

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies  
Visiting Speaker Lecture  
Wednesday 22 January 2020  
Lecture Theatre 1, IAIS

5.30pm

[Coffee and tea in the Common Room from 5.10pm]

## **Emotions and modernity in colonial India. From Balance to Fervor**

Professor Margrit Pernau

Senior Researcher, Center for History of Emotions  
Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin  
Extraordinary Professor, Freie Universität Berlin



Professor Pernau is a leading specialist in the history of emotions using the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history) developed by Reinhart Koselleck, with pre-colonial and colonial Muslim South Asia as her main area of study. She will present a lecture on her new book, *Emotions and Modernity in Colonial India*, published in October 2019 by Oxford University Press. With this pioneering project, Margrit Pernau brings the 'history of emotions' approach to South Asian studies. A theoretically sophisticated and erudite investigation, *Emotions and Modernity in Colonial India* maps the history of emotions in India between the uprising of 1857 and World War I. Situating the prevalent experiences, interpretations, and practices of emotions of the time within the context of the major political events of colonial India, Pernau goes beyond the dominant narrative of colonial modernity and its fixation with discipline and restraint, and traces the contemporary transformation from a balance in emotions to the resurgence of fervor. The current volume is based on a large archive of sources in Urdu, many being explored for the first time. Pernau grounds her work on such diverse sources as philosophical and theological treatises on questions of morality, advice literature, journals and newspapers, nostalgic descriptions of courtly culture, and even children's literature. This close look into individual experiences, practices, and interpretations reveals the myriad emotions of the day, and the importance of these micro-histories in presenting an alternative account of colonial India.