Religion in the Public Sphere: From the Ancient Years to the Post-Modern Era

20-22 June 2023

THIRTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIETY

School of Theology, Laboratory of Pedagogy and Religious Education
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
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Dear Participants,

It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you to the 13th International Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society, hosted by the prestigious National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. This conference, scheduled to take place from the 20th to the 22nd of June 2023, promises to be a momentous gathering of scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world, all united by a common interest in exploring the dynamic intersection of religion in the public sphere, spirituality, and society.

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with its rich history and intellectual heritage, has long recognized the profound significance of religion in the public sphere and the vital role of theology in fostering a deeper understanding of human spirituality. As the chairperson of this conference, I am delighted to witness the culmination of our university’s dedication to the study of religion and the thought-provoking discussions that will surely ensue during our time together.

Located in the enchanting city of Athens, a place steeped in centuries of culture and wisdom, this conference provides a unique platform for scholars and practitioners to convene and exchange ideas, fostering a vibrant intellectual discourse that transcends geographical boundaries. Athens, with its historical significance as the birthplace of democracy, philosophy, and numerous religious traditions, offers a setting that encapsulates the essence of this conference.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the remarkable work carried out by the School of Theology and the Laboratory of Pedagogy and Religious Education. Their tireless efforts in promoting interfaith dialogue, understanding, and research have significantly contributed to the academic study of religion and spirituality. This conference serves as an opportunity for participants to engage with the latest scholarship and to network with esteemed colleagues, creating new avenues for collaboration and the advancement of knowledge.

During our time together, we invite you to immerse yourself in a diverse range of sessions, keynote speeches, and a workshop that cover a broad spectrum of topics related to religion and spirituality in society. From examining the role of religion in fostering social justice to exploring the intersection of theology and contemporary issues, this conference promises to be intellectually stimulating and personally enriching.

Once again, I extend my sincere welcome to all participants of the 13th International Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society. May your time in Athens be marked by fruitful discussions, transformative experiences, and lasting memories. Together, let us embark on a journey of discovery, understanding, and enlightenment, as we explore the multifaceted dimensions of religion and spirituality in society.

Yours faithfully,

Marios Koukounaras Liagkis
Conference chair, 13th International Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society
Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 13th International Conference on Religion and Spirituality in Society, which this year is being held at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece (20–22 June 2023).

The Special Focus of this year’s conference is “Religion in the Public Sphere: From the Ancient Years to the Post-Modern Era.” The theme is extraordinarily appropriate for a conference held in Athens. It was precisely in this city that the various theories and explanations of the role of religion in society and politics, in the agora and the streets, emerged in antiquity. In a way, the participants in this congress continue the task of reflection that began approximately 2500 years ago.

The Religion and Spirituality in Society Research Network is in continuous growth. The thirteen editions of the annual conference counted with the collaboration of prestigious academic institutions on both sides of the Atlantic, among them the National University of Costa Rica, the University of California at Berkeley, the Imperial College of London, the University of Granada, the University of Cordoba or the Center for Byzantine Neo-Greek and Cypriot Studies of the University of Granada. This year we are honored to have the invaluable collaboration of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

In addition, the main objective of the Research Network is academic collaboration, both through the publication of the Network’s journal and books and by facilitating contact between researchers and teachers from all over the world, thus enabling a flow of knowledge that encompasses all the multifaceted facets of a phenomenon as complex as religion, which resists being confined to a single specialty.

Of course, this is only possible with the members of the Research Network and the participants of this conference. You are the real protagonists, and I hope to have the opportunity to greet you personally during these days.

Best Regards,

Luis Gonzaga Roger Castillo
Center of Byzantine, Modern Greek and Cypriot Studies
University of Granada
Research Network Chair
Founded in 2011, the **Religion in Society Research Network** explores the relationship between religion in society and the changing nature of spirituality. We seek to build an epistemic community where we can make linkages across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries. As a Research Network, we are defined by our scope and concerns and motivated to build strategies for action framed by our shared themes and tensions.

**Scope & Concerns**

Not that religion and spirituality can, in their very nature, ever be neutral subjects of discussion. In fact, religion is one of the most interest-laden of all discussions; religion supplies meanings in the world. Spirituality is an ultimate source of interest. Religion provides an account of human origins, responsibilities, and destinies. It sets out to explain the nature of being and it creates a framework for interpreting human action according to principles of good and evil.

Religion’s stance is not only interest-intensive. It is also transcendental. Religion strives to reach beyond the lifeworld, grasping deeper meanings that may not always be self-evident in the ordinariness of everyday experience. This much can be said of religion in general. As for religions in particular, the range is as wide as the cultural experiences of human beings.

“First nations” or indigenous peoples practiced a broad range of immanentist religions, including variants of totemism, animism, nature worship, shamanism, and ancestor worship—perhaps, in one perspective, for as long as the one hundred thousand years or more of our existence as a species. Religion, then, was less a separate institutional, spatial, and temporal space than it became in subsequent moments of human history. Religious meanings were deeply and integrally layered into the material and social worlds, thus representing a belief in the pervasive immanence of spiritual powers in natural circumstances and human affairs.

From about five thousand years ago, religious modes took a radically new textual-narrative form in conjunction with parallel revolutions in agriculture, the domestication of animals, village or city dwelling, the invention of writing, and institutionalized economic class inequality. The new religions are rarely unequivocally monotheistic (monotheistic systems of deity mostly have multiple personalities and deified prophets or saints). Nor are they simply polytheistic (polytheistic systems of deity mostly have hierarchies of major and lesser deity). Their key features are the progressive solidification of religious expression into sacred texts, sanctified buildings, and the institutional formation of a class of priestly interpreters and intermediaries. The common modes of meaning of these second-phase religions are even signified at times to the extent of sharing historic origins or exemplary persons and narratives.

Religious meanings took a third paradigmatic turn with the arrival of modernity. Or, more to the point, a new mode of spirituality emerges in a parallel universe of meaning alongside the persistence of the first two. For the first time in human history, modernity provides an alternative meaning system which is a-religious—based on mixes of the epistemes of science, civic law, economic progress, vernacular materialism, and human reason. At the same time, atheism and agnosticism emerge as engaged counterpoints to religion.

Religion, nevertheless, powerfully persists in forms characteristic of all three of these world-historic moments of meaning-ascription. Modern, liberal reinterpretations of second-phase world religions recast sacred cosmologies as metaphorical and are not incompatible with science. They perform re-readings of sacred narratives in the light of modernity’s ethical aspirations such as for gender equality, human biomastery, non-violence, and material wellbeing for all. The shift is so profound that these modes of religiously might be characterized as third phase.
Meanwhile, others insist on holding to the truths of second-phase religiosity. In practice, they do this by means of textual literalism, religious fundamentalism, and didactic religious education. The chasm between liberal and fundamentalist religiosity in modernity at times seems as great as that between religionists and anti-religionists. And, to add an original layer to our contemporary complexity, first nation religions persist, and at times thrive, while revivals of immanentist religion are found in “new age” and other such spiritualities.

Today, the search for meaning-grounds can only be described as a scene of unprecedented pluralism. To this, we can react in several ways. We can adopt pluralism as a modern value and strive for shared meanings and harmony in difference on earth. Or, we can regard pluralism as a force undermining the integrity of religion and, with it, the communal distinctiveness of specific religious ways of life—in this frame of reference pluralism is an aspect of modernity that should be resisted.

The scope of this conference, journal, book series, and online Research Network is as broad as possible in the field of religious studies. Together, these forums seek to create a space for the representation of any and all perspectives on the role of religion and spirituality in society. We also welcome a wide variety of disciplinary practices. The perspectives captured in these spaces range from committed within-religion views, to comparative or pan-religious views, to areligious empirical or theoretical readings of the role of religion and spirituality in society. Above all, they provide spaces for open dialogue on the sources of foundational or essential meaning.
Dr. Luis G. Roger-Castillo
Professor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA

Grade in Law (University of Granada), Grade in Theology (University of Granada), Grade in Philosophy (UNED). Ph.D. in Philosophy. Researcher of the Center of Byzantine, Modern Greece and Cypriot Studies of the University of Granada. His academic interests are Comparative Religions, Neoplatonism, Scholar Curriculum, Philosophy of Education, Origin of Societies, Culture in Late Antiquity and Philosophy of Law. Author of several articles, chapters and conferences in the field of Philosophy and Theology.
The Religion in Society Research Network is grateful for the foundational contributions, ongoing support, and continued service of our Advisory Board.

- Catherine Caufield, Concordia University of Edmonton, Canada
- Recep Dogan, Charles Sturt University, Australia
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- Luis G. Roger-Castillo, University of Granada, Spain
- María Ángeles Gallego, Spanish Council for Scientific Research, CCHS - CSIC, Madrid, Spain
- Frank Feder, Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Göttingen, Germany
Thirteenth International Conference
on Religion & Spirituality in Society
Founded in 2011, the Religion in Society Research Network explores the relationship between religion in society and the changing nature of spirituality. We seek to build an epistemic community where we can make linkages across disciplinary, geographic, and cultural boundaries.

Past Events
- 2011 - University Center, Chicago, USA
- 2012 - University of British Columbia-Robson Square, Vancouver, Canada
- 2013 - Arizona State University, Tempe, USA
- 2014 - Universidad Nacional Costa Rica, Heredia, Costa Rica
- 2015 - University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
- 2016 - The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., USA
- 2017 - Imperial College London, London, UK
- 2018 - University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
- 2019 - University of Granada, Granada, Spain
- 2020 - UBC Robson Square, Vancouver, Canada (Virtual)
- 2021 - University of Córdoba Córdoba, Spain (Virtual)
- 2022 - University of Córdoba Córdoba, Spain
The **Religion in Society Research Network** is thankful for the contributions and support of the following organizations.
2023 Special Focus—Religion in the Public Sphere: From the Ancient Years to the Post-Modern Era

From the ancient years, religion has been a crucial factor in humans’ culture and personal and social life. Although modernity wanted religion marginalized to private spheres, religious traditions and faith communities are still in the public sphere, and as Habermas indicated they gained ‘unexpected political importance’. In different contexts worldwide different forms of relations between religion, civil society, the private sector, and the state have emerged while religion has its role in education, health care, social or charity institutions, and public services. Religious debates and conflicts as well as terrorism and fundamentalism related to religions appear as well. This year’s conference calls on researchers from religious studies, political science, theology, education, cultural studies, historical studies, philosophy, and law to explore the role of religion in the public sphere, from the ancient years to the postmodern era, the identity construction, the development of narratives, legal, political and human rights issues related to religion and faith, the public image of religious groups, the contribution of religion to culture and education.
Marios Koukounaras-Liagkis
Associate Professor of Pedagogy and Religious Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Marios studied Theology (BA, MA, PhD) Greek Literature (BA), and Social Pedagogy (PostDoc). He is an Assistant Professor of Religious Education at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). He worked as a Religious Education teacher and as a Consultant to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs.
**Gert Biesta**  
Professor, Educational Theory and Pedagogy, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, UK  

"Religious Education in the Impulse Society: On the Need for Transcendence"

Gert Biesta is Professor of Public Education in the Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy at Maynooth University, Ireland, and Professor of Educational Theory and Pedagogy at the Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. He is co-editor of the British Educational Research Journal and the Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, and associate editor of Educational Theory. He currently advises the Dutch government on the reform of the curriculum for primary and secondary schools. His work focuses on the theory of education and the theory and philosophy of educational and social research. He has a particular interest in teaching, teacher education, citizenship education, arts education, religious education, and education policy. Recent books include: World-Centred Education: A View for the Present (Routledge 2021), Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction (Bloomsbury 2020), Religion and education: The forgotten dimensions of religious education (co-edited with Patricia Hannam; Brill 2021). So far his work has appeared in 20 different languages.

**James Walters**  
Founding Director, Faith Centre and the Religion and Global Society Research Unit, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK  

"Postsecular Temporalities and the Clash of Futures"

James Walters is founding director of the Faith Centre and the Religion and Global Society Research Unit at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is a Professor in Practice in the Department for International Relations and an affiliated researcher in the Department of International Development. The LSE Faith Centre promotes religious literacy and interfaith leadership among the LSE’s global student body, in government and to wider global publics. Religion and Global Society conducts research in the field of religious pluralism, including the intersections of climate change and women’s leadership in the creation of religiously plural institutions. Their work is currently focused on Egypt, Israel, Palestine, and Indonesia, as well as in the UK. Professor Walters’ books include Loving Your Neighbour in an Age of Religious Conflict (2019), Religion and the Public Sphere: New Conversations (2018), and Religious Imaginations: How Narratives of Faith are Shaping Today’s World (2018). He is a priest in the Church of England and a Canon Theologian at Chichester Cathedral in West Sussex, UK.
Aristotle Papanikolaou is professor of theology, the Archbishop Demetrios Chair of Orthodox Theology and Culture, and the Co-Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University. He is also Senior Fellow at the Emory University Center for the Study of Law and Religion. In 2012, he received the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the Humanities. Among his numerous publications, he is the author of Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion, The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy, and Η Πολιτική της Θέωσις? He is also co-editor of Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity, Fundamentalism or Tradition: Christianity after Secularism, Christianity, Democracy and the Shadow of Constantine (Winner of 2017 Alpha Sigma Nu Award in Theology), Orthodox Constructions of the West, Orthodox Readings of Augustine, and Thinking Through Faith: New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars. He enjoys Russian literature, Byzantine and Greek music, and is a bit of a foodie.

"Political Communion: The Proper Role of the Church in a Democratic Public"
Each year a small number of Emerging Scholar Awards are given to outstanding early-career scholars or graduate students. Here are our 2023 Emerging Scholar Award Winners.

- Stephen Christopher
  University of Copenhagen, Denmark

- Núria Reguart-Segarra
  Universitat Jaume I, Spain

- Melanie Rae Perez
  Florida International University, USA

- Nicky Gutierrez
  Bethany Theological Seminary, USA

- Alexander Hurtsellers
  University of Exeter, UK

- Iro Potamousi
  National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

- Evangelos Markantonis
  National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

- Nazir Paul Nazar
  National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

- Evita Rentzi
  National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

- George Pantoglou
  National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

- Lise Dheedene
  University of Antwerp, Belgium

- José María Toro Piqueras
  Università Ca’ Foscari, Italy
Emerging Scholars

Vineet Gairola
Indian Institute of Technology
Hyderabad, India

Fabio Andrés Medina Ostos
Universidad Central, Colombia

Hannah Tonn
United Lutheran Seminary, United States

Angelos Mavropoulos
Dublin City University, Ireland
Presentations, Presenters, and Participants
Interfaith Dialogue and Regenerating the Public Square

Peter Admirand, Associate Professor, Research Convenor, Director of Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, Theology, Philosophy, and Music, Dublin City University, Ireland

This paper focuses on how interreligious (or interfaith) dialogue is a crucial component in establishing a robust and pluralist public square (or sphere). Building on my work in Jewish-Christian dialogue (as the Irish Co-Chair of Christians and Jews) and atheist-theist dialogue (Seeking Common Ground, 2021), and my role as the Director of Ireland’s only academic centre focused on interreligious dialogue, I examine why and how such dialogues and partnerships can contribute to healing both the stigma and perceived reality of a toxic public square, often characterised by group conflicts and echo-chambers. Charting the deeply encouraging changes in Jewish-Christian relations since the Shoah (focusing on texts like the 10 points of Seelisberg, Nostra Aetate, “Dabru Emet,” and “The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable,” I show how groups that had once seemed like bitter enemies have made deep and lasting strides in partnership, mutual trust, and stronger theological and social connections. Less heralded, but also promising, are the growing developments of atheist and humanist voices involved in interfaith dialogue from local to international platforms. Here I focus on the work of humanists in Ireland involved in the Dublin City Interfaith Forum and my co-written book on theist-atheist shared values with atheist philosopher, Andrew Fiala. Drawing upon these overlapping but distinct dialogues, I highlight five values that these dialogues hone and develop which can help regenerate and heal the kinds of ruptures that fracture our public square.
Religion and Spirituality in a Spacefaring Society: Interdisciplinary Explorations

Demetrios Alexopoulos, Special Associate for Research and Development, School of Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Attiki, Greece

This paper briefly discusses, through the lens of astrobioethics, key religious and spiritual aspects of humanity’s current spacefaring societies. On the face of planet Earth, humans as religious and/or spiritual beings have evolved to become the ruling species. Likewise, religious and/or spiritual movements have risen through the millennia to become a recognized and respectable, when not decisive, element of human societies and civilizations. The Space Age, however, had apparently quite different tags in store for these earthly power-players. In the cosmic web of vastness and alterity untold that constitutes the observable universe, humans and religions seem to fall among the rarest and strangest occurrences. They seem to demonstrate every sign of not belonging, of not fitting in well with the larger cosmos, not in the long-term the very least. At the same time, outer space brings forth new dimensions in religious and/or spiritual expression and growth that are fast becoming part and parcel of the public sphere, especially in the social context of the space powers. Astrobioethics of religions, an emerging discipline of the space sciences family, could provide us, it is argued, with a theoretical framework and interdisciplinary roadmaps that work towards an meaningful understanding and beneficial management of the religious and/or spiritual sphere in mankind’s present, or future, celestial adobes.

Dissecting Online Patriarchal Masculinity: How Christian Fundamentalism Bleeds into the Manosphere

Ty Anderson, Student, Geography, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma, United States

In recent years there has been increasing dialogue online that has projected patriarchal masculinity, in particular, the Manosphere. Such rhetoric has worked in opposition to the feminist movement and has been wildly accepted by youth in America. Using the works of feminist scholar bell hooks, this study examines the relationship between the Manosphere, patriarchal masculinity, and fundamentalist White Christianity, mainly how the manosphere develops the same arguments and perspectives as those presented in Christian fundamentalism. Specifically, we explore how these concepts work to hinder intimate relationships and perpetuate sexist notions while also examining capitalist exploitation and racism.
Liturgies and Academics! The Contribution of the School of Theology of the University of Athens to the Work of the Special Synodical Committee for Liturgical Rebirth of the Church of Greece

Fotios Apostolos, Assistant Professor, Department of Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

In our paper, we make reference to the Special Synodical Committee for Liturgical Rebirth of the Church of Greece and its contribution to the request for the renewal of worship from its foundation up to our days. We emphasize the pleasant collaboration with the Greek academic community and especially with the Theological School of the University of Athens. Prominent liturgists and professors from the Theological School of Athens continuously participate in the committee’s work with original presentations at the conferences it organizes and publications, which contribute significantly to the renewal efforts, which actually began with the establishment of the committee by the blessed Archbishop Christodoulos in 1998. The various reactions that this whole initiative caused made evident the difficulty of a precise theological delimitation of the term Liturgical renewal and what it entails for the liturgical life of the Church today. The purpose of our study is to demonstrate the contribution of the academic community and particularly of the Theological School of Athens to the renewal liturgical movement of the Greek Church, and the attempt to define the renewal of worship through the liturgical tradition of Orthodoxy.

New Challenges in the Study of Animism: Human–Trees Relations Rediscovered

Eliran Arazi, PhD candidate, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, France
Miguel Astor-Aguilera, Professor, Arizona State University, United Kingdom
Elizabeth Oriel, Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, Denmark
Youval Rotman, Professor, Jewish History, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Guido Sprenger, Professor, Institute of Anthropology, Heidelberg University, Germany
Nurit Stadler, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

We address the cultural and socio-religious role of animism by focusing on different forms of human-tree relationship in distinct religious systems. Rather than drawing on explanations that concentrate on human actions, meanings, and interpretations of animism, such as those informed by representational, interpretive, and hermeneutic approaches to human thought and practice, we offer to explore the relationships between humans and those who could be defined as “non-human subjects”. In this panel we offer new approaches to go beyond the “ontological turn” in the study of animism that challenged the category of “subjects” as humans. The ontological turn led scholars to explore the definition of “non-humans” subjects, especially plants and trees, as possessing their own self, mind and immanent agency. We wish to expand on this and examine the ways by which the relationships with them are forged, and the field of interactions between human and vegetal subjects that such relationships open. This will enable to detect the interpersonal dimension that animism establishes between society and the natural environment. Most of the scholarship about animism focused on beliefs in nature spirits as a static system. We wish to go beyond such premise and examine animism as a religious experience which offers opportunities of change. Natural subjects thus function as social agents, which we term here “new challenges in the study of animism”. By forging relationships with trees, we suggest, society opens ways to make its structures dynamic and flexible.
Spiritual Warfare Symbolism and the Use of Cryptography in Films

Pepperdine University, Adjunct Faculty and PhD Global Leadership and Change Student, Graduate School of Education and Psychology

The war between good and evil has existed from the beginning of time. It has been illustrated in subtle ways within cinematic experiences using an ancient form of hidden communication called cryptography. The encoding of spiritual warfare themes and symbolism into cinematic film storylines has occurred from the early pioneer film era to the present-day new millennium. The use of cryptography by writers and film production executives is by strategically placing secret messages of the occult and embedding them into storylines, scenes, costumes, and plots. The use of cryptography is inspired by mystical practices, including Freemasonry, Rosicrucian, and other Gnostic and Hermetic orders. The significance of the research on this topic is to provide education and awareness of how occult messages and spiritual warfare themes are coded into media, specifically films. The inquiry process uses a social constructivism worldview that creates a conceptual framework for an ontological qualitative research approach. The interpretive research focus is explored by critically analyzing the existing literature on film and television writers, Christian symbolism, and the use of cryptography. The representation of Christian symbolism in films combined with research interpretation and meaning concludes that analyzing films is a religious philosophy that prompts an insightful understanding of the Trinity of Christianity and the spiritual war for the salvation of souls against the triad of evil.

