Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy

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Monday, October 16, 12:15 – 1:30 pm
UCLA School of Law, Room 1447
RSVP Here

In the first book published by Professor Khaled Abou El Fadl as editor for the Oneworld series on Islam, Human Rights and Democracy, authors Dalia F. Fahmy and Daanish Faruqi investigate the putative about-face of a critical mass of prominent Egyptian liberal activists and intelligentsia, who despite spending full careers pursuing progressive reform under Mubarak ultimately remained silent in the face of, or outright lent support to, the counterrevolutionary forces that culminated in the military coup of July 2013. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the editors ultimately argue that the latest failures of Egyptian liberals in the context of 2013 are indicative of a broader set of contradictions inherent in the liberal project in Egypt, from its institutional dimensions and frameworks — from Egyptian party politics, to the judiciary, to civil society organizations — to its ideological and philosophical foundations. Professor Abou El Fadl will give context to the importance of this book in light of his new Oneworld series, and also discuss his own chapter in the book entitled “Egypt’s Secularized Intelligentsia and the Guardians of Truth.” Fahmy and Faruqi will elaborate on these institutional and philosophical contradictions endemic to Egyptian liberalism, and offer potential correctives for rethinking liberalism in a manner that does sufficient justice to Egyptian social and cultural identity, and that overcomes its elitist and authoritarian proclivities.

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