Debates about the intertwined nature of humanity, human rights and humanitarianism have brought historians into new fields bridging social, international, legal and colonial history. Keith David Watenpaugh's book *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (University of California, 2015) contributes to this debate from the unique perspective of the First World War and its aftermath in the Middle East. In this talk, he argues that international and local efforts to address mass violence against the Ottoman Empire's ethnic minorities gave rise to a new form of conceptualizing and writing about human suffering and human need — humanitarian knowledge. Humanitarian knowledge was not only necessary to the design and implementation of humanitarian programs for rehabilitation and relief, but was a critical element in the process of naming genocide and comprehending its vast, multigenerational consequences for humanity.

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