The Neglected Agents: Individuals in the Protestant Churches and the Associated Institutions in Hong Kong during the Latter Half of the Twentieth Century

Haosheng Chen, Student, PhD, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

This paper points out that the Protestant churches in Hong Kong can be regarded as a kind of special community place in Hong Kong in the latter half of the twentieth century. The study shows that normal attendees held various non-religious activities in the churches and these normal attendees obtained their self-satisfaction through their own ways. By showing the cases, this paper proves that many normal attendees were not passive but active in the Protestant churches in Hong Kong during the concerned period. Additionally, this paper finds out a special social pattern called the cultural nexus of power of the local Protestant churches to interpret the above facts appeared in the history of twentieth century Hong Kong. This cultural nexus of power made its continuous influences in the local community in Hong Kong. As such influences were very diffused by different ways, for example by the active normal attendees in the churches or by the kindergarten held by the Protestant church, it was easy for many local residents to get access to this cultural nexus of power in Hong Kong in the concerned period. And this paper also points out that such cultural nexus of power tried to influence not only the daily life of the residents in the communities in Hong Kong but also the local policy in the concerned period.
Rhetorical Haunts: The Ancient Greek Temenos, Plato’s Phaedrus, and a New Theory of Civic Discourse

Ben Crosby, Associate Professor, English, Brigham Young University, Utah, United States

The links between civic architecture, sacred space, and rhetorical discourse in the ancient Greek world are relatively well established. It seems clear that both civic and sacred design elements developed in concomitant ways with the advent of democracy and the development of rhetoric as a discipline in the fifth century and beyond (Lewis). In other words, scholars know that key elements of civic life have their roots in a timeless cosmogonic impulse. Through a close reading of the setting and speeches of Plato’s Phaedrus, this paper proposes a theory of the temenos as a foundation for what I call a sacred-civic rhetoric. This paper then applies this theory to a modern rhetorical artifact: the 1988 Gallaudet University protests in the United States. By virtue of their success, these protests have become a touchstone for other protests in which civic spaces are occupied for rhetorical purposes, often to powerful effect. Ultimately, this paper shows that the sacred-civic power of the temenos has rhetorical traction still today, and often manifests as protest.

Parallel Moral Communities of Welfare: Welfare Regimes and the Prosperity Gospel in Flanders

Lise Dheedene, PhD Student, Sociology, University of Antwerp, West-Vlaanderen (nl), Belgium

Pentecostal churches have increasingly filled the gaps in Western welfare regimes. However, due to the secular gaze still predominating welfare scholarship, the intricacies behind this phenomenon remain murky. In this paper, therefore, I shed light on the ways in which two pentecostal churches construct their solidarities in interaction with their local Flemish welfare regimes. I do so from a postsecular perspective which focuses on the interplay between secular and religious discourses, practices and ethics. Based on fieldwork, document analysis and in-depth interviews, I propose to view these churches as ‘parallel moral communities of welfare’, i.e. welfare actors that construct the formal welfare system as their constitutive other without engaging in a direct relationship. Yet, while the first church does so by actively encouraging its members to make their own money rather than relying on welfare state facilities, the other treats successful welfare state interventions as divine miracles. This contrasting way of engaging with the welfare state, I argue, must be ascribed to their different application of the prosperity gospel.
Religious Thoughts in Kairos: A Comparative Study of Ancient Greek and Chinese Classics

Yiling Fang, Student, Doctoral Student, Soochow University, Jiangsu, China
Qian Na, Soochow University

Kairos is one of the core rhetorical concepts and a significant way of thinking in ancient Greece, while ancient Chinese civilization has also witnessed quasi-kairotic thinkings. Among its implications, timing and moderation are two basic elements. Studies have displayed an intersection between kairos and religion by exploring the rhetoric of timing in the New Testament. However, The comparative study in this regard has hardly been touched upon. In order to further investigate the religious thoughts in kairos, we propose following questions: 1) What kind of relationship between people and Gods/celestial God is reflected in the kairotic thinking of Ancient Greek and Chinese Pre-Qin classics (c.800-221BC) respectively? 2) What are the major similarities and differences? 3) Why does kairos in these two cultures reflect such relationship? To solve these questions, we will mainly analyze two classics in detail: The Book of Documents (Shang Shu《尚书》) and Hesiod’s Works and Days. Also probed into are the corresponding religious thoughts in the Songs of Chu (Chu Ci《楚辞》) and the Book of Change (Zhou Yi《周易》) in Pre-Qin era as well as Hesiod’s Theogony and Plato’s Phaedrus in Ancient Greece. Through this comparative study, we have discovered a common theological feature within—the importance of Gods or celestial God in guiding people to act appropriately in the right time. Tracing back to the works in the Axial Age is of great significance, as it will not only enrich kairos by revealing its religious thoughts, but also suggest an effective way of deepening the research on key categories.

Forgotten Sorcerers: The Prevalence of Jews in European Witch Trials

Maya Fitch, Student, Museum Studies, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma, United States

The Medieval Period saw the eruption of witch trials across the European Continent. Amid these witch hunts, Jews became a consistent target for accusations of demonic and heretical acts. Preceding the Medieval Period, Jews in the Greco-Roman world were established as sickly and violent people. Anti-Semitic stigmatization influenced the feminization and demonization of the Jewish body in the Medieval period. Christians characterized Jews as feminine through the accusation of male menstruation, which also allowed for the connection of Jews to menstrual-related magic. Furthermore, Jews were associated with the celestial body Saturn, deeming them capable of ritual cannibalism. This manifested in the routine accusation of Jews committing ritual murder and cannibalism known as The Blood Libel. Christians connected supposed ritual murder by Jews to Passover celebrations, male menstruation, the recreation of Christ’s Crucifixion, and magical potions. In addition to The Blood Libels, Jews were accused of being in league with the devil and having devilish bodily characteristics such as horns and goatees. Demonic femininity, cannibalism, pacts with the devil, and sorcery are all accusations that both Jews and gentile witches were tried for in Medieval Europe. For both Jews and gentle witches, these accusations often ended in execution via fire. In this study, I demonstrate how, beginning in the Medieval Period, European society systematically persecuted Jews and Witches as related, and sometimes identical, entities.
Conversion and Gratitude in/to Love: Bernard of Clairvaux’ Community-building Spirituality

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Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153 CE) stands as one of the foremost representatives of medieval monasticism and mysticism. The famed abbot of Clairvaux’ charismatic personality and leadership significantly contributed to the extraordinary growth of the emerging Cistercian order. Desiring to retrieve the spirit of the Rule of Benedict, Bernard promoted a way of life grounded in complete dedication to contemplation, accomplished by means of self-discipline. The proposed presentation will argue that for Bernard the hallmark of spiritual life and progress lies in the persistent ability to perceive and acknowledge the active presence of the divine in one’s life and world. Incorporating the dual-movement of self-examination and gratitude toward God, the monastic life as conceived by Bernard of Clairvaux invites to lifelong ongoing conversion. Spiritual growth takes the form of a journey from grace to grace, where the human community is led to experience and offer a free response to transformational love. Personal involvement with the God revealed in Jesus Christ radically alters the shape and meaning of human existence, progressively turned into an unceasing song of praise. The lifelong chanting, meditation and savoring of the Psalms, which form the core of the Liturgy of Hours, itself central to monastic life, contribute to building a human community united in prayer before God. Personal intimacy with God nurtured in community empowers for public witness and service. Such a spirituality of communion in humble contemplation speaks to 21st century Westerners desiring to share with others their longing for authentic living and the transcendent.

The Theoretical Construction and Social Significance of Leonardo Boff’s Mariology: How Does Liberation Theology Reconcile the Ethics of Social Movement and Everyday Life?

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Leonardo Boff is one of the few male liberation theologians who write on Mariology systematically. His fundamental principle is that the Holy Spirit has become hypostatically united with Mary at the moment of the Annunciation, since Mary becomes the permanent temple of the Holy Spirit from then on. As a result, Mary is the revelation of the feminine dimension of God whereas Christ is the revelation of the masculine dimension of God. Together, the two reveal the fullness of the Godhead. What is the most interesting in Boff’s writing is the seeming paradox that, on the one hand, he depicts Mary as a prophetic woman of liberation, which is totally public and political, but on the other hand, he also identifies Mary as the archetype of the eternal feminine, which is not so far away from the traditional Mariology and even Marianismo, in terms of her participation in divinity and the caring virtue of motherhood. In Boff’s view, if the progressive church just keeps talking about the plan or project of God, it would unconsciously take a masculine way of faith and miss some immediate relevance of the Virgin Mary among Latin American people. He hoped that women’s political participation would infuse women’s experiences and qualities into public life and change the dangerous tendency of the male-dominated social movements that put too much emphasis on grand projects rather than people.
The Parthenon Marbles as Sacred Space: Past, Present and Future

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As part of a larger work on sacred spaces, this paper discusses the Parthenon Marbles, in particular examining whether or not the Parthenon at the Acropolis should be considered a sacred space without the Marbles. In this study, I argue that the obvious answer is yes. I also discuss the degree to which the “Elgin” Marbles themselves, currently housed in the British Museum, constitute a sacred space (again, I argue the answer is still yes, although this is less obvious). I lastly argue that the Parthenon Museum, at the base of the Acropolis, should also be rightly classified as a sacred space, as it contains many fragments from the Parthenon not part of the “Elgin” collection, as well as serve as a prepared space for the rest of the Marbles if and when they are returned. The ongoing debate about the Marbles and whether or not they should be returned to Athens, which they should, serve as the backdrop.

Substance Dependence Among the LGBTQ+ Community in the Religious and Rural Southern United States

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My work considers why substance abuse and dependence may be higher in the rural southern United States. I look specifically at Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and less popular sects of religion to evaluate spaces held for members of the LGBTQ+ community within these religious groups. Additionally, the study may provide solutions for sobriety and harm reduction practices in the rural southern United States for special groups, like the LGBTQ+ community. My paper takes an intersectional view of the aforementioned issues in terms of religion, class, race, and sexuality.

"Religious Belief Has No Place Here": Between the Religious and the Secular in Greek Orthodox Organizations

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The Orthodox Church of Greece - through its NGO and in cooperation with international aid agencies, other NGOs, and the Greek state - runs multiple shelters, schools, and food distribution projects in its capacity as a practical arm of contemporary government and civil society. While this seems on the surface to be the insertion of religious practice into the public sphere, these projects are instead wrapped up in a process of secularization themselves. In fact, in many of these spaces, actors nominally employed by the Church of Greece model their work itself as truly secular or irreligious. Based on 10 months of participant observation and interviews over the course of my dissertation fieldwork, this paper focuses on the employees of a teen migrant shelter and an adult migrant school. I look at the ways in which the institutionalized care of the Church is secularized in order to fit itself into the larger humanitarian and charitable landscape of Greece. Further, I consider the methods employees use to distance themselves from both the larger Church and religious practice while remaining employees of it. Finally, I highlight the ways in which religious symbols and ideologies still slip through the cracks of the organization’s secularized fortifications. In so doing, I offer an important reflection on the blurriness of the boundaries between the secular and the religious in modern national Churches.
Paul the Apostle’s Rhetoric on Injustice and Its Bearing on Community Cohesion

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The paper explores Paul’s idea of accepting injustice for oneself while rejecting injustice in general, with a focus on the role of God in promoting this moral stance. The goal is to promote social cohesion by suppressing self-centered aspirations and mitigating conflicts, with unity as the ultimate aim despite differences. Today, this aim of unity still holds relevance, with many similarities to the era of Paul. The Christian religion can help by encouraging an ethical stance similar to that of the apostle: preferring to be wronged rather than wrongdoing others. At the same time, however, there should be no tolerance for injustice towards others. This requires an active stance against injustice as a communal effort, rather than in the form of individual retribution. Such communal effort can contribute decisively to social cohesion.

Jewish Participation in the Temple of Religion at the New York World’s Fair of 1939

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Created for the New York World’s Fair of 1939, the “Temple of Religion” was designed to be a symbolic representation of American religious freedom that also avoided privileging or even recognizing the specificity of any one faith tradition. This paper explores the “Temple” in the context of its historical moment on the cusp of World War II, considering parallels with, and implications for, our own contemporary challenges with increasing polarization, xenophobia and intolerance. A focus on the “unity” and “brotherhood” of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews was deemed especially important in the context of political unrest and religious persecution in Europe; in particular, the Jewish community was grappling with increasingly dire reports from Europe, and severe limitations on the number of refugees permitted to immigrate to the United States. My presentation will focus on Jewish participation, which met multiple challenges, including the Temple’s calendar, designed to accommodate Christian praxis without consideration either for the Jewish sabbath (observed each week from sundown Friday to one hour past sundown on Saturday) or the multiple Jewish holidays that fell during fair season. Yet, despite this lack of what would now be termed “cultural competence,” archival correspondence suggests Jews of all denominations were eager to participate. I argue this enthusiasm stemmed from a desire both to encourage a positive view of Judaism during a time of rising antisemitism, and to draw attention to the increasingly ominous plight of Jews in Nazi Germany and Europe in general.
Prohibition, Censorship, Denial: Polish Episcopate’s Discourse on Homosexuality Between 1945 and 1989

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One of the most important issues for the Polish Episcopate under communism was moral evaluation of differential sexual activities. Bishops believed that along with other immoral activities, homosexuality was resulted from the popularization of Marxism and atheization of symbolic culture and customs. This paper presents a critical discourse analysis of the episcopal writings from 1945–1989 and their evaluation in light of Michel Foucault’s theory in order to discuss the specifics of the Polish episcopal power in the context of the narrative on homosexuality. I highlight the doctrinal context of the Polish Episcopate’s thought: biblical sources, selected historical points that show the tendencies in the formation of teaching about homosexuality in the Church, and the universal Church’s magisterial thought from the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover, I indicate the factors characterizing the episcopal discourse’s content and language about homosexuality. I treat the statements of bishops as impacting the construction of: (1) social knowledge about sexuality, (2) the agency of homosexuals, meaning their experience of themselves and events in Poland.

John Paul II on the Spirituality of Youth

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The study examines the integration of St John Paul Spirituality in the existing Youth Ministry Program of the Diocese as well as the youth ministry programs implemented by the vicariates. The following were also explored in this study: the elements of the core spirituality as reflected in his catechesis during the World youth Day celebration, lived experience of the youth in the light of St. John Paul’s II spirituality including the issues and concerns related to the sustainability of the youth ministry. Using the Documentary Analysis, the following are the five elements of JP II: Witnessing faith, Valuing Humanities, Fostering Unity, and Aspiring Happiness. The survey method reveals that the top three youth ministry programs implemented in the different vicariates are Parish Youth Program, Diocesan Youth Day and Diocesan Youth Assembly. The most common issues and concerns related to the sustainability of the youth ministry include the problem of commitment (33%) and the relationship with others (32%). Through FGD, the lived experiences of the youth are characterized by the following themes such as respect for self and others, service in the church and community, family as pillar of faith, prayer as source of strength and courage, school as a means of formation, and problems encountered in life. The result of the study implies that through the implemented youth ministry programs it becomes an opportunity for the youth to grow in terms of their knowledge, relationship and commitment with the Lord. These programs have also offered venues for self-discovery and self-development.
Catholicism in the Latinx Community: A Look at Identity Impact on Mental Health

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The Latinx community has largely followed Roman Catholicism beliefs and practices. Throughout history, Latinx culture has been greatly influenced by Roman Catholicism. Religion can be a positive guiding force in one’s life and on the opposite end of the spectrum it can be problematic, restrictive, and unsupporting. Catholic individuals traditionally have more conservative, fundamentalist views on social and religious issues. The intersectionality of being Hispanic, queer, and religious leads to different mental health outcomes. This research focuses on the role religion plays in Latinx mental health specifically regarding anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. This research was gathered via studying different articles, research studies, and books. It also discusses concepts such as religious switching, religious saliency, Magico-religiousness, Fatalism, and the foundations of Machismo and Marianismo. Machismo is viewed as toxic masculinity in a cultural context. Marianismo specifically is a set of values and expectations concerning female gender roles that are based on the Virgin Mary - a highly regarded religious figure within Catholicism. The religious beliefs, cultural norms, and toxic gender roles of the Latinx community all combine to impact mental wellness and this study helps bring awareness to these cultural issues.

Addressing the Divine in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism: Who Is Solicited with What Intention?

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One of the unique characteristics of the Kṛṣṇa-bhakti tradition is its diversity of prayers. My research objective was to study the scriptures of its Gauḍīya branch and define their purpose in prayer, collect quantitative and qualitative data of their content and specifically their subject: to whom do Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas turn with prayers. Thus, I hope to contribute to the field of Religious Studies by offering a clear and structured categorization of the entreaties. My textual analysis focused on the central text of the tradition, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and later sacred texts like the Caitanya-caritāmṛta and prayer books of the Gauḍīya disciplic succession with the method of close reading. Having read over a thousand prayers I identify eleven intentions or aspirations they express, and nine categories of subjects addressed with entreaty, among them God and his different expansions, saints, holy places, scripture or even the mind. My study reflects that the tradition of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism deserves the attention of scholars in the field of Religious Studies focusing on prayer for a deeper understanding of the possible connections with Divinity beyond prayer to God.
White Christians and White Supremacy: The Less Familiar Story

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Christian denominations in the Americas were marked from the beginning by racialized hierarchies which continue to underpin political and economic decisions made in the public sphere. The often explicitly Christian African American Civil Rights movement sought to re-articulate, on and in their own terms, the basis of their full citizenship and their ambitions and place within Christ’s kingdom and US society. This is the familiar story. The less familiar story: To sustain race-based categories, which clearly delineated who would be eligible for full protection of the law and the widest access to opportunities and power, some white Americans were prepared to respond to any attempts at racial equality with Biblical arguments for their own racially superior status in the hierarchy of God’s kingdom as well as on earth. This paper explores the less familiar story in two eras when religious arguments by White Americans have been used to reinforce the inferior status of Black Americans in the public sphere. The first section explores ante bellum arguments between Whites who wanted to convert enslaved Africans on US soil to Christianity and those who opposed them doing so. These arguments had distinct implications for the public sphere, where the legal, economic, social and educational status of enslaved people would be determined. The second section explores White religious responses to the African American Civil Rights movement into the present day. Current scholarship has identified numerous paths through which White Christian religionists in the US have sought to reinforce White supremacy and suppress Black Americans.

Sacred Trees in Crete: Religious and Folk Traditions and Their Contribution to Environmental Awareness

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On the island of Crete there are several cases of centuries-old trees and shrubs that are considered sacred. There are plenty of religious traditions and folk customs associated with these trees, in which a large number of people participate. It is an ancient tradition (from the Minoan era) that survives to this day and has been adopted by the Christian church. In this paper, after a relevant literature review, such cases of sacred trees and the associated traditions are considered. In a world dominated by the lack of spirituality, loss of values, individualism, over-consumption of natural resources, which are the main causes of environmental and social problems, it is demonstrated how the preservation and revival of these religious traditions, especially for young people, contribute to the cultivation and adoption of spiritual values, such as reverence and respect for the natural environment, in order to promote ecological sensitivity and balance.
Neopagan Identity in a Conservative State: Exploring a Complex Cultural Identity in a Predominately Christian State

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Neo-paganism as a religious movement has been on the rise not only within the United States, but also across the world. Neopaganism is a tapestry of complex, cultural practices that are widely dictated by the practitioner rather than a larger entity. Social media and entertainment outlets have portrayed different sensationalized facets of these movements, such as witchcraft. This includes an umbrella of many different practices from across the world including astrology, reiki, yoga, and crystal meditation. This phenomenon led to conducting a survey of the University of Central Oklahoma’s campus population to gauge what were the attitudes around Neopaganism and the umbrella of practices. The survey received 308 unique responses and proved both that Neopaganism was growing in Oklahoma, but that Christian culture was against the movement. Neopaganism offers those who practice it the freedom to experiment and dictate their religious identity without some of the constraints of organized religion. Organized religion’s constraints are seen within states like Oklahoma that practice not only conservative politics but also conservative religious views. Christianity is the predominate religion in the state and is present within almost all faucets of life within the state. Christian ideals maintain a particular status quo within Oklahoma’s society and if one does not fit within them, it is common for people to leave the state establishing a religious hegemony. This paper explores the survey results as well as the fundamentalist Christian culture that is in Oklahoma and the growth of the Neopagan counterculture in the state.

