The Israeli government’s approach to controlling the West Bank and Gaza, and changes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the past fifty years involve evolving official reinterpretations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as well as human rights laws. These reinterpretations, while intellectually sophisticated, deviate significantly from international consensus about the status of the occupied territories and the rights and duties of an occupying state. The reinterpretive project has been undertaken in order to, first, assert that the territories are not “occupied,” and then to “legalize” state practices toward Palestinians that violate customary legal norms and bedrock rules of IHL, including torture, targeted killing, and the use of massive force against civilians.

About the Speaker:
Lisa Hajjar was the Edward Said Chair of American Studies at the American University of Beirut in 2014-2015. Professor Hajjar’s publications include Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza (University of California Press, 2005) and Torture: A Sociology of Violence and Human Rights (Routledge 2013).