

## FALL 2017 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

*Date: Wednesday, October 25*

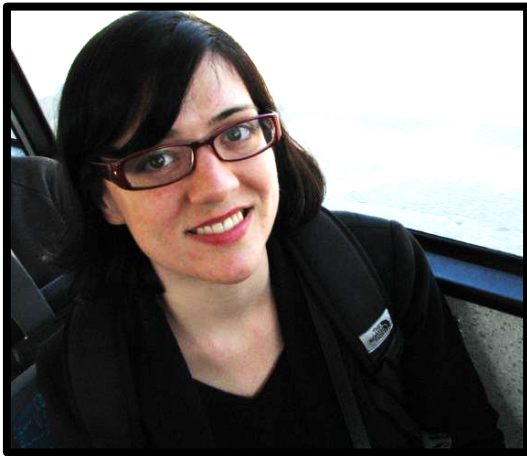
*Time: 3:15 – 5PM*

*Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261*

# Dr. Sarah Bakker Kellogg

Hunt Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar  
Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion, UC Berkeley

## *Christianity as Kinship Practice: Ritual, Ethics, and Indigeneity in the Syriac Diaspora*



Political debates about migration and the accommodation of religious minorities in Western Europe fixate with increasing regularity on the religious difference of immigrants and refugees from the Middle East, particularly among Dutch Muslims. In the Netherlands, these debates are spurred, in part, by state anxiety over religion's undue influence on family relationships and domestic life, which is considered the proper domain of secular social workers and academic experts.

From the perspective of Syriac Orthodox Christians in diaspora, who for forty years have fled waves of political violence in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, the Dutch state's approach to minority religious accommodation is as threatening to their ethnoreligious identity as is the physical violence from which they fled. In this talk, I examine how and why Syriac Christians respond to the twin threats of political violence and cultural assimilation through sonic and ethical experiments in Christian ritual practice.

Drawing upon nearly ten years of ongoing ethnographic research among the Syriac Christian diaspora in the Netherlands, I show how liturgical performance is constructed as a mode of political activism in how it both reinforces and remakes the relationship between Christian ethics and Christian kinship. Taken together, ritual, ethics, and kinship give form to Syriac Christian understandings of ethnic belonging, which in turn shapes their efforts to seek recognition from the Dutch state, the European Union, and the United Nations as an Indigenous people of the Middle East.

Sarah Bakker Kellogg (UC Santa Cruz, Anthropology, 2013) is a Hunt Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar at the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion at the University of California - Berkeley.