The Patriarch, the Promised Land and the “Chosen” Nation: Interrogating Religion, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Exodus - Gods and Kings

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Todd Reeser (2010) observes that a nation in a state of fear, trauma, suffering or has experienced military defeat may uses images of strong masculinity to “revitalize or revirilize itself”. In post 9/11 America, the harking back to traditional forms of masculinity and heroic manhood, and calls for strong masculinized national response as observed by scholars like Hannah (2005), Nayak (2006), Faludi (2007) etc. can be seen manifested in the cinema of the times. This paper looks at the ways in which religion, masculinity and nationalism intertwine in the realm of popular culture to promote American geopolitical interests through a reading of Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014), a Biblical epic film re-imagining the Old Testament tale of Prophet Moses and the Exodus of Jews from Egypt. It focusses on US geopolitics post 9/11 and the “War on Terror” wherein the military engagements and other human rights abuses committed by America and its allies invited mass condemnation, necessitating ideological pushback. This period saw the use of religion, religious figures and language as it engaged with masculinized nationalist tenets in American politics to justify aggressive American foreign policies. Considering films as reflecting/refracting society, this paper primarily utilises theories from Connell, Nagel, and Slootmaeckers to focus on Moses—the Patriarch, the idea of a land promised by God and a people/nation “chosen” by God as sites of enquiry within the text, to understand the interplay of religion, masculinized nationalism and politics in contemporary times with special focus on America and its ally Israel.
Religious Leadership and Power Abuse: Effects on Nigeria’s Development

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Nigeria is reputed for having a teeming population of deeply religious men and women. Religion appears to have permeated all aspects of its life and existence, thus exercising enormous influence and control on its social, political, and cultural life. It has actually become a thriving enterprise, even to the point of being commercialized. Rarely have researches on religion in the continent been directed to critically questioning the relationship between religious leadership and power, whether as ‘soft’ or as overt power. Yet it is clear that religious leadership cannot be divorced from the issue of power. The palpability of power exercised over the populace by religious leaders is glaring. It could and has been used to good effect, as well as for fuelling crisis and impoverishment of the masses. This paper concentrates on the examination of Christianity and interrogates the relationship between Christian leadership and power in Nigeria. It investigates how Christian leaders have understood and utilized their power as mutual empowerment, but also as a manipulative instrument, thus fuelling the popular Marxist ideology of religion being the opium of the masses. The authors work on the hypothesis that proper management of power by religious leaders has a long way to go in influencing development in Nigeria both on the personal, social, political, and economic levels/realms. They discuss how Christian religious leadership could be steered toward service-oriented endeavour, anchored on social prophecy and mutual empowerment. The methodology employed is a hermeneutical-critical analysis of existing literature on the subject matter.


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The debate on the role of religion in Greek education is not new. Its roots can be traced back to the collapse of the military junta and the restoration of democracy (Metapolitefsi) in 1974. The redefinition of Church-State relations, the need for democratic education reforms, and the emergence of a new current of theological thought in the 1970s and 1980s raised the question of renewal in Religious Education. However, the impact of these processes on educational policymaking in religious education has attracted very little attention within the research community. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the historical framework by highlighting the key aspects that shaped education policy in religious education during the first period of the Metapolitefsi era (1974-1989). To achieve this goal, archival sources such as parliament proceedings, school curricula, government circulars, church encyclicals, union announcements, and press publications were used. The available data suggest that the first decade of the Third Hellenic Republic was a period of intense “mobility” regarding the role of religion in public education, which ushered in a new model of interaction between stakeholders that is still in use today.
The Biblical Conception of Plagues

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As the COVID-19 virus spread, we witnessed different economic, political, and social aspects of the pandemic. Besides questions of public health, it became impossible to ignore the cultural implications of the pandemic. Attitudes to the body, pain, and sickness are all influenced by culture. The coverage of the pandemic, from its beginning, has presented events as approaching an apocalypse. In my study, I reveal the roots of this foundational narrative, along with other narratives that constitute the cultural attitude to plagues and pandemics in Western culture. Utilizing a genealogical methodology, I evaluate the cultural sources of the attitudes to plague, disease, and the body as they are found in a foundational text of Western culture, the Bible. Genealogy is a method that delves into the past with the goal of understanding and critiquing the present. Modes of thinking and cultural norms can be revealed by examining the religious doctrines of a culture. Plagues are understood in the Bible as a form of collective punishment. The Hebrew word for plague, magefa, is derived from the verb root n.g.f, meaning hit or strike. In the Bible, religious action is required to stop a plague. In addition, the biblical approach to the body is mainly materialist. Revealing the sources of biblical narratives about plagues makes possible a reevaluation of the values and positions relevant to this topic in the Western culture in general and in Judaism in particular.

Faith and Rhetoric in John Henry Newman: Students in the Public Forum

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This paper asserts that the primary source for opinions in the contemporary age is derived from unmediated access to popular culture we develop our first premise: that the contemporary religious student takes in facts in a fundamentally esoteric setting. An American secondary school may contribute to the fundamental and grounding elements that eventually make possible John Henry Newman’s idea of a university education, but religious, political, and literary opinions are now composed principally of ideas gleaned from the internet or social media. In a country which does not profess the faith, it (the educational institution) at once runs, if allowed, into skepticism or infidelity, but even within the pale of the Church, and with the most unqualified profession of her Creed, it acts, if left to itself, as an element of corruption and debility. If many norms established in contemporary American culture are not principled in a Jesuit manner, or faithful in the traditional sense, and if students are more pluralistic in direct proportion to growing student bodies and societal norms, then Jesuit institutions find themselves in the situation described above. The externality of ends to which a contemporary student is being fashioned is strikingly contradictory to her purpose according to John Newman and Jesuit principles of Cura Personalis. This paper seeks to establish the most effective modern pedagogical method of Eloquencia Perfecta in the tradition of educating the whole student and heart speaking to heart or Cor ad Cor Loquitor by drawing on Newman’s historical rhetorical curriculum.
Formation of Women Leaders: The Influence and Effects of Catholic Education in the Philippines

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The Catholic Church tries to make its own contribution towards the promotion of the common good in various sectors but more importantly in the educational field. Catholic schools’ mission includes forming men and women to be ready to take their place in society, by preparing them to make a social commitment that will enable them to work for the improvement of social structures, and by making these structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education; 1982:19). Around the world, there is a growing demand and clamour for a more gender equal society. Political participation and women leadership are limited if not restricted in all sectors of the society. In order to truly achieve a balance and just society, it is important to give equal opportunity and representation for everyone – whatever race, religion or gender to take up leadership positions (UN Women; 2020: Online). The paper provides a summary of the historical perspective and cultural context of women leadership in the Philippines and how Christianity played a role in the formation of women. It discusses how women leadership emerged throughout history from pre-colonial Philippines, during the Spanish Colonization, American occupation and the recent context of women and leadership. How the research plans to proceed in identifying the effects and influences of Catholic Education in the formation of women in the country in the current context is also reviewed.

Religion in the Philosophical Sphere: The Digression in Plato’s Theaetetus

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The reference frame of this paper is the concept of philosophical godlikeness in Plato’s Theaetetus, and more specifically in the digression (172c-177c) which presents the personalities of the orator and the philosopher. The digression is articulated in three axes of study: a. ontological, b. anthropological (authenticity of the philosopher’s philosophical experience), and c. moral. The paper focuses on the last axis and my purpose is to argue that philosophical godlikeness is focused on the conception of true knowledge (Theaetetus reviews three definitions of knowledge) and virtue and is perceived only by philosophers. The digression highlights that the knowledge of divine justice provides the social presence of the philosopher and is the measure of human worth and wisdom and prudence (against Protagoras’ theory). The results of this study are intended to show the timeless connection between the moral and the divine in platonic philosophy (ontology, moral philosophy). Our research in terms of the method is bibliographic, historical-interpretive, and integrated into the wider framework of philosophical anthropology.
**Spiritual Intelligence, Burnout, and Loneliness: A Study among Roman Catholic Sisters**

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Roman Catholic sisters have committed their lives to serving God through religious vows that require them to relinquish their former lives and work towards promoting education, health, love, and charity in local communities. However, misconceptions about their way of life and mental well-being abound, warranting a deeper understanding of the challenges they face. The present study examines the relationship between spiritual intelligence, burnout, and loneliness among Roman Catholic sisters. The study included 50 sisters from Hyderabad, India, divided into two sub-groups based on their years of consecration and occupation. The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, UCLA Loneliness Scale, and a semi-structured interview were used to collect data, which was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation, t-tests, and thematic analysis. The findings of the study indicated that spiritual intelligence was negatively related to both burnout and loneliness. No significant differences were found between sisters consecrated for less than 15 years and those consecrated for more than 15 years, or between those in teaching occupations and those in non-teaching occupations. Qualitative analysis identified promotive, protective, and dogmatic factors as well as factors impeding psychological well-being of the sisters. The study recommends spiritual intelligence training as a mechanism to buffer burnout and loneliness among Roman Catholic sisters. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Roman Catholic sisters and underscore the importance of addressing their mental health needs.

**Hideaki Anno’s Postmodern Vision in Evangelion: A Personal Interpretation of Salvation**

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On March 20 1996, the ambiguous 25th episode of the Neon Genesis Evangelion series was released. A week later it came to its conclusion under sharp criticism: its spectators accused its director of aborting the climax of the “last” battle. Like a barefoot Moses standing before the divine presence embodied in a burning and murmuring bush, Shinji undresses before himself. He establishes a dialogue in which his voice will respond, so he is questioned by himself. Lines breaking the screen with the symbolism that Terrence Malick gives to God in his The Tree of Life: the Trascendent and the Word made Image. A plethora of mythical references (the Genesis devised by the Father, the Apocalypse, Adam and Lilith, the Messiah, etc.) cause a sense of dread to the Rilkean “vermauerten Augen” (walled-up eyes) of the contemporary spectator, who does not understand that leap into the void. A reverse step from Science Fiction to trascendent etiology, from noise to the abyss of silence. Thus Hideaki Anno offers us his own way of salvation. Neon Genesis Evangelion was the culmination of an internal process of transformation and severe depression at the end of which the creator established a connection with the resilient sacred.
Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Archive: Orthodoxy and Exclusion in Catholic Theo-Politics

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This paper introduces the ecclesiological model of the ‘Catholic archive’. Influenced by Derridean and Foucauldian philosophy, the Catholic archive is attentive to how knowledge is privileged or rejected based on prevailing conceptions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. It also notes the vanishing point between theological and political discourse as they pertain to ecclesial governance. As an example of the Catholic archive, this paper analyzes the theo-political significance of Thomas Aquinas’s theology within the Catholic archive throughout the papacies of Leo XIII and Pius X (1878–1914) and the Modernist Crisis. As a response to social and political instability in the nineteenth century, Vatican I consolidated power within the ecclesial hierarchy. What the hierarchy lacked, however, was the archival capacity to determine orthodox from heterodox knowledge. Leo XIII provided this capacity in his encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879), where he makes Aquinas an unassailable standard of orthodoxy. This transformation influenced Pius X’s suppression of the Catholic Modernists. In Pascendi Dominici Grigis (1907), Pius X uses Aquinas as a theological litmus test to identify and discipline modernist theologians. The theological renewal of Leo XIII’s papacy became a reign of terror in Pius X’s, in which the hierarchy’s interpretation of Aquinas legitimated archival violence: censorship, excommunication, and religious intolerance. The Catholic archive not only provides a new framing of the theo-politics between the Vatican Councils but can reveal how hegemonic expressions of orthodoxy can be used to suppress and discipline identities that do not conform to traditional notions of Catholicity within the contemporary Catholic Church.

Toxic Masculinity’s Role in the Hindutva Movement, 1940s–Present

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In India, the far-right nationalist movement known as the Hindutva movement has caused an increase in sexual violence, domestic violence, communal violence, and marginalization of minority groups throughout the Hindu-dominated country. This movement was born out of strict gender roles, left over by British colonizers, that bred a culture of toxic masculinity. From the late 1940s to the present day, the amount of violence in the subcontinent has only increased in part due to deeply engrained toxic masculinity mixed with nationalist fervor. Leaders like Prime Minister Modi have only added to strict gender roles for male and female Hindus which have had the effect of “Othering” anyone who is not of those groups, especially Muslims. My research explores the intersections between Hinduism, nationalism, and toxic masculinity within modern day India.
Religious Education and Empathy: A Review of Empirical Research on Adolescents

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The social dimension of the human brain is a topic that has particularly concerned the scientific community in recent years. Empathy is the human ability to maintain social bonds, through understanding the situation of people belonging to the same group. Research shows that the skill of empathy promotes effective healthy social interaction. Developing empathy in the classroom leads to greater understanding of another’s perspective and students are more likely to imitate empathic behaviors they observe in the classroom. The purpose of the research is to investigate whether the Religious Education, with didactic interventions based on experiential learning, contributes to the development of empathy in adolescent students (15-16 years old).

Religion and Love: Queering Relationships to Deconstruct Patriarchal Christianity

Samantha Royka, Student, Professional Media, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma, United States

Colonial and patriarchal interpretations of Christianity spread through time have culminated in cultural norms of a particular relational structure, namely, monogamy. These norms have been reinforced through repetition of colonized gender roles and stereotypes. When alternative relationship structures have been historically allowed to coexist with Christianity, as in 19th century Latter Day Saints plural marriage, the factors of sexual and racial oppression are revealed further. For example, men have many subservient wives while women are devoted to one man. This study examines the historical context that led to monogamist and hetero-normative culture while providing clues about how to begin the processes of queering and decolonizing our relationships through an open-minded and gender-expansive lens.
What is the Relationship between Religiosity, Childhood Attachment, and Childhood Trauma in Adulthood?

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The present study explores the relationship and possible effects of religiosity on both adverse childhood experiences and childhood attachment. Furthermore, to explore the idea that adult religiousness may play as a protective role, specifically protecting adults with a past of adverse childhood experiences and an insecure childhood attachment from reporting depression. Analyses are based on 57 participants (N= 57, 32.1% of ages 18-22, 70.2% female, 28.1% male, 1.8% other). In the form of an online Qualtrics survey through questionnaires, childhood attachment, adverse childhood experiences, sense of religiosity, and depression were measured. While not significant at conventional levels, there was no direct relationship between adverse childhood experiences, insecure childhood attachment, and sense of religiosity, and when assessing age for the relationship in later adulthood, there was no significance. Positive childhood experiences of feeling protected, love, and special had a direct relationship with a positive image and sense of closeness to God. Results highlight the importance of positive childhood experiences, secure childhood attachment quality relationship, such as trust, communication for positive health outcomes, such as less depression.

Adapting Cognitive Behavior Therapy’s Theory of Modes for the Christian: The Beloved Mode

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Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based treatment with a strong research base. Its theory of modes was first introduced by A.T. Beck in 1967, but it has gained renewed attention due to the ground-breaking work of Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy and its expansion to protocol for a wide range of disorders in recent years. The emerging prominence of theory of modes in mainstream CBT suggests a need to tailor for the Christian worldview, as the techniques including the activation of the adaptive mode or the “best self” were designed for use by secular professionals and their clients. The adaptive mode is replaced with the Beloved mode. Instead of the activation of the idealized self, similar to Padesky’s New System, there are spiritual practices for contemplation, and a descent to the heart where, as Henri Nouwen mentioned, where we come to know our true identity as the Beloved Children of God. Empirical research and the adaptation of theory of modes, aspirations, core beliefs and the cognitive triad, and therapeutic principles, such as recovery map, are described in detail.
Paul’s Rebut of Christian Patriarchy in First Corinthians: Paul’s Dialogue Concerning the Undo Influence of Patriarchal Civic Ecclesial Discourse

David Odell-Scott, Professor of Philosophy, Coordinator of Religion Studies, School of Multidisciplinary Social Sciences and Humanities, Kent State University, Ohio, United States

I argue that 1 Cor 14:34 & 35 is a quotation of a declaration by members to a line the Corinthian Christian ecclesiae with the patriarchal codes and practices of Greek civic ecclesial discourse so as to silence and subordinate women to men in the churches. Paul quotes their declared position in order to directly rebuke their efforts beginning in v 36 with a two-fold negative interrogation, which is followed up with a rhetorical reminder in 15:1 & 2 as to the shared circumstances by which all the congregants received the proclamation from Paul and came to believe. Paul concludes v 2 with a stinging critique that impeaches the faith of those quoted as believing in vain. I argue that the critique plays upon themes introduced in 13:1–7, which serves to qualify the value of all spiritual gifts by the features of “love” – without which faith and all forms of public spiritual presentations are assessed to be nothing. Paul’s quote and reply, serve to rebuke those who incorporate social “public” conventions and mores into the “public” gatherings of a small religious community when such established social codes serve to reinforce the insistence on advantage and disadvantage based on gendered arrogance by some men who seek to institute their entitled civic privilege in an emergent faith community that values the voices and leadership of women.

The Emergence of Free Market (Religious) Pluralism in the U.S. Military (1970s-1990s): The Chaplaincy’s Role in its Enactment

Jessica Sitek, Student, Doctoral Candidate, Temple University, Pennsylvania, United States

This paper examines the model of religious pluralism promoted in the U.S. military through the agency of the chaplaincy in the period between the Vietnam and Gulf Wars—a model I call free market (religious) pluralism. I demonstrate the way this form of pluralism was informed by a shift in US constitutional jurisprudence in which there was a growing emphasis on the free exercise of religion over the separation of church and state. This shift is especially evident in the Katcoff v Marsh case of 1979 in which the military chaplaincy was charged with violating the U.S. constitution. In response, the military began to frame the work of the chaplaincy as a “free exercise” role meant to protect the constitutional right of religion among individuals who are free to choose a form of religious expression from among military sanctioned options in the marketplace of religion. Close reading and analysis of the Military Chaplains’ Review, a Department of Defense (DOD) publication (1971–1992), along with literature on pluralism, will be used to show more clearly the institutional production of free market (religious) pluralism within the military, and the challenges this posed for its chaplains who were tasked with its implementation. Ultimately, the religion positive posture of free market pluralism recast the chaplaincy as a generic service to all military personnel, without addressing the existential tension many military chaplains began to feel between expressing their particular religious identity and being a generic something to everyone they serve.
Post-Colonial, Post-Christian Interventions on Eco-justice

Nadja Furlan Stante, Principal Research Councillor, Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies, ZRS Koper, Slovenia

Within ecofeminist framework, this study focuses on post-Colonial eco-feminism which critically questions the attitude of human imperialist and consumerist relations to animals, plants, environment and nature. As such, it sets the mirror of social (in)justice and connects sexual (in)justice with ecological (in)justice. Social and ecological responsibility go hand in hand. The basic understanding is that we are all connected at the interface of various systemic and institutional discriminations (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia). It is, therefore, a perspective based on the assumption that oppression of women and abuse of nature are related phenomena that are neglected and subordinated by the patriarchal system and other systems of oppression (capitalism, neo-liberalism, consumerism). Consequently, the active inclusion of women in environmental (inter)religious peacebuilding enables the dismantling and transformation of eco-apartheid and neocolonial mentality and bridges the ecotheological perspectives of the Global North (especially Western Christian theology) and the ecotheological perspectives and practices of the Global South.

