euro-centric notions of sovereignty that privileged European states’ belief in of their superiority over the letter of the law.

Dr. Mostafa Minawi’s current research focuses on Ottoman Imperialism on the African Red Sea Coast at the turn of the 20th century.

His first book, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa* (Stanford University Press, 2016) was translated and published in Turkish in 2018. Outside of academia, he is involved in volunteer work related to the global refugee crisis and rising risk to scholars around the world.

**Undergraduate Presentations:**  
Saturday, April 6, 9 am–12:30 pm  
Founders Hall 232

**Refreshments  
will be served.**