February 25, Kuwait’s National Day, marks the date in 1950 that Abdullah al-Salem (popularly known as the father of Kuwaiti democracy) came to power. National Day also commemorates the anniversary of Kuwait’s independence from Britain in 1961, which was followed by the promulgation of the Constitution in 1962 and establishment of the National Assembly in 1963. National Day is therefore a celebration of Kuwait’s genesis as a modern and democratic nation-state. However, is Kuwait truly a democracy?

In an attempt to address this question, this panel discussion will critically unpack the meaning of democracy in Kuwait, and analyze the country’s complex experiences as a self-proclaimed democratic nation. The main questions to be discussed are: What is Kuwait’s style of democracy and how did we get here? What tensions undermine Kuwait’s democratic development? Where is Kuwait’s current system going, and what can be done to improve its democratic credentials?

**PANELISTS:**

RANIA AL-NAKIB is Assistant Professor of Education at GUST. Her research focuses on human rights education and education for democratic citizenship in Kuwait.

FAHAD AL-SUMAIT is Department Chair of Communications at GUST. His research focuses on contested discourses on Arab democratization in the United States and Kuwait.

SALEH AL-NAFISI researches the effects of natural resources on the political and economic development of Kuwait from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

**MODERATED BY:**

FARAH AL-NAKIB, Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Center for Gulf Studies at AUK.

Tuesday, 18 February 2014
6:00 - 7:30 pm
AUK Auditorium