Buffering the Effects of Religious Incongruence on Adolescent-parent Connectedness: An Intergenerational Solidarity Perspective

Emily Taylor, Student, Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, Brigham Young University, Utah, United States

American adolescents are leaving shared family religions at record levels. This trend threatens to divide families because when parents and children experience religious differences, their relational satisfaction tends to decrease, conflict increases, and family connection may weaken. Based on the theory of intergenerational solidarity theory, we explored how dynamic changes in religious congruence (consensual solidarity) between parent and adolescent might lead to decreased social connection (affectual solidarity). We hypothesize that adolescent empathy and parenting style might buffer the negative effects of religious incongruence on adolescent-parent connection. The sample featured 500 families drawn from Waves 3-5 of the nationally-representative Flourishing Families data set. We operationalized religious incongruence between parents and children as independent variables, creating three absolute value religious incongruence variables for prayer, religious importance, and worship service attendance. We ran three models of regressions for the three religious incongruence variables of prayer, religious importance, and worship service attendance. As expected, empathy and authoritative parenting style did increase adolescent connection despite religious incongruence. However, we identified several interactions between religious incongruence variables and our moderators. Differing levels of prayer interacted with adolescent empathy to buffer the effects of religious discord. In contrast, authoritarian or coercive parenting styles interacted at Wave 5 with both religious importance and worship service attendance incongruence to decrease connection. The present study is among the first to study the role of adolescent empathy in buffering the effects of decreased adolescent religiosity on family connection.
The Evolution of Primary and Secondary Burial in Greece: An Analysis of Contemporary Accounts of Funerary Ritual Across Three Periods in Time

Milo Rhys Teplin, Asst. Archeologist, Cultural Resources Management, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Texas, United States

Death is a universal event. But how is death conceptualized? Not death as in its scientific terms or in personal terms, but how does each culture answer the question “what happens next?” When that question has a concrete answer, popular ways of interacting with this “next” create a social space for death to exist in. The creation of social boundaries entail such requirements as etiquette between different groups and ritual to mark social transition. Disregarding the boundaries between the living and the dead would invite disaster on a supernatural level. To better explore these concepts, this paper will examine three different time periods in the same region and examine how death worked within the social structure. These are: Ancient Greece [between 700 BC to 400 CE], Serbia & Greece in the 17th/18th centuries, and rural Greece in the 1970s. These three periods provide snapshots in time within the same geographic area, allowing for present-day observers to examine the changes in how death was addressed as a social status.

Self-Transcendence and Consumerism in Late Capitalism: From Dichotomy to Dialectic

William Tilleczek, Visiting Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Deep Springs College, California, United States

A common critique of contemporary capitalism is that it incites to consumption: more food, more drink, more luxury goods; the very success of capitalism as an economic and social system is predicated on this consumerism. According to cultural critics like Daniel Bell and Philipp Rieff, capitalism thus represents the death of an ancient and honorable form of ethical life known as ‘asceticism.’ It is no longer possible to live a life of self-deprivation oriented towards super-material, spiritual, ‘higher’ purposes, whether personal or political. With the advent of neoliberalism, however, and the emergence of new markets in self-improvement, this traditional assessment needs to be complicated. Neoliberal capitalism requires a form of consumption that is at the same time an asceticism, in the proper sense of the term: repeated practices of the self that transform the practicing self. Yoga, mindfulness, fitness, and even the classically ascetic practice of fasting have become so many products to purchase and ‘consume.’ This is a form of consumption that is directly ascetic and a form of asceticism that passes via the consumption of product-practices. Indeed, one can even speak of an ‘ascetic imperative’ today in so far as the maximization of human capital requires a constant work on the self in order to remain competitive in the market economy. In a word: producers consume practices that maximize their productive capacities in turn. A full understanding of the role of spirituality and asceticism in contemporary society requires moving from an asceticism/consumerism dichotomy to a subtler dialectical approach.
**Historical Faces of Jesus - Late Antiquity**

Hannah Tonn, Student, Master of Arts in Religion, United Lutheran Seminary, Pennsylvania, United States

Christianity adapted through the centuries. Jesus has changed along with it. This study explores what was occurring in the Late Antiquity centuries that caused Jesus’ appearance and image to change drastically between cultures. The essay investigates interpretations of Jesus that have come about through the early centuries. This includes examinations of artwork and writings from a historical perspective. Questions about what happened in history during these times are taken into consideration.

**A Faith-Based Epistemology: An Insecure Hope or Certain Knowledge?**

Jacob Tubbs, Student, PhD, University of West Georgia, Georgia, United States

Since at least the Medieval period a distinction has been drawn between reason and faith, where reason was seen as the epistemology for knowing factual, earthly knowledge, and faith was seen as the epistemology for finding spiritual knowledge. The Enlightenment solidified this dichotomy by contrasting faith with the certainty of empiricism. Faith, thus, became seen as being when one believes in something that cannot be known with certainty. This dichotomy relegated faith to secondary status as a less valid, less true epistemology. This paper traces this understanding of faith from its historical origins to the modern day to show how it has permeated our modern understanding of what it means to have faith. It will then be argued that faith can instead be seen as a form of knowledge and knowledge seeking that is just as valid as rational argument and sensory experience. To make this case, various treatises on faith from the Book of Mormon will be analyzed, under the premise that religious texts can carry philosophical heft. These texts show that an understanding of faith is possible where faith is not merely belief in something that cannot be known for certain, but rather an epistemology based on undeniable phenomenological experience that is uniquely suited to gaining knowledge of people, relationships, and the divine, as opposed to rational and empirical knowledge. The importance of this faith-based epistemology is evident in how it can raise religious knowledge from its secondary status to equal standing with other forms of knowledge.

**Exploring the Significance of Religious Locations in Taipei: Mapping, Comparing, and Investigating Their Role in Spiritual Sustainability**

Lan Chih Wen, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, China University of Technology, Taiwan

Wang Ming Hui, research fellow, Foundation of Urban Development and Environmental Education, Taiwan

Religions play a significant role in urban development, reflecting the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of urban societies. In Taipei, religious locations are an integral part of the city’s cultural landscape, reflecting the diverse religious traditions and practices of its people. This research outlines a two-part study exploring the significance of religious locations in Taipei, comparing the meanings of local and non-local religions, and investigating their role in spiritual sustainability.
Mulajadi Nabolon: From Indigenous Religious Practice to Contemporary Society in Public Sphere

Halim Wiryadinata, Lecturer, Theology, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta Raya, Indonesia

Mulajadi Nabolon is a tribal religious concept that departs and develops from within the culture of the Batak tribe in Indonesia. Its images and teachings are not only limited to epistemological constructions of religion that persist in dogmatic beliefs but become instructions, norms, ways of life, and behavioral control that are integrated into the social life of modern society in the technological era. Even this concept rests on the harmony that humans are part of nature and vice versa, so the two should not destroy each other. The idea of Mulajadi Nabolon assumes that Debata as the creator of the universe and its contents. This concept bequeaths knowledge and instructions to the Batak people in building social behavior from generation to generation. This research tries to answer why the Mulajadi Nabolon concept persists in contemporary Batak society in this all-digital era. This research will be devoted to how Mulajadi Na Bulon as a religious practice influences society and continues to emerge as a social norm in the modern era. The research’s systematics is the construction of the concept of Mulajadi Nabolon; the second is an implementation of the Mulajadi Na Bulon concept in society, and the third is how Mulajadi Nabolon, as the indigenous belief system, sustains and impacts the contemporary society. This research is based on consulting books, articles, and the old manuscripts of Mulajadi Nabolon. The problem statement of this research is discussed with the critical thinking method and qualitative approach.

From Sabbath to the “Nap Bishop”: Liberative Movements to Reclaim Rest

Claire Wolfteich, Professor, School of Theology, Boston University, Massachusetts, United States

This paper explores the ancient Jewish and Christian practice of Sabbath keeping in dialogue with contemporary movements to reclaim rest and renewal as acts of social/political justice. I draw from classic theological texts, especially the writing of Abraham Joshua Heschel, John Paul II, Jürgen Moltmann, and Walter Brueggemann. These theologies of Sabbath are juxtaposed with recent research the author has conducted with local congregations as well as to narratives and practices reflected in popular publications and social media that portray rest as critical resistance and counternarrative to capitalist and racist ideologies (e.g., “the nap bishop”, “rest is resistance”, “somatic abolitionism”). The paper shows complexities of religious practices around Sabbath keeping, including barriers to accessing Sabbath related to gender and race, as well as liberative impulses that may represent fresh manifestations of this ancient spiritual practice.
Buddhist Perspectives Faith on Interfaith Understandings Relations

Yar Za, Magadh University Bodhgaya Primary, M.A., Buddhist Studies, BODHI RAJA MONASTERY, MASTIPUR, BODHGAYA, BIHAR, INDIA., GAYA Bihar

Religion should not be the tool to divide people, but should be used to bring unity. In this sense, there should be an urgent call for every follower of different beliefs to come and discuss together to avoid misunderstanding among religious. This is when people, regardless of religious, work to promote interreligious relations and mutual understandings. As we like to put it, we are working to encourage interfaith relations. In the case of interfaith relations, Buddhism should be one of the tools to bring the people of different faiths closer. Buddha has been a great role model of interreligious work. So there are some understanding Buddhist today. If we want to unite people from different faiths, Buddhism should have its place in the interfaith work.

Digital Religion: Worship God through Internet?

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Digital religion is a modern religious phenomenon in the era of technology. The transition from a traditional religious way to a technology-mediated way of religion is not easy. Various problems arise regarding the Biblical paradigm of worship, rites, and rituals. This study considers how the concept of digital religion appears in society and various new forms of worship, rites, and Christian rituals. Problems regarding biblical and non-biblical aspects will be the framing of the discussion in this paper, which is described with a qualitative approach. The whole review is directed to answer the main question, what things from traditional patterns must be maintained when the internet and digitalization take over.

Religion in Society: Ethnic, National, and Racial Identities

Aphiwe Zondi, African studies researcher, African psychology, Mind Spring Mental Health Alliance, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Religion has been a significant aspect of human life for centuries, and it has played a crucial role in shaping ethnic, national, and racial identities. The relationship between religion and identity is complex and multifaceted, and it has been the subject of much academic inquiry. This study explores the relationship between religion and ethnic, national, and racial identities, with a particular focus on African Spirituality. The paper also discusses inter-religious harmony and the challenge of double consciousness in African Spirituality.
Narratives and Identity

Narrative as an Effective Tool of Persuasion in Protestant Sermons

Martin Adam, Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Masaryk University, Jihomoravský kraj, Czech Republic

One of the common denominators that underlie Protestant sermons is their narrative character. Storytelling of different genres with different phases and culminations seems to serve the needs of the church for teaching via preaching. The storyline of sermons may include biblical stories (Gospel as well as other stories, such as parables), a story from a different source (lyrics, a poem, a joke, media, fiction, etc.) or a personal story (reminiscences, experiences, and the like), that is a narrative in the broadest sense of the word (cf. Nash, 1985, 26ff; Wierzbicka, 2001). The story as such carries the line of narration and helps point out ideas, illustrate the doctrine and draw conclusions. Moreover, the narrative line in sermons naturally includes all three Aristotelian persuasive appeals. The proposed paper strives to look at narrative as a tool of persuasion; it wants to demonstrate how stories take believers by the hand and lead them to persuasion, conviction and belief. Thus, the narrative line in protestant sermons appears to be a constitutive feature; not only does such a sermon attract the attention of listeners more easily, it enables the preacher to construe the intended structure of the message gradually and to conclude the sermon with a true (typically pathetic) punchline, that is a message that aims directly at the hearts and minds of the audience.

African Precarity and the Evolution of Religious Imagination

Kenneth Amadi, Student, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, Indiana, United States

One of the common denominators that underlie Protestant sermons is their narrative character. Storytelling of different genres with different phases and culminations seems to serve the needs of the church for teaching via preaching. The storyline of sermons may include biblical stories (Gospel as well as other stories, such as parables), a story from a different source (lyrics, a poem, a joke, media, fiction, etc.) or a personal story (reminiscences, experiences, and the like), that is a narrative in the broadest sense of the word (cf. Nash, 1985, 26ff; Wierzbicka, 2001). The story as such carries the line of narration and helps point out ideas, illustrate the doctrine and draw conclusions. Moreover, the narrative line in sermons naturally includes all three Aristotelian persuasive appeals. The proposed paper strives to look at narrative as a tool of persuasion; it wants to demonstrate how stories take believers by the hand and lead them to persuasion, conviction and belief. Thus, the narrative line in protestant sermons appears to be a constitutive feature; not only does such a sermon attract the attention of listeners more easily, it enables the preacher to construe the intended structure of the message gradually and to conclude the sermon with a true (typically pathetic) punchline, that is a message that aims directly at the hearts and minds of the audience.
Two Birds, One Stone?: Reshaping Nationhood and Secularism through the Regulation of Religion in Quebec, Canada

Dia Dabby, Associate Professor, Sciences Juridiques, Université du Québec à Montréal, Quebec, Canada

In 2019, the Quebec provincial government passed An Act respecting the Laicity of the State. While this piece of legislation is currently before the courts on multiple grounds of discrimination, this legislative exercise was singular from earlier iterations on the regulation of religion undertaken in the last decade in this province for two reasons. On the one hand, this act expanded secularism’s nomenclature, by introducing laicity to the dialogues on regulating religion. On the other, the act also embedded the ‘nation’ into a provincial human rights’ charter. Both reasons telegraph important transformations for religion in the public sphere. This paper analyzes how laicity and nationhood were mobilized during the legislative hearings before the provincial National Assembly by drawing on memoranda submitted by various social actors. It then examines how these concepts circulated and were translated into the context of ongoing legal contestations, namely Hak v. Quebec (Attorney General), now awaiting a decision by the Court of Appeal. Finally, this paper reflects on how An Act respecting the Laicity of the State’s renaming of ‘new’ and ‘old’, in the sense of Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities, has ripple-down effects in the public sphere. More broadly, it considers the shifts engendered to understandings of time and space and ultimately, how this statute seeks to refashion narratives of identity in Quebec and Canada.

Twelve Zodiac Animals in the Media Space of the Republic of Buryatia, Russia

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The twelve animals of Chinese zodiac symbolize a twelve-year cyclic calendar used among Buddhists in various regions of East and Southeast Asia. The Republic of Buryatia is one of the three Buddhist regions of Russia. The Buryats profess Tibetan Buddhism of Gelug school which spread through Mongolia in the 17th century. That is why the nomadic culture of Buryats is closely intertwined with Buddhist philosophy. For the Buryats an animal can be seen as not just a source of food, a helper, or a friend, but also as a sacred being. The twelve zodiac animals are endowed with a special sacred meaning for Buryats. The study analyzes the system of ideas about twelve zodiac animals in the media space of the republic of Buryatia. Specifically, we study the materials of the news portal Inform Polis Online for the last twelve years, from 2011 to 2023. In total, ninety-six publications were analyzed. As a result, we identified six thematic structures related to the animals of the lunar calendar. The material considers symbolic nature of zoomorphic images; visual representation of the images of zodiac animals in the urban landscape of Ulan-Ude, the capital of the republic; the specifics of integration of animal images into regional education and culture, etc. The analysis of the role of zoomorphic images and practices of their interpretation in the media space of Buryatia can enrich the debates on human–animal relationship from the point of view of Buryat culture where traditional nomadic views are merged with Buddhist philosophy.
"Knowledge, Experience, and Love": The Contribution of Spirituality to Women Exiting Street Prostitution and Substance Use

Nili Gesser, Postdoctoral Fellow, Psychology, University of North Dakota, United States

Women in street prostitution are a highly marginalized and stigmatized population. When they wish to exit prostitution, they generally have few resources available to them. One such resource, which has been little explored in the literature, is the support from a higher power, described as God or spirituality. The current research addressed this gap by interviewing 29 women who were formerly engaged in street prostitution and substance use about their views on God and spirituality. The analysis of these in-depth interviews demonstrates that women receive support from a higher power in the form of love, hope, and a sense of purpose; advice via prayer; and divine inspiration. I argue that leaning on spirituality can help women exiting street prostitution practice positive religious coping. The implications are that programs which assist women exiting street prostitution should encourage women to find their higher power and engage with it in their exiting journeys.

Shedding Catholic Religion in 21st Century Poland: An Interview-based Project

Magdalena Grabowska, Assistant Professor, Institute of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Languages, University of Gdansk, Vejle, Denmark

The focus is drawn to shedding Catholic religious identity in Poland and how interviewees represent it, where they find reasons and how this decision has affected their lives. Methodologically I am inspired by biographical research which assume that narration enables one to construct a coherent picture of one’s own identity. Theorists admit that people very often possess more than one identity. Moreover, life-storytelling not only gives insights into this complex identity issue but also endows our life with meaning and integrity. My interviewees underlined that they have entirely lost touch with the Roman Catholic Church. However, almost everyone has admitted that a direct catalyst which pushed them to this decision were events which occurred in Poland in the years 2020-2021, i.e., revealing cases of paedophilia among the clergy and the ruling of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal on abortion law. This turn towards outside factors makes me think the participants seek reasons for their breach with religion in society. Thus, I have decided to seek inspirations in critical discourse analysis methodology. The subject matter of my research is 35 audio recorded conversations with apostates in Poland. These are narratives which tell the story of breaching from family roots, coping with a change, taking responsibility, courage, emancipation and a reflective view on life, culture, and national traditions.
A Comparison of Agency of the Women of the Hebrew Bible with other Ancient near Eastern Heroines: Agency (not) Granted to Women’s Narratives in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

Deborah Gruber, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Classical Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, CUNY Queens College, New York, United States

The stories of the women of the Hebrew bible was often used a secondary device used to promote both the destiny arc of assignation of land and promise of number and nationhood. The fulfillment of these desires were almost always emphatically complete by male heroes. This paper examines the roles and narratives of women biblical heroines and compares them with women from other Ancient Near Eastern cultures of the same time period such as Crete, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Using legal and literary documents from these cultures, special attention will be given to women’s rights to justice, agency, and identity, in order to ascertain the placement of biblical women in the Ancient Near East.

The Theopoetics of Father Raymond Roseliep

Nicky Gutierrez, Student, Master of Arts in Theopoetics and Writing, Bethany Theological Seminary, Indiana, United States

Dr. Reverend Raymond Roseliep was a Catholic priest and haiku poet who through the means of poetry brought up theological themes which served as a “common” mode of experiencing spirituality. Through his poetry, Roseliep created a public theological conversation with his readers and audience who might be spiritual but probably were not Catholic. His haiku pushed the boundaries for his time as he wrote about spirituality and experimented with the haiku form. He also wrote about themes that would be scandalous for him to write about as a priest. Because of the origin of haiku, Roseliep came into contact with Buddhism and was influenced by its philosophy and aesthetic. In some of his haiku, he created interfaith poems that drew from the wells of both traditions to show the mystery of the Divine. His published haiku, his essays on poetry, and interviews show how deep his views on the sacramental nature of poetry were and how the poet was coworking with God. A close reading of his work gives a robust understanding of his theopoetics and his sacramental poetics. His poetry serves as a bridge and as a model for the common person to enter into conversations about the Divine. This paper considers how a priest like Roseliep can express his sacramental and theopoetic beliefs publicly outside of the context of the Church through the medium of poetry and how poetry can be a means of theological reflection for both clergy and the laity.

A SWOT Analysis of a Family-Wahhabi Nationalism: A Case Study in Saudi Arabia

Gadi Hitman, associate professor; head of MECARC (Middle East and Central Asia Research Center, Middle East and Political Science, Ariel University, Israel

This paper considers a new book written to analyze the religious-national quest of KSA through a SWOT model. The analysis discusses issues of oil, regional alliances, international position, instability of the royal family fragile demography, terror threats and Sunni-Shi’a rivalry. All of it relates to the formatting of a Wahhabi-family nationalism. The book is a Bernard Lewis prize winner for 2022.
From a Lutheran to a Secular Nation: How Ideology and Politics turned Sweden into one of the most Secular Nations in the World

Kjell Olof Urban Lejon, Professor, Head of Division, Director of Studies, Department of Culture and Society (HKR/IKOS), Linköping University, Sweden

Sweden was for centuries a community-oriented Lutheran nation. The nation’s flag consists of a golden cross on a blue sky, and according to the Constitution, the Head of State has to be of Lutheran (Augustana) Confession. The Religious Freedom Act is from a comparatively late date: it came into law in 1951. More than half of the population still belongs to the former state church, the Church of Sweden. Nevertheless, Sweden is today one of the most secular countries in the world, as, for example, presented by the last World Values Surveys. What made this relatively fast shift possible? In this study, the ideological foundation and political steps taken in order to secularize Sweden (as well as the Church of Sweden!) are displayed.

Civil Religion and Nationalism: A Godly–Civil Continuum

Eyal Lewin, Chair of Department of Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ariel University, Israel

This study defines religion and then shows how the operative definitions are just as relevant to other phenomena such as patriotism and nationalism. To a certain measure when examining nationalism and religion, we are dealing with variations of similar occurrences, strongly intertwined with each other. This paper takes the task of solidly framing the concept of civil religion by presenting a general model that puts into one cohesive context civil religion and traditional one. The new paradigm suggested in this research is that the relations between traditional religion and civil religion are merely a representation of a struggle many centuries long between godly authorities and civil authorities. Hence, the two forms of religion never occur in the form of a dichotomy; rather, there is a continuum stretching between two poles, with states and nations falling along a range, some of them closer to the extreme traditional religion end of the scale and others located near the opposite extremity of the civil religion.
“There’s No Separation of Church and State”, a Metaphorical Analysis of Muslim Native Speaker Teachers’ Representations of the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language and Islam in Saudi Arabia

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There has been an increased interest among researchers concerning the relationship between faith and English language teaching in the context of the global spread of English; however, to this date, very few studies have focused TEFL and Islam. In light of the wider socio-political, ideological or religious issues connected to the global spread of English, this study draws on the experiences of six Muslim EFL teachers, commonly referred to as “native speakers”, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by qualitatively investigating their representations of Islam and TEFL. Based on a non-realist rhetorical analysis of interview data, the study explores the participants’ worldviews and their positionality as native speakers, Muslim EFL teachers in the KSA, thereby exploring how Islam impacts their professional practice. The study concludes that language teaching issues are inextricably intertwined with broader issues such as religion, thereby arguing that the links between religion and language teaching need to be explicitly addressed within the TESOL arena.

‘Based on Your Source...’: The Ba’alawi of the Malay World’s Legitimizing Sunnism, Shiism, and Salafism Through the Utilization of Each Other’s Belief Systems

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The Ba’alawi, descendants of Prophet Muhammad through his daughter and son-in-law, have secured a comfortable position as religious leaders in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia or the Malay world. They are purported to have brought their brand of Sufi Islam known as the Tariqah Alawiyya (Alawiyya Sufi path) successfully through trade and intermarriages with local sultans even prior to Western colonization. This has resulted in much of the Malay world espousing Sunni-Sufi Islam as reflected in the Ba’alawi diasporic homeland of Hadramaut, Yemen. Much sociological and historical studies have thus discussed the Ba’alawi through their roles as adherents of a Sunni-Sufi tradition who have successfully carved a name for themselves in the social, political and religious realms of power with the most popular having supporters that number millions. However, while some of the leaders have participated in establishing a definition of Islam in the Malay world as Sunni-Sufi, other members of the Ba’alawi have embraced other forms of Islam such as Shiism and Salafism. As such, the Ba’alawi are involved in creating a competitive Islamic marketplace in the Malay world in which different forms of Islam try to gain adherents through claiming legitimacy whilst delegitimizing the other. Through in-depth, unstructured interviews with 40 Shiite, Salafi and Sufi Ba’alawi leaders from the Malay world I argue that Ba’alawi Shiites, Salafis and Sufis tap into each others’ embodied, national, institutional, textual and histórico-narrative legacies in order to portray their form of Islam as the most legitimate whilst rendering the other not legitimate.
The Hidden Stories: Identity Through the Intersectionality of Religion/Spirituality and Social Advocacy

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This interactive workshop will encourage dialogue on hidden narratives of identity, spirituality/religion and social advocacy within history and from personal experiences. The presenters focus on concepts of intersectionality and advocacy through the lens of social sciences and the field of social work. The group’s exchange will include: The meaning of identity and intersectionality; Shared stories of application in the area of inclusivity of religious and spiritual perspectives; Examples of international and historical stories that have been missing from the common narrative of religion, spirituality and diversity; Connecting through personal reflection in an effort to inspire and develop action within their communities.

Consumption and Ritualization in Daoist Practices: Women’s Spiritualization in Ming-Qing China

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For the feminist scholar, the Ming-Qing period saw three periods of significant, extended social transformation, the transition from Yuan to Ming1229 China; the transition from Ming to Qing China; and, the long century of degradation and disruption leading up to the fall of the Qing Dynasty. These periods formed key historical windows of transition in women’s religious practice and the social and spiritual meaning of women’s religious performance. Between these periods of transformation, there arose discrete messaging and consumption patterns in and around women’s religious roles on the one hand and religious symbolism on the other. Ritualization patterns – some more rote action than overt, oblique canonized rituals – became objects of scrutiny, identification formation and dynamic symbolic transformation. Consumption of religious symbols and symbolism formed symbiotic patterns laying the groundwork for a revalorization and de-valorization of ritualism and women’s ritual performance. Focusing particularly on the last of these windows of transition, this paper explores the dynamics invigorating these significant changes, and their significance for a feminist understanding of the religious history of Daoism.
Will There Be Races in Heaven?: Identify and the Afterlife

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Drawing on work in the Philosophy of Race, this paper argues that the existence of races in heaven is either incompatible or only questionably compatible with the mainstream Christian view of the afterlife. However, it also argues that there is a phenomenon adjacent and related to race that can exist in the afterlife, namely racial identity. If one thinks of racial identity as a kind of practical identity, it turns out that racial identity is primarily psychological. Thus, its existence in heaven is compatible with the mainstream Christian view that people with some semblance of human psychology continue on after death. Furthermore, the paper offers reasons to think that we will need racial identities in the afterlife to facilitate forgiveness and reconciliation. Finally, it suggests that preserving racial identities from this life to the next is, on balance, preferable.

Interpretation of Armenia’s Religious Heritage in Tourism Practices - Goshavank Monastery

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Armenia, which was the first Christian state in the world, has the most ancient symbols and places of worship for its religion. The cultural heritage of the country, which has returned to the forefront of foreign news in recent months, is for many reasons a unique example of the importance of a particular group in the history and the continuity of the influence of religion on the identity of its members. The key element of this heritage is architecture, especially religious buildings, which is a unique combination of elements of nature in the form of stones and rocks with human civilization achievements in the design of, among others, places of worship for which the country is commonly called “Hajastan-Qarastan”. Churches, chapels, monastic complexes, khachkars, combined with the dominant mountain landscape, remain attractive places also in terms of tourism. Considering the great cultural and religious significance of the selected places for Armenians, it was decided to investigate how this heritage is interpreted in the tourist practices of the representatives of foreign tourists visiting them. The following place was selected this time is Goszawank Monastery. In this study such aspects are analyzed: opinions and recommendations of these places, published on the TripAdvisor - as short traveling texts online.
The Holy Name Society: Catholic Masculinity in the United States during the Papacy of Pius XI (1921-1939)

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The Papacy of Pius XI witnessed the emergence of new political and economic regimes that promoted types of masculinity that conflicted with Christianity. Under the new governments that emerged in the post-war order, Christianity was disparaged for promoting a particular kind of masculinity defined by the new political regimes as “feminine” and “weak,” particularly when viewed through the lens of Nietzsche’s writings. The Papacy of Pius XI promoted a particular type of masculinity for the laity through the devotion of Christ the King and the promotion of Catholic Action. In the United States, the Catholic Church sought to encourage men to join the Society of the Holy Name, a devotion that had emerged in the thirteenth century but became an important organization within the American Catholic Church in the first three decades of the twentieth century and which sought to reinforce a vigorous Catholic masculinity through the fight against three foes: atheists and those who blasphemed against Christ through the use of profanity and obscene speech. This paper explores the type of masculinity the Holy Name Society promoted and the type of masculinity it attempted to encourage.

Cosmology, Music, and Identity in the Andes

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Music has long been one of the ways people signal their beliefs, identity, and culture. In the public sphere, music can serve to maintain a people’s religious and cultural practices despite the pressures that incur societal change: environment, colonialism, diasporic movement, economics, the introduction of other religions, and so forth. Through the continual performance of particular, specific musics in their appropriate ritual and spiritual settings, the Quechua, Aymara, and Chipaya peoples of Peru’s Altiplano region have retained much of their pre-Columbian cosmology and identity. The foundational concept of indigenous Andean cosmology is the idea of duality—more specifically, a gendered duality—and many of those dualities are represented in musical aspects of Andean cultures, including melodic structure, musical instruments, performance practice, and music’s role in public festivals and daily life. Many of those beliefs are expressed through and adapted to modern Christianity and social systems, as Andean indigenous religious practices were incorporated into Catholic ritual and expression. The syncretic nature of both Andean religious practice and music performance has helped the indigenous peoples to maintain their dualistic worldview and, by extension, their cultural identity.
A Stranger in One’s Faith: Ritual Desecration and Reverse Ritual Purification in Religious Communities and Society

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In the Alfred Schutzian tradition, the social reality of ritual purification has been described as a coping strategy for reality maintenance and mental hygiene whereby individuals reconcile their encounter with a stranger and their official reality. Integrating the disciplines of philosophy and sociology to answer this question: What about those who are considered a “stranger” in their faith community? Given the hardships that transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people may encounter, “unsuccessful socialization” does not offer the best account of the challenges, obstacles, and sufferings they face when marginalized by others. Advancing Schutzian research, we offer two terms that better unfold their situated realities, namely, ritual desecration and reverse ritual purification. Using a dialectical framework, a social and interpersonal conflict occurs between ritual purification and ritual desecration. Consequently, creation of two personal iterations emerges, namely, those who experience ritual desecration by remaining in their home environment and those who migrate to another community for the possibility of acceptance and belonging, hence, reverse ritual purification. Therefore, we explore ritual desecration and reverse ritual purification given the struggles TGNC people face in religious communities.

Spiritual Capital and Class Privilege in Women’s Spirituality: The Case of Feminist–Spiritualist Menstrual Movement the Red Tent

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Menstrual blood is still regarded as taboo in many places all over the world. An important form of breaking the menstrual taboo is the Red Tent movement, established in 2007 in the USA within the women’s spirituality movement. Studies on women’s spiritual movements in the West show how new spiritual movements such as Goddess spirituality, neo-paganism, and New Age offer empowerment to women that is otherwise lacking in more traditional and institutionalized religious traditions, promote equality, and affirm the values associated with practices of healing, and female solidarity. Although contemporary spiritualities present themselves as non-hierarchical and gender equal, spirituality and wellbeing in women’s circles is pre-dominantly practiced by white middle-class women and a lack of diversity may perpetuate social dynamics structured by systematic inequities. By concerning potential exclusion and privilege, particularly regarding social class, the purpose of this paper is to question whether the Red Tent movement reproduces the existing power structure where hegemonic norms and institutionalized forms of power are entrenched and reproduced. It derives from the assumption that by continuously exploring their spiritual life women from the Red Tent were also increasing their “spiritual capital”. In their pursuit of spiritual growth deriving from an exceedingly wide range of practices we can witness spiritual omnivorosity, because they combine multiple religious and spiritual traditions. The research is methodologically based on ethnographic fieldwork by participating in Red Tent gatherings in Slovenia, semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants and hosts and in-depth content analysis of interactions manifesting through digital communications (websites, Facebook etc.).
At the Intersection of Queerness and Religion in the Bible Belt: Christianity as Hyper-marginalization for LGBTQIA+ Community

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Growing up in the Bible Belt (an extremely conservative area of the United States), specifically in the state of Oklahoma, carries with it an air of menace for youth and adults that fall under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella. Even today, in the aftermath of marriage equality, the Midwest is still stagnant in terms of progression. This immobility is coddled by the overwhelming number of Christian-affiliated spaces (churches, restaurants, boutiques), rhetoric, motifs, and paraphernalia packed into square footage. Not only do these items take up spaces of their own and give a sense of overcrowding to those marginalized by them, they intentionally creep out into LGBTQ+ spaces like Pride via protests or acts of saviorism. On an average day, even just a trip to one’s neighborhood grocery store, one can pass more than five churches. This does not include bumper stickers, advertisements, salutations that one will undoubtedly come into contact with before, during, and/or after. Though these occurrences may not be intentionally aggressive or threatening (quite often they are), they carry with them the same abusive connotations that the majority of LGBTQ+ individuals in the Midwest endure. Religious motivations are often at the root of the vilification of openly queer individuals. The overwhelming nature of Christian institutions and teachings causes heightened detrimental effects on the mental health of an already ostracized, minoritized community. This research interrogates and uncovers the aforementioned issues through written word, photographs, and localized maps.

Southern Comfort in the Age of Jim Crow: Representing Soul Food in Ralph Ellison’s Juneteenth

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Defining the relationships among food, spirituality, representation, and identity has been a formidable but necessary undertaking in African American literature. Exploring such connections involves reconfiguring traditional boundaries, specifically those related to America’s reductive notions about the consumption patterns and spiritual beliefs of African Americans. This paper shows that soul food involves more than the pleasure of eating and feeding. African Americans use soul food as an essential tool to trace their “roots” and forge communal ties. First, I briefly outline how soul food emerged as a culinary practice in the United States and explain its development in a society that historically devalued African American humanity and intellectual abilities. From there, I examine two sermons from Ralph Ellison’s second novel Juneteenth where preachers embraced soul food not only to remember the fevers and deaths of the Middle passage and the subsequent destruction of African language and culture but also to celebrate the acquisition of a new identity. He represents soul food as a form of Southern comfort and cultural resistance. Through this culinary practice, Ellison illustrates how African Americans creatively took care of their souls while as they combatted discrimination and second-class citizenship. Ralph Ellison believed that African Americans could persevere, even thrive in spite of racism and inequality. Ellison felt that blacks were more than the sum of their circumstances. From Ellison’s point of view, African Americans had a rich culture that deserved recognition, admiration, respect and above all, remembrance.
Christian, Country, and Queer: Analyzing the Effects of Christianity on the Midwestern Queer Community of the Late Twentieth Century United States

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The Midwest United States is well-known for its hospitality, conservative values, and religious roots. Although the so-called “Bible Belt” of the United States is more closely associated with the South, many Midwestern states are included in its influence. Additionally, the Midwest region is home to predominantly right-wing politics. A combination of Christian and right-wing values saw the rise of the religious right beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the modern-day social scene. Christian and conservative activists, such as Anita Bryant, Phylis Schlafly, and Jerry Falwell helped propel the movement into popularity. Some of the political and social issues the religious right sought to address included limiting access to abortion and birth control, supporting Christian prayer in the school system, and eliminating same-sex marriage. This paper will utilize the University of Central Oklahoma’s Women’s Research Center and BGLTQ+ Student Center’s rare collection of feminist and queer periodicals from the 1970s through the early 2000s to analyze the impacts of the religious right on the experiences of queer organizations and individuals in the Midwest United States. These periodicals range from newspapers and academic journals to works of poetry and visual art, but all provide primary source material written by queer individuals and organizations from the late twentieth century. Through the analysis of these wide-ranging periodicals, this paper assesses how Christianity and conservatism impacted queer people living in the Midwest.

Shaman Drums in Postmodern Hungarian Religiosity

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The study analyses the forms and narratives of an archaic religious form, shamanism, and its main religious object/instrument, the shaman drum, in postmodern new religiosity. The interpretation of these phenomena is enriched by numerous publications of Hungarian religious studies. Shamanism in Hungary can be considered a syncretic belief system, which became a dominant element of the new Hungarian mythology-based identity constructions after the regime change of the 1990s. In addition to the sociology of religion, cultural anthropology, ethnography, semiotics, and social psychology also play a role in the research on this topic. The interdisciplinary approach sheds light on the main motivations for the revival of ancient cultures and the specificities of the Eastern European Hungarian ethnopaganism, which differs from similar religious phenomena in Western Europe. The role of contemporary media, the World Wide Web, is also important to examine in researching this topic.
Children’s Spirituality Coping with Grief

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This workshop will discuss the role of religion and spirituality as children cope with grief. Participants will explore religious beliefs, rituals, and relationships that occur during bereavement. Children’s drawings will be used to demonstrate how children engage in meaning construction, how grief presents challenges to belief systems, and the process of meaning reconstruction as a process of maturing religious belief.

Mirabai in Public Spheres: Liminal Spaces, Bhakti, and Women’s Emancipation in India

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Stories, myths and legends travel across time and spaces, and constitute the very essence of a nation’s culture. The way certain popular narratives originate and circulate in public spheres—constantly challenging yet cohabitating with hegemonic forces of dominant cultures—is pivotal to understand why such narratives endure and how they evolve with the socio-political culture of an age. The case of the sixteenth-century Indian bhakti poet-saint Mirabai along with the multiple narratives of her life and legend that currently circulate in public spheres is crucial to understand the discourse of bhakti that once emerged as a social movement but eventually took the form of a religio-political enterprise which assimilated the marginalised with the centre, and provided new meanings of cultural interactions. Bhakti as an epochal sensibility valorised cultural resistance and thrived upon the creative energies of poet-saints such as Mirabai herself. The paper traces the lives of destitute women—especially widows—with interviews conducted recently in and around the city of Vrindavan in India, where they have embraced the name, life and suffering of Mirabai and are called ‘Miramais.’ It also explores the reception of Mirabai among Indian women as an icon of resistance in Indian cultural landscape when she moves along the public domains of canonised popular memory. Her lyrical compositions known as bhajans are read as sites of dissent, and have paved way for generations of Indian women to achieve socio-cultural emancipation through daily acts of performative bhakti in the form of bhajan singing and dancing.
Pagan Faith Identities within Social Networking Spaces – Narratives of the Instafamous Witch: A Case Study of Three Witches and Their Celebrity Status

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The primary aim of this study is to understand how witches become celebrity using social networking spaces through performing their witch identities. Using and developing Deleuze and Guattari’s Rhizome Theory I explore the plateaus where witches have hundreds if not thousands of followers and thereby become ‘instafamous’ and celebrity. This paper explores the concept of the Celebrity-Witch through analysing how self-identified witches network through complicated pathways that cannot be re-created, and through the symbiotic relationships within them. The rhizomatic and mycelium networks support the evolution of faith and witch identity. The presentation of witch truths resonates with large groups of people, hence creating popularised forms of Witchcraft. A witch becomes an influencer or celebrity because they are considered by the online population to be credible, attractive and authentic in addition to offering alternative ontologies of Witchcraft and Witch identities. Initially celebrity witches may not have intended to brand themselves but have become a branded-celebrity due to the networked nature of social media and the platform’s purpose. Zappavigna (2014) argues that blogging is social and although the comments are personal, they are not always about presenting a brand but are intended to create a community of feeling. The interpersonal online relationship with the community creates trust in the authenticity of the Celebrity-Witch. Thus, influencing people who are exploring their witch-identity and potentially creating a new movement of Witchcraft.

Christian Conservative Uses and Abuses of Historical Narrative

Jason Whitehead, Associate Professor, Political Science, California State University, Long Beach, California, United States

Narratives constitute the social and political identity of Christian conservatives as they do for other groups. In particular, Christian nationalist narratives about the American founding have come to dominate Trump-era Christian conservative identity. Christianity has always played a significant role in American civil religion, with sometimes liberating results. On this view, the Christian story is a powerful redemptive metaphor, shaping political life symbolically, and generating political principles—like equality, fair treatment, and moral dignity—that can be interpreted and appropriated in different ways. By contrast, Christian nationalists see the Christian history of the nation more as a blueprint, and they seek to reconcile contemporary American reality as literally as possible to this true and only identity. The shift from civil religion to Christian nationalism poses dangers to American liberal democracy, as illustrated during the 2020 election and its aftermath. This paper first describes the redemptive and reconciliatory approaches to historical narrative, drawn from the work of key narrative theorists. Second, the paper explains the differences between the uses of history in the American civil religious tradition and the Christian nationalist movement, correlating those differences with the redemptive/reconciliatory distinction. Third, the paper tests the redemptive/reconciliatory distinction by seeing if it makes sense of empirical studies of Christian nationalism, including my own ethnographic fieldwork with Christian conservatives.
The Images of the Female Monastic in the Nectar Ritual Paintings: Gender, Public Space, and Ritual Authority in Chosŏn Buddhism

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This paper concerns the representation of Buddhist nuns in the Buddhist nectar ritual paintings. Originating in the Chosŏn kingdom (1392-1910), these paintings depict Buddhist rites that are performed to save sentient beings from the sufferings of samsara by offering sweet nectar to them. Presently, there are about seventy extant paintings. I analyze the nuns’ images in the nectar ritual paintings from a socio-religious point of view. I first explain the definition of this genre and the historical context of its emergence in the sixteenth century. The second part of my paper examines the salient iconographic characteristics of the Buddhist nun figures, focusing on their robes and postures. In the last section of my article, I discuss the social and religious significance of the display of the nun images in the public space during a Buddhist salvation ritual. My paper counters the widely accepted view that the nuns’ lineage had vanished by mid-Chosŏn due to anti-Buddhist measures taken by the pro-Confucian kings. The vibrant iconographic representation of the nuns strongly suggests that they were actively engaged in the lives of the commoners, contrary to the claim that they had become “invisible” in mainstream Chosŏn society. As evidence of my point, I show the surprising portrayals of the nuns as the performers of the ritual, which clearly attest to the historical continuity of their sangha throughout Chosŏn.
The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism in the United States and Beyond: Exploring Issues Regarding Gender, Sexuality, and Marginalization

Lindsey Churchill, Professor/Director of Women’s Research Center and BGLTQ+ Student Center/Director Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History/Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma, United States

This session considers the rise of Christian Fundamentalism in the United States through the lens of gender, sexuality, and sex health. Initially, I present research regarding this trend and the impacts restrictions have had on marginalized communities. Participants are asked to reflect on their own experiences and regions and how the rise of fundamentalism has influenced discussions regarding gender, sexuality, and sexual health. We also explore the experience of starting a research Center in a fundamentally conservative region, and creating the only stand alone LGBTQIA+ Center at a college or university in the state of Oklahoma.

Key Figures of Religious Leaders in the Russian–Ukrainian War

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With the outbreak of a war between the former territories of Kievan Rus, today Russia and Ukraine, it seems important to analyze the role and actions of three of the most important non-political figures for the citizens of that area: Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk and Pope Francis. The reason is that historically religious leaders have played a key role in measuring armed conflicts, for example, during the war in Sudan where the Vatican intervention was key to the end of the war, or the papal intervention in the Beagle Conflict between Chile and Argentina. It is therefore pertinent to analyze how these three religious leaders have acted and the possible intervention they could make for the end of the Russian–Ukrainian war. On the one hand, the Russian Patriarch supports Putin’s position; on the other hand, the Greek Catholic Patriarch manages the situation from the epicenter; finally, Pope Francis pulls diplomatic strings from Rome. In summary, this research uses qualitative methods, specifically historical and previous case studies, to provide some possible future scenarios that only the passage of time will prove to be true.
"Islamic" Human Rights as a Consequence of Islamic Religious Self-conscience: A Qur’ānic Dictate

Michalis Marioras, Associate Professor, Department of Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Attiki, Greece

The basic principles of Islamic teaching on Human Rights are contained in the Qur’ān. They derive entirely from absolute divine authority, while in general there are several similarities with the corresponding Christian teaching. The Qur’ān introduces very serious provisions concerning Human Rights and as a result various, official Islamic Declarations-positions have emerged in the modern era. In addition, there is an abundance of texts that capture the views of important Muslim intellectuals as well as state constitutions. However, all of this ends up being exclusive to Islamic states and Muslims, as all rights are regulated exclusively by the sharī’a. Thus, while for example religious tolerance seems to be accepted, in fact it only concerns Muslims, as it is not clearly addressed to all people without exception. Therefore, it is clear that in the Islamic world there are official texts and positions concerning Human Rights. It is equally clear that they mean exclusively Muslims, since they cannot have universal application due to the inflexible interpretive framework delimited by the sharī’a. A really interesting way out of this impasse is the interpretative re-approach of the Qur’ān and the reduction of the great weight of the sharī’a.

Christian Nationalism and the Formation of Transgender Health Policies: A Review of Stigmatization around Gender Diversity in the Bible Belt

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Developments in gender diversity are not nuanced, nor have they historically been demonized. Stigmatization on transgender people in the early twentieth century was far less aggressive than current attitudes towards transgender health. When gender is pulled into a political sphere, rather than residing in a personal one, negative opinions are forced upon queer people by those who hold the power of “normality.” Across the bible belt, cultural norms are represented by heteronormativity, christian nationalism, and capitalistic attainment. The overlap of conservatism and christianity has undeniably influenced the formation of strict health policies related to gender affirmation. In the bible belt, communities of queer folx have been restricted to seeking online health, health care in nearby liberal states, or receive no health care at all. Ultimately, gender has been brought into a political field by christian nationalists who support restrictive health policies and fixed autonomy. Preventative policies further promote paternalism in health care settings, which instill heteronormative notions of gender. When medical professionals cannot be responsible for implementation of gender-inclusive practices, members of society are led to believe that the only acceptable notion of gender is the model portrayed in their belief system. Those who reside in the bible belt are subject to the conflation of religious authority and political representatives, even when those individuals do not hold a religious affiliation. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate the need to separate christian values from policy making as it relates to transgender health.
The Women's Burden: Iranian Theocracy and the Case of Mahsa Amini

Melanie Perez, Student, Doctoral, Florida International University, Florida, United States

Over the past few weeks, there has been an overwhelming amount of protests and outcry following the murder of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the Islamic Religious Police. Amini’s murder was preceded by her arrest due to an incorrect hijab according to the morality laws in place. This has led to many Muslim feminists and activists to speak out against the government as well as question the foundations in which their society is built. The murder of Mahsa Amini, while connected to the hijab law, has served as a catalyst and symbol of the authoritarian theocracy. This paper argues how such laws are only part of a repressive regime that have inevitably oppressed women and therefore, a whole society. Through an investigation of the history and religious doctrine that supports morality laws and the over-policing of women in Iran, this paper hopes to connect the murder of Mahsa Amini to an unjust system that violates women’s rights, human rights, and international law.

Indigenous Spirituality from a Human Rights-based Approach

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The 21st century is witnessing a revaluation of the role of religion and spirituality in society. In the midst of this process, there is one human group whose spiritual practices and traditional ways of living are becoming increasingly important. Indigenous peoples are nowadays emerging as powerful actors in socio-political debates and environmental movements across the world, although they are still victims of structural problems and gross human rights violations, which tend to reflect in the land grab of their ancestral territories for economic exploitation. Such practices, while also infringing numerous human rights, completely preclude the ability of these peoples to fully enjoy their freedom of religion or belief, which comprises not only the sacred places their territories host, but also their territories as such, due to the intrinsic sacredness attributed to them. At the same time, their spirituality also accommodates invaluable traditional ecological knowledge that has proven to be essential in the fight against climate change, whose worst effects they are already experiencing first hand. These differential factors have led to the delegitimization of indigenous religious beliefs and value systems, which have been deemed inferior and unworthy of protection. That is why looking at indigenous spirituality from a human rights-based approach stands as a necessary consequence of the decolonization of international law. This paper analyzes indigenous peoples’ freedom of religion or belief and identifying the major obstacles it nowadays has to face, after which some recommendations are made in order to try to trace the way forward.
Debt Forgiveness, Religious Principles, and the Path Towards Alleviating Poverty: A Multifaith Approach to Sovereign Debt Relief

Charles Ho Wang Mak, Lecturer in Law, Robert Gordon University, United Kingdom

This essay delves into the intricate interplay between religious principles and debt forgiveness for nations weighed down by crippling debt burdens. It explores the possibility of incorporating these principles into international law and policy and analyses their potential impact on ongoing and future debt relief programs. With a comprehensive examination of the ethical foundations of debt forgiveness in major world religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, this essay dissects the fundamental moral imperatives that underpin the movement towards debt relief. Moreover, it underscores the link between sovereign debt and poverty, highlighting the urgent need to prioritise the interests of vulnerable populations in any debt relief program. By taking a multi-faith approach to incorporating religious principles into global law and policy on debt relief, this essay examines the benefits and challenges of this approach in a world characterised by legal pluralism. It aims to demonstrate the potential of religious teachings to inform and shape international law and policy on sovereign debt relief, thus creating a more equitable and humane global economic system that places the well-being and dignity of all individuals at the centre of its priorities.
Interdisciplinary Approaches

Classifying Muslims - but How?

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Recent studies have pointed out the game-changing role of the 19th century, when Western values and modernity began to dominate the Islamic world, in attempts to classify Muslims. Historically, in general, Muslims have been classified as Sunnis, Shiites, Hanafis, Malikis, Mu'tazilis or Ash'aris, based on their differing perspectives on certain issues, particularly the theological and legal differences. However, when it comes to the 19th century, despite a broad consensus among Muslims on the major Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, the need to cope with the challenges of modernization has led to the emergence of new perspectives that prioritize reason in the interpretation of Islamic sources. In this regard, not only Muslim scholars but also Western intellectuals have attempted classifications of the contemporary Muslim world. However, the intellectual diversity of the Islamic world makes it difficult to define Muslim society within the limits of a single, widely recognized classification or typology. This paper examines how scholars classify Muslims and the arguments behind those classifications, with a focus on calls for Islamic reformation, employing a qualitative methodological design. To gain a better understanding of how Muslims are classified, the paper focuses on the classifications developed by scholars with different cultural backgrounds: John O. Voll and William E. Shepard (non-Muslims / outsiders) and Tariq Ramadan and Yahya Fozi (Muslims / insiders). The outcomes demonstrate that the proposed classifications are, in essence, typological approaches to how Islam manifests among Muslims, and Muslims are increasingly seeking reason-oriented solutions to their concerns.

Religion in the Wake of Crisis: A Longitudinal Study in Puerto Rico

Julianne Bryant, Associate Professor, Modern Languages, Biola University, California, United States

Religion has been shown to provide a forward focus, beyond one’s current circumstances and, thus, create an empowering and unifying function. Various studies demonstrate a correlation between religion and positive coping and resiliency following stressful or traumatic events, some even measuring post-traumatic growth. This understanding has informed the scientific study of religion in dealing with the aftermath of a natural disaster, an emerging and growing field of inquiry. Many resources have been developed to encourage the integration of religious and spiritual elements in disaster relief efforts. And current research has supported the benefits of positive religious and spiritual care in disaster survivors. However, studies examining spiritual and emotional care in practice are very limited. Even fewer are investigations within actual church communities. This paper presents the findings of a mixed methods research study that investigated how religion influenced the spiritual and emotional care of the people of Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria, the political strife of summer 2019, the earthquakes and the pandemic. With this new knowledge and understanding we hope to isolate variables and develop models for practitioners that may contribute to a more culturally sensitive practice.
Exploring the Cultural Evolution of Religion through Contemporary Practice: A Large-scale Study of New Religions

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Why do some religious groups achieve global popularity while others fail to spread or simply die out? How can we track changing religious expressions in contemporary contexts and compare these dynamics to historical data? This paper analyzes the potential of the mixed-methods Database of Religious History (DRH) to address these questions. While the DRH has pioneered a digital interface to analyze cultural evolution through the long durée, it currently lacks data on a specific set of variables that would be required to test hypotheses relating to the cultural morphologies, which can be tested through a New Religions dataset. This study describes the methodological process of creating a poll on New Religions and recruiting 100s of expert participants. I focus on how the tech interface can expands academic engagement with Digital Humanities and facilitates new forms of computationally-engaged interdisciplinarity testing about the dynamics of religious change.

Ritual and Role-play in the Metaverse: Building Community, Suspending Disbelief

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Online rituals occurring in 3D virtual environments have become increasingly commonplace. In Linden Lab’s Second Life, for example, users can utilize their avatars to represent themselves at sermons, weddings or guided meditation sessions. Despite the loss of physical immediacy in these events, there are aspects of online interaction in virtual spaces that provide affordances that bolster their legitimacy as authentic and meaningful. Through ethnographic participant observation and semi-structured interviews, the author looks at ritual practices in three Second Life communities, groups that integrate Buddhism, Hinduism and new age spirituality with role-play and fan fiction. By observing how these rituals strengthen group cohesion while providing an opening for participants initially averse or ambivalent to spirituality, the author explores the overlap of suspension of disbelief in online role-play and the willingness to believe necessary for religious practice.
Theological Considerations of Artificial Intelligence

Vasileios Aristarchos Gkrekas, Assistant Professor, Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Attiki, Greece

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the contemporary globalized environment offers humans remarkable facilitation in their daily life. Nevertheless, there is skepticism about the possibilities or opportunities of AI autonomy in decision-making, as well as several ethical dilemmas emerging from the use of AI applications. At this point, the theology of the Orthodox Church constitutes a safe timeless criterion for self-determination, self-awareness, and their achievements, on a rational basis. Consequently, the Orthodox theological tradition sets the criteria of the moral basis of self-awareness, so that this relationship with the world and the science are balanced by the worldly presence of God, along with the eschatological perspective. Worldly prosperity is a gift of God, when attributed to God’s beneficence. In contrast, it could deviate to the egotistic self-love, when anthropocentrism is autonomous and eliminates the divine factor from the life and action, as an individual and as a society. The teaching of the Orthodox Church deals with the issues of technological progress while always respecting the freedom of scientific research, but at the same time it reminds us of the divine destiny, as well as the moral values that are entailed.

The Quest for Islam and Muslim Society: Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Century Muslim Intellectual Reflections on Reform

Maha F. Habib, Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Khalifa University, United Arab Emirates

Since the nineteenth century, the Muslim world has been the subject of discussions that reveal its dire state of affairs. How Muslim intellectuals characterize their own predicament is integral to understanding Muslim articulations for reform. Concerned for the state of their societies and cultures, religious intellectuals reflect on the state of society and re-examine religious sources and modes of thinking in an attempt to respond to current needs. More so, there are elements that a diverse selection of Muslim intellectuals from various parts of the Muslim world seem to coalesce around that is suggestive of a constitution of a shared reform vision. These elements include: the reconciliation of the relationship of Islam to modernity/West; the reinvigoration of the Islamic civilizational essence and its tawḥīdī epistemology; a centralization of Islamic heritage and its values; and, a restoration of Islamic epistemology. These elements form the theoretical underpinnings of reform and an Islamic alternative; they represent a rigorous intellectual investment in the rethinking of Islam and its role, and in meeting the challenges of modernity, the challenges to Muslim society, and in constituting a trajectory inspiring of change. These intellectuals share a common set of features: a commitment to Islam, with an openness to cultural exchange; the encouragement of the development of Muslim thought; and, a need to respond to modern concerns, coupled with an investment in (re)establishing common boundaries for religious understanding. The anticipation is that there would be a restoration of Muslim society and civilization, thus, civilizational reform, renewal, and progress.
Commercialized Consecration: Pop Culture Villainy in Modern Spirituality

Matthew Hodge, Associate Professor, Theatre and Music, William Peace University, North Carolina, United States

The ever-growing fusion of popular culture into belief systems has produced a 21st-century boom in commercialized religious and spiritual byproducts. Subsequently, practitioners of belief systems are also simultaneously consumers of mainstream entertainment. From comic book themed sermons and graphic adaptations of the Bible, to the influences of Disney and cultural fairy tales onto cartomancy and divination decks, spiritual practices now offer a welcoming gateway for modern generations who feel affection towards pop culture fandoms. This paper explores various ways that religion and spirituality have commercialized and celebrated beloved fictional stories — especially in ways that highlight the deep fascinations contemporary audiences feel towards villains. Whether in a comic book, a Disney movie, a literary fairy tale, or biblical scripture, the pondering of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’ have never been more colorful or entertaining — especially the ‘evil’.

Religious Coping and Psychological Well-Being

Mona Ibrahim, Aiyana Jollie Trottier

As reported in a recent U.S. surgeon general’s advisory, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly worsened the mental health crisis that young people were already experiencing. College students, in particular, are experiencing alarming levels of decreased psychological well-being and life satisfaction coupled with increased loneliness and anxiety. As a result, demand for psychological services has overwhelmed the existing mental health system. The surgeon general’s advisory urges finding a wider variety of resources to help people cope with the pandemic. While there is much attention directed to how religious beliefs might hinder efforts to fight the pandemic, the role that religious coping might play in increasing psychological health and life satisfaction during the pandemic has not received enough attention. Previous research has indicated that positive religious coping is a predictor of life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. My research focuses on the intersection of faith and health in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. We designed a survey to assess religious coping and key mental health outcomes in adult college students. This poster presents findings from our research study pertaining to the correlations between positive religious coping and various mental health outcomes, including life satisfaction, anxiety, and loneliness. Implications for potential interventions that might help enhance positive religious coping in young adults to increase their psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed.
Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: Masturbation, Queer Love, and Homoeroticism in the Life of Jesus Christ

Clint Jones, Full-time Faculty, Religion and Philosophy, Capital University, Ohio, United States

My essay is an attempt to read the life of Jesus Christ through the lens of Queer theory to demonstrate how such a reading could be used to rebut current societal trends of homophobic beliefs and behaviors especially in Christianity. First, I show how a misreading of the biblical story of Onan, historically and continuing today, creates the conditions for individual and social harm. Examining this misreading creates the opportunity for re-reading the life of Jesus as a potentially queer life in at least three ways: the Roman centurion, his relationship to Judas, and positing Lazarus as the Beloved Disciple. Paralleling these arguments I also show that Jesus’s involvement at the Wedding at Cana demarcates the possibility of Jesus as bisexual. However, my focus is not on sex or sexuality, but rather on eroticism as a way to argue for a more dynamic rendering of Jesus and a clear extension of his love to all people regardless of their particular orientation to the world.

Islam and the Environment: Applying the Historical Perspective

Jakub Koláček, Researcher, Lecturer, Department of the Middle East, Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Czech Republic

The Islamic discourse on environment now dates back over a half-century. Over its course, it comprised mainly of attempts to let the rich Islamic textual tradition speak to current ecological problems in which scholars, philosophers, social activists, and more recently also governmental institutions and NGOs have engaged. Especially over the last decade, this also led to various theorizations of this discourse revolving among others around the questions of authenticity and practical viability of the ‘Islamic environmentalisms’ (among others in a recent book by Anna Gade). In my contribution, I argue that the scholarly debate on the topic has not yet reached sufficient scope and depth, mainly for one reason: the overwhelming focus on the ‘ethical’ dimension of the Islam-environment nexus built upon the uncritically accepted supposition about the primacy of “values” in determining social agency vis-à-vis the environment (in fact originating in the foundational discourses of White and Nasr from 1960s and animating the discourse all along). Against that, I propose that a much broader outlook focusing on the long-term historical interaction of Muslim societies with their natural surroundings is desirable and that only it has the potential to move the study of the question forward and resolve some of its lingering discrepancies. This basically means to historicize the question and apply some of the cutting-edge knowledge from the field of environmental history to it. Such a turn, I argue, also opens some new fields of inquiry of interest to both historians and scholars of Islam.
Religiosity, Spirituality, and Religious Conspiracy Theories: Their Association with Health Outcomes During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Alice Kosarkova, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Theology, Christian Education, Palacky University in Olomouc, Olomoucký kraj, Czech Republic

Religiosity and spirituality (R/S) can help some people shape their worldview and in coping with difficult situations. As such, they can also play an important role in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in times of uncertainty and threat, R/S may in some aspects became also a factor related to the development of religious conspiracy theories (RCT). Given the negative consequences of RCT, it seems important to examine the nature of R/S itself and the type of religious coping used, which may be key to understanding the basis of the worldviews that underpin the emergence of RCT. This poster presents findings from two studies conducted in the Czech Republic in 2020 during the first wave of the pandemic and in 2021 during the COVID-19 vaccination period. We investigated R/S, religious coping, RCT about COVID-19, religious fundamentalism, their associations with worsened mental health and willingness to be vaccinated. Our results show that RCT beliefs are related to an individual’s R/S, maladaptive religious coping strategies and religious fundamentalism. The negative effect of RCT beliefs and of negative coping was revealed by significantly higher levels of worsened mental health in those who reported such beliefs or/and a way of coping. A negative effect of RCT beliefs was further revealed by significantly higher levels of COVID-19 vaccine refusal among those who were spiritual but not religiously affiliated. Our findings may help to understand the factors influencing the dynamics of RCT development and their associations with R/S domains of human life during a pandemic.

Can Mysticism Contribute to Inter-religious Relations?: Some Reflections

Patrick Laude, Professor, Theology and Religious Studies, Georgetown University, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

Mysticism is a broad field of study that conjures up images of sublime states and arcane teachings. History shows, however, that mystical forms of religion have had, in addition to their esoteric aspects, a deep and lasting influence on entire societies and civilizations. They have also contributed, historically, to inter-religious relationships and have built bridges between civilizations. This paper articulates a few reflections on the opportunities and challenges presented by mystical discourse and practice in the sphere of contemporary multicultural public settings.
Food Evangelism on the Street: Hare Krishnas and Seventh-day Adventists in Action

Tamas Lestar, Senior Lecturer, Responsible Management and Leadership, University of Winchester, United Kingdom

The Hare Krishna and the Seventh-day Adventist movements are two among the few religious communities who take their messages to the street through community outreach. Both organisations commit to food-related evangelising in the form of exhibitions, cooking classes, literature distribution and food sharing. My presentation has two aims: 1. Compare the approaches to health and outreach methods in the two organisations. 2. Establish links between food evangelising practices and current trends and needs in contemporary society. The main questions to investigate: How does food evangelising in the Hare Krishna and Seventh-day Adventist movements relate to issues of individual and planetary health and well-being? What are the enabling and disabling factors for wider impact?

The "Absolutization" of Autonomy: The Stance of Christian Bioethics

Angelos Mavropoulos, PhD student and part-time lecturer, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music, Dublin City University, Ireland

According to Beauchamp and Childress, in their extremely influential work, The Principles of Biomedical Ethics, the four principles of bioethics are autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. The first principle, autonomy, is the right of individuals to self-determination and self-government, that is, one’s right to make informed decisions about their life and health without any external interference, which leaves no room for any kind of paternalism. For Christian theology, the creation of humans in the image and likeness of God, reveals their superiority within the rest of creation as well as the human person’s unassailable dignity, because of which, human life is considered sacred. Furthermore, according to Christian ethics, within Creation, only human nature is associated with reason and free will and this is what justifies the inalienable human rights and our undeniable right to decide autonomously for ourselves. Therefore, Christian bioethics firmly respects human autonomy. On the other hand, Christian theology does not conform to the “absolutization” of autonomy and the excessive emphasis given to it by modern bioethics, since the eschatological salvation of the soul is of much higher importance. For several Christian theologians and thinkers, this absolutization, instead of bringing people together, isolates and separates them, while, on the moral level, leading to incoherence and confusion. So, where exactly does Christian bioethics stand between these two poles of absolutization and repudiation of autonomy? This question is considered in this paper.
**Buddhist Psychology to Enhance Recovery from Co-occurring Disorders: Enhancing the Effectiveness of DBT, ACT, MBRP, CBT**

Christopher Mc Duffie, Associate Social Worker/Chemical Dependency Counselor II, Mental Health, AToN Center, California, United States

Buddhist psychology and spiritual recovery are highly effective pathways for recovering from co-occurring disorders. Therapists who are better informed of Buddhist principles that are incorporated in DBT, ACT, MBRP and CBT will enhance relapse prevention. Attendees will learn Buddhist principles, teachings and practices to inform their approach and effectiveness with third-wave psychotherapy.

**Modernity and Religion**

Nicos Mouzelis, Emeritus Professor, Sociology, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

The paper tries to link the concept of modernity to various religious phenomena. Modernity in the social sciences focuses on three sociostructural dimensions which, in their combination, one does not find in traditional, premodern societies. These are inclusion into the nation state, the top-down differentiation of the institutional spheres and widespread individuation. With the help of the above conceptual framework one can study in a systematic manner aspects of religiosity. For instance inclusion into the nation state, as far religion is concerned, leads to the inclusion of those in the periphery (local priests and believers) to the central national religious organization. In that sense it gradually undermines the dualism between elite and the popular religion. The former is characterized by scripturalism, and coherence of the theological doctrine. The latter is less “pure” since the popular religious tradition coexists with superstitions, magical or pagan elements. One can find similar interconnections between the other two features of modernity and religious development.
Fraternal Correction: Borrowing a Religious Model to Understand International Politics

Brian Muzas, Assistant Professor and Director, the Center for United Nations and Global Governance Studies, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Seton Hall University, New Jersey, United States

It is true that just war thought has an influential presence in international politics. Whether in international law or the emerging norms of the Responsibility to Protect, various fundamental and derived just war criteria often serve to measure or restrain state behavior. It is also true that, before and after just war thought was incorporated into current international law, much systematic thought and analysis was contributed by religious thinkers, notably from Christian traditions. However, just war thought has limitations. It is meant to grapple with the initiation and conduct of war, so much of international politics falls under its framework incompletely. Moreover, just war thought itself is a limited, special case of a broader outlook. In that broader outlook, however, one finds a plausible connection between international politics and peer-to-peer fraternal correction: The criteria which describe fraternal correction can be used to illuminate diplomacy because these criteria highlight the strategic and interactive aspects of international politics. While moving beyond just war thought, the fraternal correction framework fits with the philosophies of ethics, government, and human nature which underlie just war thought, and so the fraternal correction framework is a legitimate and relevant. Also, like just war thought, fraternal correction has been explored systematically by thinkers from Christian traditions. This paper leverages part of the relevant Christian religious cultural heritage in question, applies its fundamental principles to interstate relations, offers historical exemplifications of these principles in practice, and connects these principles to general and specific policy questions for contemporary state leaders.
The Religious Thought of Alchemy and the Novalisian Expansion of Consciousness: How Alchemy and the Spiritual Thoughts of Romanticism Can Develop a More Conscious Outlook on the World

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Alchemy can be understood as an ancient and syncretic theoretical-practical system. The main ideas can be summed up to the premise of the correspondence between micro and macro cosmos, as well as the objectives of transmutation and conjunction of opposites, all of which lead to the manufacture of the Philosopher’s Stone. Metaphorical writing and its allegorical narratives allow alchemy to be both practical in a chemical and metallurgical sense and speculative in a philosophical and literary way. Taking an interest in alchemical studies, Novalis began conciliating their conclusions within the spirit of his time through his literary productions. In the philosophical way, alchemy works towards the expansion of consciousness. The perfection of the matter is related to the perfection of the human being in a moral and spiritual senses. This idea will find a space to be developed with German Idealism and Romanticism, specially with Novalis, for whom this expansion results from the return to a primordial unity. Novalis found the perfect symbol of this unity: the blue flower. This paper considers how the alchemical process was thought to lead to the expansion of consciousness and how Novalis reworked this idea in his literary productions. Moreover, I link Novalis’s thought to the question of how a (re-)confrontation with Romantic poetry and its reconceptualisations of alchemy may catalyse its readers’ own (spiritual) awakening and the development of a more conscious and thus perhaps ‘woke’ outlook on the world.

Behind Death and Construction of the Beyond: Historical and Narrative Analysis of the Mortuary Rituals of Current Religions in Latin America

Fabio Andrés Medina Ostos, Maestrante, Universidad Central, Colombia

Although not everyone fears it, at least it is something that no one can be indifferent to. Death is the protagonist of this study that begins with an in-depth analysis of ancient civilizations, religious construction, the emergence of the gods and the perception of the Beyond. Later, it continues with a tour, hand in hand with the sacred books, through the paths of paradise, purgatory and hell, which have been created in the Catholic, Muslim and Jewish religions, as a product of the contacts and migrations of the most important civilizations of the world; finally, we explore the symbolic, narrative and social complex of these three religions, which materializes in funeral rituals and how to this day it is still the way of saying goodbye to those who have transcended to another form of existence.
**Daven - Examining Embodied Exploration and Choreographic Collaboration as a Model of Interfaith Engagement**

Marin Roper, Assistant Professor, Dance, Brigham Young University, Utah, United States  
Jordan Halterman, Student, BA in Dance Education, Brigham Young University, Utah, United States  
Erik Stern, Professor, Performing Arts, Weber State University, Utah, United States

This interactive workshop examines choreographic collaboration and embodied experience as a model for interfaith engagement. The workshop draws on methods of a recent interfaith performance project that paired contemporary dance artists with college dance students. The aim was to create dance solos that explore how the body manifests and responds to religious ritual and its many associations. Presenters from one such pairing reflect on the 10-hour rehearsal process, and share insights about verbal/non-verbal communication, kinesthetic empathy, embodied knowledge, and the value of shared creative expression as tools for interfaith engagement. Theories of movement analysis and cultural frameworks for dance research will be discussed. Participants will also be guided through accessible movement activities (no experience necessary) as well as view a live performance of Daven, one of the solos resulting from the project.

**Catholic Currents in the Antipoetry of Nicanor Parra: Navigating Belief in Chilean Society**

Joseph Wagner, Associate Professor of English, Humanities Department, Bowling Green State University, Firelands College, Ohio, United States

This paper explores how Nicanor Parra’s antipoetry can help us negotiate the role of religion in Chile (and by extension in other secular democracies with deep religious roots). The aim of this study is to illustrate how Parra’s antipoetry offers a relationship to the divine that prompts productive dialogue in a pluralistic society. As Chile is currently a beacon of hope for those seeking a better life in South America, it is worth reviewing the role of religion in a country that is facing serious protests from angry citizens, violent attacks from indigenous Mapuche, an enormous influx of immigrants, and an ever-more-difficult drought—all of which provide an important context for the recent election of President Boric, with his ties to a communist party, that further calls into question religion’s place in Chilean policy and politics. The disciplinary framework for this study includes literature, rhetoric, and philosophy. The methods used in this study include literary critique, textual analysis, and the application of rhetorical and philosophical principles. Close re-reading and theoretical review make up the knowledge activities of this interpretive study. The result of this study shows that Nicanor Parra’s unique and influential antipoetry provides a road map for a shared, fruitful approach to religious belief, in part via the notion of “antistrophos,” and in part via Ludwig Wittgenstein’s view of the mystical. In conclusion, such an approach could be put to good use to confront social and political strife in any secular, pluralistic society.
In Krahtwohl’s (2002) revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy, the two highest levels of cognitive processing activities in learning are ‘analysis’ and ‘creation.’ Yet creating opportunities for this kind of deep learning (Manalo 2019) can be time-consuming and challenging for instructors. The present study posits that interdisciplinary collaboration among students from different majors in different courses at different institutions can provide opportunities for these higher levels of learning to occur in a more engaging way, more student-centered way. This dynamic pedagogical approach has been labeled “cross-course” learning (see Nwokeji & Frezza 2017) to distinguish it from the more traditional “in-course” learning where students may work collaboratively but are limited to learning interactions only with their classmates at the same institution. Specifically, in the context of Qatar, this project explored the following teaching-related questions: 1. How do students and faculty perceive cross-course, interdisciplinary approaches to learning pedagogical content in the field of religious studies (RS) when compared to more traditional in-classroom approaches? 2. How do cross-course reading activities impact the quality of student learning? Preliminary survey results from this case study involving three partner universities at Education City in Doha, Qatar show that cross-course activities create more dynamic engagement and discussion than in traditional in-course reading activities. The researchers observe that such cross-course reading activities whether done in-person or online can add a valuable and enriching component to traditional religion-themed courses.

Krishna’s Leela and Winnicott’s Play: A Correspondence

Vineet Gairola, Student, Ph.D., Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

It is time for psychology to get in touch with its creative roots. This paper emphasizes psychoanalysis of the highest and the deepest parts of psychology—correspondence between the infantile and the mystical. Both parts carry with them a promise of absorption, which echoes in itself a ground zero for psychology. It is about creatively noticing the fundamentals and witnessing a dependent origination. Krishna was a man of the future. He is beyond post–postmodernism. It is on the grounds that Krishna’s truth is ‘neither this nor that, this also, that also’—a paradoxical site by accepting the totality of existence. Different people saw different facets of who he is. For some he is God, for some, he is a crook, for some, he is a lover, for some, he is an eloquent flute player, for some, he is a truly audacious warrior, the most vibrant embodiment, a yogi of the paramount order, and so on. We see what both the creative analysts—Krishna and Winnicott have to offer in the understanding of the infantile in our time. Both of them allow us to explore the most profound and the most serious aspect of life playfully. If we want to be-in, be-with, and finally be the truth, we will need Leela ‘play.’ At the intersection of psychoanalysis and culture, can Winnicott’s true self dance to the flute of Krishna?
Meaning in Life, Generativity and Legacy in Educational Leaders

Douglas Hagedorn, Student, PhD, Dallas Baptist University, Colorado, United States

A generative individual guides, cares for, and invests in the next generation and, by doing so, creates and constructs a legacy. Not every person is purposeful in their legacy, but each person will leave a legacy, regardless of their intent to do so. An educational leader’s focus on generativity and legacy may have a connection with achieving meaning in life through meaningful activities, personal experiences, and attitudes. It is highly likely that an educator already participates in generative expressions by passing on ideas, values, traditions, knowledge, and things that outlive themselves. The problem at hand is a lack of research and linkage between meaning in life and generativity and legacy, specifically in an educational setting. The current study explores leadership expressions of generativity that may result in meaning in life or leaving a legacy. It is a qualitative study that utilizes a multiple-case study design to assess three faith-based schools. The sample frame included three cases with three variants of educational leaders within each case: administrative leaders, classroom teacher leaders, and parental educational leaders (N=18). An alumni focus-group was also conducted. Each educational leader answered questions related to their own meaning in life, generativity, and legacy in an educational setting. The research goal endeavors to answer the following question: “In what ways do educational leaders leave a legacy with their followers in K-12, faith-based, University-Model® schools?” Findings show that faith-based educational leaders exercised their callings and purpose with numerous generative expressions that led to meaning in life and a legacy.

Trauma Informed Spiritual Practice

Jesse Eugene Herriott, Student, Ordained Ministry (Unity Minister), Unity Institute and Seminary (UWSI), Missouri, United States

Trauma informed spiritual practice embraces the viewpoint that participants in small communities of learning and development such as faith communities, schools, religious institutions, and families have different needs. In a post-COVID society, research has shown that anxiety has seem to risen to all time highs in America. What may be equally true is more people are finally becoming aware that engaging the world requires an understanding of the needs of the communities one may find themselves belonging to. Touch, hugs, and direct contact in interpersonal relationships within communities should be re-examined to include and strong awareness of consent at the initial point of contact and throughout the period of engagement—from hello to goodbye. The likelihood of triggering unwanted feelings of anxiety and social awkwardness forces additional self-regulation in an extroverted world are strong, even though hugs, direct conversation both in person and through indirect, and normal greeting exercises have been considered appropriate methods of engaging known and unknown individuals. COVID protocols have sparked a new interest in how to engage communities in a world where the variety of psychological experiences and trauma are diverse. Therefore it is essential to explore the personality and psychological needs of the individuals that make up a community at the onset of the initial encounter, regardless if there is a common relationship between those that are attempting to conduct a standard greeting.
Contemplative Pedagogy and the Meaning of Death: Using Practices Drawn from Religions in a College Classroom in the US

Bishal Karna, Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, Nazareth College, New York, United States

I share my experience of using contemplative practices, adapted for secular college classroom from different religious traditions, in a course on death and dying. The topic of death brings up intense emotions for most people, especially for young adults. These emotions often prevent students from engaging with the course materials, obstructing learning. They also spill over into the classroom space. Over the years, I have realized that teaching and learning about death requires that I also teach students how to manage their emotions and intentionally help them find meaning in the fact of human suffering and mortality. Contemplative pedagogy and practices have enabled me to do so. I share in this presentation the difficulties I have faced, the lessons I have learned, and the best practices I have developed in teaching about death. I hope to contribute to the larger conversations about teaching difficult topics, teaching the whole person (instead of isolating the intellectual side of our students from their emotional and spiritual sides), and the problematic issues with using religious practices in secular settings.

The Revival of the Religious Ideal in Postmodern Social Life through the Symbolic Depiction of Angels

Eleni Linardou, Student, PhD candidate, Panteion University Social and Political Sciences, Attiki, Greece

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate how religion can still exist indirectly in human social life, despite its marginalization in the modern world. A religious contemporary work of art it’s easier to act indirectly educationally in the social life of the individual, it can be found in any exhibition space, even in public spaces. As for the Angels, despite the fact that their depiction has something ideal, non-human in contrast to the industrial world, it’s much more adopted from the postmodern society than the depiction of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. An indicative example is the “Angel of the North” (1994-1998) by Antony Gormley. The Britain artist chose to make an angel sculpture because he hoped it would act as a guardian, or messenger in the Gateshead area, welcoming travelers from near and far. Therefore, Gormley brings the religious symbolism of the Angel into modern social life by making religion something favorable rather than repulsive as it is often treated today. It’s a contribution of religion to culture and education. The originality of the research is based on the time frame we are studying, from 1990 to the 21st century. Until today, various researches have been carried out on the hagiographies, the importance of religion in the social life of the Middle Ages etc. The purpose of this study is the importance of religion in the modern world, society, politics through art works that have not been studied earlier, nor have countless essays been published.
Ignatian-Inspired Pedagogies to Build Community and Collaboration for the Common-Good

Katia Moles, Adjunct Lecturer, Engineering, Santa Clara University, California, United States

This research examines how team-based pedagogies may benefit from being centered in the five key elements of the Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm (IPP): context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. Examining evidence gathered from across a variety of classes in which the proposed pedagogies were deployed, the project shows how integrating the IPP into team-based learning introduces students to transformational practices both during their time together, and more importantly, as lifelong practices in the years following graduation. As young people today are searching for meaning, spiritual frameworks and practices, such as the IPP, can be incorporated into team-based learning pedagogies to meet student needs. The fruits of such frameworks and practices include helping students to: become more inclusive, respectfully communicate across differences, expand and challenge perspectives, deepen understanding their own assumptions and implicit biases, clarify values, and increase their desire to act collaboratively and ethically in service of the common good.

Jerusalem Pilgrims: Spirituality, Rationality, and the Iconic in the Ministry of St. George’s College

Stephen W. Need, Associate Professor, Theology, University of Notre Dame, London, United Kingdom

Pilgrims to Jerusalem and the Holy Land often find questions about the authenticity of holy places unsettling. But genuine questions lead to new horizons. The Anglican St. George’s College in Jerusalem offers holistic “study-pilgrimages” which bring prayer and devotion together with academic study. Following the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the interplay between the spiritual and the rational on a pilgrimage is characterized here as a “conversation” and imagined as an element within a personal relation with the divine as understood by Martin Buber. These ideas are explored further through a consideration of the classical theology of icons found in the writings of John of Damascus and Theodore the Studite in the eighth and ninth centuries, and rooted in the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE). Overall, pilgrimage and holy places are seen as “iconic” and the conversation between the spiritual and the rational as having its roots in the relational interplay between the human and the divine. It is maintained that spirituality and rationality can co-exist on St. George’s College courses within a creative inter-relation which draws pilgrims into the presence of God, showing that questions of the authenticity of sites are only part of a much wider pilgrim experience.
The Contribution of the First Christian Preaching (1st Cor. 15, 3-5) to a New Christian Identity: A Theological Approach

Alexandra Palantza, Assistant Professor, Theology, NKUA, Attiki, Greece

Paul’s presentation in Corinth is closely connected not only to the Christian preaching at the capital of the province of Achaia, but also to different religious parties in it, which claimed, that they were the unique representative of Jesus Christ. The present text of ours tries to see the first-Christian preaching in its further meaning: a) as a common base, which expresses the constant faith to Jesus Christ. He, and no one else sacrificed himself and died for people’s sins and was resurrected from the dead according to the Holy Scriptures, b) this constant faith makes a new people, not the old people of God, who were waiting to be restored among the nations, but those one, who as a whole of Gentiles and Jewish people, has been saved through Jesus’ sacrifice. This base creates a new life for anyone, who joins the Christian faith and keeps away from diversities of any kind, c) from another point of view the Christian preaching gives the orientation of a peaceful life, full of the fruits of love, justice and Christian tolerance could offer, not the military possession under the roman troops (pax romana).

Belief as a Construction of Society

Phillip Pierce, Professor, Social Sciences, Texas Woman’s University, Texas, United States

The “Thomas Theorem” in sociology states: “Things believed to be true, are true in their consequences”. This research explores the consequences of that theorem in people’s personal lives, where “reality” is, for all intents and purposes” intertwined with what it is believed to be. Reality of any situation is not exactly the same for any other person than the one experiencing it. The same is true for all collectively held beliefs in groups. Emile Durkheim argues, If a group’s solidarity is mechanically oriented, everyone would have the same beliefs based, mostly, on what they have been taught. It may be related to culture, race, power and influence, or religion. Solidarity may become “organic” when it is necessary to approach many people and groups outside one’s established one, in order to obtain products and services they desire and cannot receive from their group. This forces an acknowledgement of other people’s ways of life and belief. Tension develops between the associated groups as they attempt to maintain a no-longer relevant insular reality of existence. This is an examination of the beliefs and the realities they construct, and vice versa.
Photis Kontoglou, Writer and Painter: Reflections of His Lifetime Experiences and Deep Religiousness in Texts and Artworks

Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou, Professor, School of Theology/Department of Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Attiki, Greece
Panagiota Katopodi, Student, PHD, UOA, Greece
Michail Asfentagakis, Student, Post. Doctoral Researcher, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Attiki, Greece

Photis Kontoglou was one of the greatest personalities of the 20th century in Greece. When he left his hometown, Aivali, after the Smyrna Catastrophe (1922), he moved to Athens, where he was distinguished as a painter and also a writer. Through this paper, we present artworks and texts of his and show how three important historical events, World War I & II (1914–1918, 1939–1945) and Asia Minor Catastrophe, impacted his way of thinking and his beliefs, and empowered his religious sentiment.

Imagination – the Spiritual Key to Self-actualization: The Dynamics of Thought in the Heart of Humankind; the Potential Exponential

Coralee Prutzman, ESOL contact/teacher, ESOL, Palm Beach School District, Florida, United States

As the human fingerprint is unique to all, the images created in one’s mind have the power to bring forth one’s full potential. In this paper, the objectives are to understand the dynamics and possibilities of imagination through the spiritual lens in the life of humankind. In a world that is quickly spiraling out of control – with suicide at an all-time high, voices from without bombarding the mind and heart – parents, educators, leaders, and most importantly individuals, must take hold of this God-given key and unlock the door to their divine purpose. This paper is directed to those who have an ear to hear what the Bible has written in regards to man becoming his best version for the glory of his Creator. The methods used to collate this material are from literature reviews, textual analysis, and critical reappraisal. The work undertaken is from artifact analysis and theoretical reconceptualization. From this paper, it is understood that as a person thinketh so they are, and therefore, the possibility of self-actualization is just an image away in becoming reality. In conclusion, finding one’s full potential begins in the heart through the power of imagination.
Encountering Religious Difference in University: The Impact of Education on Students’ Pluralism Orientation and Appreciative Attitudes

Alyssa Rockenbach, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development, North Carolina State University, North Carolina, United States

Drawing on data from the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) conducted in the United Kingdom, this paper explores how students’ attitudes toward religious diversity change during university and the role of educational experiences in producing change. One thousand students attending university in the UK participated in two waves (2021 and 2022) of survey data collection, allowing a longitudinal assessment their pluralism orientation (i.e., global citizenship, goodwill toward people of other religions, appreciation of interreligious commonalities and differences, and commitment to interfaith leadership and service) and appreciative attitudes toward eight groups (i.e., Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, and religious people). Paired t-tests and multivariate regression analyses were employed to examine the nature and predictors of change. The findings suggest that students do make appreciable gains in pluralism orientation and appreciative attitudes during their time in university. To some degree, their attitudes are related to identities they hold (e.g., gender, race, sexuality, religion, political ideology), but aspects of their university experience play a noteworthy part in the process of change as well. The type of institution attended—that is, whether it was religiously affiliated, secular, or traditional elite—surfaced across numerous regression models, suggesting that contextual factors make an important contribution. Moreover, students who perceived their university as religiously diverse, felt safe and supported to express their perspectives, and encountered people and ideas who challenged their stereotypes and assumptions were more inclined than those who did not to grow more pluralistic and appreciative of religious difference.

Learning Empathy and Learning Wonder: An Interrogation of Two Contrasting Aspirations in the Classroom

Jessica Scott, Teaching Associate, Theology and Religious Studies, University of Nottingham, London, City of, United Kingdom

A number of recent commentaries have asserted a connection between the practice of reading stories and the development of empathy. Parallel connections exist in accounts of the study of theology and religious studies, wherein the act of reading scriptural narratives belonging to different traditions is framed as enabling students to empathetically imagine a worldview apart from their own. In this paper, I first probe what is meant by ‘empathy’ in such accounts; second, I suggest a number of troubling implications contained in the affirmation of ‘empathy’; and, third, I propose, as an alternative, an aspiration to wonder as an experience to be pursued by educators in the classroom. My argument is formed through theological reflection and textual and conceptual analysis, in dialogue with theologians and literary critics, among them: Rowan Williams, Terry Eagleton, and Maria C. Scott. In its interrogation of ‘empathy’ and ‘wonder’ as contrasting aspirations, this research reckons with questions pertaining to how we may know and not know the ‘other’, how we may know and not know ourselves; and how distance and proximity can be negotiated in the practice of reading.
Secularism and the Right to Spirituality: Work, Leisure, and Contemplation

Arik Segev, Head of the M.Ed. Program in Educational Leadership Development, School of Advanced Studies, Kaye Academic College of Education and Sapir Academic College, Israel

People have a claim-right to spirituality. It is therefore the duty of society, including secular societies, to enable its members to exercise this right. This means that spirituality should not be left to the realm of laissez-faire, and that society has a moral duty to nurture spiritual opportunities for children and adults. Moreover, I uphold the idea that all people, including those who live in secular societies, have the right not only to any spiritual life, but to their own, i.e., spiritual values consistent with their particular upbringing. Unfortunately, secular societies do not see themselves as responsible for the cultivation of their members’ spirituality. At the same time, they suffer from a public spiritual void. I claim that this void is due to the overwhelming role occupied by work in the lives of people of secular societies, as well as to an overly narrow understanding of leisure, here referred to as leisure 1. The combination of work and leisure 1 has marginalized practices of contemplation that are the core of any spiritual practice. These practices constitute a special kind of leisure, leisure 2, that forms the foundation of spiritual life. I argue that secularism need not be characterized as an un-spiritual, worldly culture, and demonstrate that philosophy as practice and tradition belongs to the particular spiritual tradition of the democratic secular culture – that is, philosophy is secularism’s own spiritual practice. It is the duty of governments to provide secularists with the opportunity to practice philosophy.

Religious Perspectives of Disability Inclusion and Sustainable Education for Persons with Disability in Uganda

Masiga Simon, Student, Doctorate, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

The religious discourse on disability and inclusive community shapes the perceptions of the society and the debates on inclusive development and sustainable education. This paper interrogates the African religious texts and ritual practices on disability inclusion and their influence on sustainable education for persons with disability. The paper examines the historical narratives that form the religious perspectives of disability inclusion among Ugandan communities. It employs a historical critical method, interpretative phenomenological approach and survey method to collect and analyze data from both the field and archive sources. Historicising the religious perspective of disability inclusion is significant for the liberation, inclusion, and empowerment of people with disability to actively participate in the society. The research reveals the ways how theological and religious interpretations of disability can contribute to academic debates on inclusive education and advance the knowledge of inclusive development and sustainable education for persons with disability. It also has implications on transforming cultural perceptions and community perspectives on inclusive education.
Performing Religion in the Resounding Classroom: Dante’s Inferno, Interdisciplinary Art Education and Religion in a Post-secular World

Morten Stene, PhD Fellow, Humanistic Studies and Teacher Education, Volda University College, Norway

The notion of secularism and the binary distinction between the secular and religious it presupposes has since long been subject to discussion. Post-secularism is not the disappearance of the religious but rather a shift in the consciousness of the role of religion in public life. Thus, post-secularism implies an acknowledgement of the entanglement of the religious, spiritual, and secular in our modern world, including education. Current studies in music education research point to different ways music/art, education, and religion relate, conflict and can come together, both in theory and practice. If, as these scholarly contributions suggest, music/art, education, and religion can foster a sense of community and connections between different worlds and within people, it is crucial also to be attentive to the performative art educational processes where such relations can take place. With this paper, I focus on how relations between religion and art education are explored in an interdisciplinary co-art project (music, dance, and drama) in a Norwegian upper secondary school. The paper is part of an ongoing ethnographic study following fifty students and five teachers in staging and performing “Dante’s Inferno”. Data material consists of participant and video observation, teacher- and student interviews, and field notes. A narrative thematic analytical approach is applied. I contribute to the ongoing discourse with a reading of the German sociologist Hartmut Rosas resonance theory and its relevance for understanding the role of art and religion in education.

Hieratic Communication Embodied in Art: A Consideration of the Transubstantiative Symbolism in Silver Age Art

Sally Stocksdale, Instructor, History, Towson University, Maryland, United States

Influenced by David Nikkel’s theory of embodiment, Pavel Florensky’s analysis of art, and Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutic phenomenology, I discuss the artistic and spiritual beliefs of the luminaries of the Silver Age cultural system in Russia. Although their spiritual influences were far and wide, I argue that Eastern Orthodoxy was their base. Utilizing a number of examples of their artwork, I discuss how their compositions represent an embodied, hermeneutic conversation about henosis. That is, hieratic, ritualized communication embodied in art, the latter of which was believed to have transubstantiation qualities. One subtheme addresses the difference between reason and the religious experience of gnosis, i.e. knowing. Another subtheme is the artist as prophet, and art as a sacred signpost of God’s word.
Religion in a Scientific Age

Agga Wansa, Student, Buddhist monk, Pannaparni meditation center monastery, Yangon, Myanmar

The relationship between religion and science is the subject of continued debate in philosophy and theology. To what extent are religion and science compatible? Are religious beliefs sometimes conducive to science, or do they inevitably pose obstacles to scientific inquiry? The interdisciplinary field of “science and religion”, also called “theology and science”, aims to answer these and other questions. It studies historical and contemporary interactions between these fields, and provides philosophical analyses of how they interrelate.

Theology and Culture in Contemporary Greek Religious Education: The Case of the Religious Education Curricula 2011-2018

Stavros Yangazoglou, Associate Professor, Department of Theology, Faculty of Theology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

The main task of Christian theology is to interpret and update the faith of the Church through a fruitful and creative dialogue with culture and the various achievements of humans in every place and in every age. Nowadays, Christian theology must once again creatively dialogue with the diversity of the contemporary world and culture, without retreating into its glorious past. However, in order to participate in the course of the modern world and culture, it is necessary to leave its pre-modern security and its confessional introversion and to engage in fruitful dialogue with the modern pluralistic world. This approach has led to the design of new open and flexible curricula in Religious Studies, no longer as teaching and learning of a confessionally enclosed subject that does not dialogue with the cultural and religious diversity of contemporary societies, but as a process that perceives religious education through the fascinating dialogue between theology and culture. The introduction into education in 2016–2019 gave rise to intense controversy and eventually their withdrawal. Nonetheless, these new curricula created and offered for the first time in the history of the Religious Studies course in Greece a comprehensive Teacher’s Guide, but also a large database and a digital application with a variety of artworks, monuments, texts, musical archives. In this way, religious education in the public-school domain made the most of the interactive relationship between theology and culture.
Attendance List

Martin Adam, Masaryk University
Peter Admirand, Dublin City University
Demetrios Alexopoulos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Kenneth Amadi, University of Notre Dame, Indiana
Ty Anderson, University of Central Oklahoma
Fadime Apaydin, University of California, Riverside
Fotios Apostolos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Eliran Arazi, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales/Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Michail Asfentagakis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Lisa Bahar, Pepperdine University
Ellen Beck, University of California San Diego
Robert Bianchi, VCUarts Qatar
Gert Biesta, University of Edinburgh
Julianne Bryant, Biola University
Haocheng Chen, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Lan Chih Wen, China University of Technology
Stephen Christopher, University of Copenhagen
Lindsey Churchill, University of Central Oklahoma
Ben Crosby, Brigham Young University
Dias Dabby, Université du Québec à Montréal
Sérgio Das Neves, The Institute for the Study of Traditional Literature (IELT) at NOVA University of Lisbon – School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH)
Sotirios Despotis
Lise Dheedene, University of Antwerp
Galina Dondokova, Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Anna Duda, Jagiellonian University
Mariana Dupuy, Uarm
Jean-Paul Lafayette DuQuette, University of Macau
Yiling Fang, Soochow University
Maya Fitch, University of Central Oklahoma
Jean-Pierre Fortin, University of St. Michael’s College
Nadja Furlan Stante, ZRS Koper
Vineet Gairola, Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad
Ran Gao, Beijing Foreign Studies University
Luis Andres Garduño Gómez, Centro de Investigación en Matemáticas
Nili Gesser, University of North Dakota
Vasileios Aristarchos Gkrekas, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Alfonso Gómez-Rossi, Instituto Universitario Boulanger/UMIS
Magdalena Grabowska, University of Gdansk
John Scott Gray, Ferris State University
Deborah Gruber, CUNY Queens College
Nicky Gutierrez, Bethany Theological Seminary
Maha F. Habib, Khalifa University
Douglas Hagedorn, Dallas Baptist University
Jordan Halterman, Brigham Young University
Hannah Ash, University of Central Oklahoma
Jesse Eugene Herriott, Unity Institute and Seminary (UWSI)
Gadi Hitman, Ariel University
Matthew Hodge, William Peace University
Hannah Howard, Boston University
Mona Ibrahim, Concordia College
Clint Jones, Capital University
Christos Karagiannis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Christos Karakolis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Bishal Karna, Nazareth College
Panagiota Katopodi, UOA
Jakub Koláček, Charles University, Faculty of Arts
Alice Kosarkova, Palacky University in Olomouc
Marios Koukounaras Liagkis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Agnieszka Laddach, University of Warsaw
Lorna Lagumbay, University of St. La Salle
Patrick Laude, Georgetown University
Kjell Olof Urban Lejon, Linköping University
Tamas Lestar, University of Winchester
Eyal Lewin, Ariel University
Eleni Linardou, Panteion University Social and Political Sciences
Ana Marie Lopez, The University of Central Oklahoma
Ismael Louber, Gulf University of Science and Technology
Sharifah Huseinah Madihid, University of Malaya
Marta Magyar, Bhaktivedanta College
Charles Ho Wang Mak, Robert Gordon University
Mary Marcel, Bentley University
Michalis Marioras, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Evangelos Markantonis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
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Shelly Smart, The College of St Scholastica  
Anton Smith, Massachusetts Maritime Academy  
Guido Sprenger, Heidelberg University  
Morten Stene, Volda University College  
Erik Stern, Weber State University  
Emma Stewart, University of Central Oklahoma  
Sally Stocksdale, Towson University  
Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Emily Taylor, Brigham Young University  
Milo Rhys Teplin, SWCA Environmental Consultants  
Paul Thayer, Boston University  
William Tilleczek, Deep Springs College  
Hannah Tonn, United Lutheran Seminary  
José María Toro Piqueras, Universidad de Sevilla & Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia  
Jacob Tubbs, University of West Georgia  
Edit Ujvari PhD, University of Szeged  
Ritu Varghese, National Institute of Technology Rourkela  
Joseph Wagner, Bowling Green State University, Firelands College  
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Claire Wolfteich, Boston University  
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Naomi Yavneh Klos, Loyola University New Orleans  
Hyangsoon Yi, University of Georgia  
Yar Za, Magadh University Bodhgaya  
Sonny Zaluchu, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Indonesia (Indonesia Baptist Theological Seminary)  
Aphiwe Zondi, Mind Spring Mental Health Alliance
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Founded in 1984, Common Ground is committed to building new kinds of knowledge communities, innovative in their media, and forward-thinking in their messages. Heritage knowledge systems are characterized by vertical separations—of discipline, professional association, institution, and country. Common Ground Research Networks takes some of the pivotal challenges of our time and curates research networks that cut horizontally across legacy knowledge structures. Sustainability, diversity, learning, the future of humanities, the nature of interdisciplinarity, the place of the arts in society, technology’s connections with knowledge—these are deeply important questions of our time that require interdisciplinary thinking, global conversations, and cross-institutional intellectual collaborations.

Common Ground Research Networks are meeting places for people, ideas, and dialogue. However, the strength of ideas does not come from finding common denominators. Rather, the power and resilience of these ideas is that they are presented and tested in a shared space where differences can meet and safely connect—differences of perspective, experience, knowledge base, methodology, geographical or cultural origins, and institutional affiliation. These are the kinds of vigorous and sympathetic academic milieus in which the most productive deliberations about the future can be held. We strive to create places of intellectual interaction and imagination that our future deserves.

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The Common Ground Media Lab is the research and technology arm of Common Ground Research Networks. Common Ground Research Networks has been researching knowledge ecologies and building scholarly communication technologies since 1984.

Since 2009, we have had the fortune of being based in the University of Illinois Research Park while building our latest platform – CGScholar. This is a suite of apps based on the theoretical work of world-renowned scholars from the College of Education and Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign. CGScholar has been built with the support of funding from the US Department of Education, Illinois Ventures, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The CGScholar platform is being used today by knowledge workers as diverse as faculty in universities to deliver e-learning experiences, innovative schools wishing to challenge the ways learning and assessment have traditionally worked, and government and non-government organizations connecting local knowledge and experience to wider policy objectives and measurable outcomes. Each of these use cases illustrates the differing of knowledge that CGScholar serves while also opening spaces for new and emerging voices in the world of scholarly communication.

We aim to synthesize these use cases to build a platform that can become a trusted marketplace for knowledge work, one that rigorously democratizes the process of knowledge-making, rewards participants, and offers a secure basis for the sustainable creation and distribution of digital knowledge artifacts.

Our premise has been that media platforms—pre-digital and now also digital—have often not been designed to structure and facilitate a rigorous, democratic, and a sustainable knowledge economy. The Common Ground Media Lab seeks to leverage our own platform – CGScholar – to explore alternatives based on extended dialogue, reflexive feedback, and formal knowledge ontologies. We are developing AI-informed measures of knowledge artifacts, knowledge actors, and digital knowledge communities. We aim to build a trusted marketplace for knowledge work, that rewards participants and sustains knowledge production.

With 27,000 published works and 200,000 users, we have come a long way since our first web app twenty years ago. But we still only see this as the beginning.

As a not-for-profit, we are fundamentally guided by mission: to support the building of better societies and informed citizenries through rigorous and inclusive social knowledge practices, offering in-person and online scholarly communication spaces.

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In 2022 we start the process of tracking and measuring emissions for all aspects of what we do. The aim is to build a comprehensive picture of our baselines to identify areas where emissions can be reduced and construct a long-term plan of action based on the GHG Emissions Calculation Tool and standard established by the United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative.

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As we work towards establishing and setting net-zero targets by 2050, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement and United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative, and to make further inroads in mitigating our impacts today, we are participating in the United Nations Carbon Offset program. As we see climate change as having broad social, economic, and political consequences, we are investing in the following projects.

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Religión en la esfera pública: Desde la antigüedad hasta la era posmoderna

20-22 de junio de 2023
Red de Investigación de Religión en la Sociedad
Enfoque e intereses

Fundada en 2011, la **Red de Investigación de Religión y Espiritualidad en la Sociedad** examina la relación entre la sociedad y la cambiante naturaleza de la espiritualidad. Buscamos construir una comunidad epistémica donde se puedan establecer relaciones transdisciplinares, geográficas y culturales. Como Red de Investigación, nos definimos por nuestro enfoque temático y la motivación para construir estrategias de acción determinadas por los temas comunes.

Religión y espiritualidad en la sociedad

No es que la religión y la espiritualidad sean, en su esencia, temas neutrales de discusión. De hecho, la religión es uno de los temas más posicionados en todas las discusiones, ya que la religión busca proveer de significado al mundo. La espiritualidad es una fuente última de interés. La religión aporta una narración de los orígenes humanos, responsabilidades y destinos. Busca explicar la naturaleza del ser y proporciona un marco conceptual para interpretar la acción humana conforme a los principios del bien y del mal.

La posición de la religión no es sólo intensiva, sino que también es trascendental. La religión lucha por sobrepasar las realidades mundanas para atisbar significados más profundos que no siempre resultan evidentes en medio de lo ordinario de la experiencia cotidiana. Todo esto es aplicable a las religiones en general. Respecto a las religiones en particular, la diversidad es tan amplia como las experiencias culturales o los seres humanos.

Los pueblos indígenas o aborígenes practican una amplia gama de religiones inmanentes, incluyendo las diversas variantes del totemismo, animismo, culto a la naturaleza, shamanismo y culto a los ancestros, y esto, quizá durante los cien mil años o más de la existencia del hombre como especie. La religión, entonces, estaba menos separada institucional, espacial y temporalmente de lo que ha estado en momentos posteriores de la historia humana. El sentido religioso estaba profundamente y íntegramente unido a la esfera social y material, basado en la creencia en la inmanencia pervasiva de los poderes espirituales en la naturaleza y los asuntos humanos.

Desde hace cinco mil años, los modos religiosos adoptaron una forma de narrativa textual radicalmente nueva, en conjunción con las revoluciones en la agricultura, la domesticación de los animales, el inicio de la vida sedentaria y el surgimiento de las ciudades, la invención de la escritura y desigualdad entre clases económicas no institucionalizada. Las nuevas religiones no son, por lo general, inequivocamente monoteístas (ya que la mayoría de los sistemas monoteístas de divinidad suelen tener diversas figuras y profetas o santos deificados). Tampoco son simplemente politeístas (ya que los sistemas politeístas de divinidad suelen tener jerarquías de dioses mayores y menores). Sus características principales son la solidificación progresiva de la expresión religiosa en textos sagrados, edificios sacramentados y la formación institucional en una clase de intérpretes sacerdotales e intermediarios. Los modos comunes de sentido de las religiones de esta segunda fase se extienden en ocasiones hasta orígenes comunes compartidos, narrativas y personajes.

El sentido religioso experimenta un tercer giro paradigmático con la llegada de la modernidad. Más precisamente, un nuevo modo de espiritualidad emerge en un universo de sentido paralelo, junto con la persistencia de los otros dos. Por primera vez en la historia humana, la modernidad proporciona un sistema alternativo de sentido que es arreligioso, basado en una mescolanza epistemológica de ciencia, ley civil, progreso económico, materialismo y racionalismo. Al mismo tiempo, el ateísmo y el agnosticismo surgen como contrapuntos a la religión.
La religión, sin embargo, persiste en las formas características de estos tres momentos universales de la donación de sentido. Las interpretaciones modernas y liberales de las religiones de la segunda fase reinterpretan las cosmologías sagradas como metafóricas y, por tanto, no incompatibles con la ciencia. Realizan relecturas de narrativas sagradas a la luz de las aspiraciones éticas de la modernidad, como igualdad de género, ciencia genética, no-violencia y bienestar material para todos. El giro es tan profundo que estos modos de religiosidad podrían definirse como de tercera fase.

Mientras tanto, otros insisten en mantener las verdades de la religiosidad propia de la segunda fase. En la práctica, recurren a medios como el literalismo textual, el fundamentalismo religioso y la educación basada en la didáctica religiosa. El abismo entre la religiosidad liberal y fundamentalista en la modernidad es en ocasiones tan grande como el existente entre religiosos y antirreligiosos. Y, añadiendo otra capa a la complejidad actual, las religiones aborígenes persisten y prosperan, dado que aumentan los partidarios de las religiones inmanentes en la New Age y otras espiritualidades semejantes.

Hoy, la búsqueda del sentido sólo puede describirse como una escena de pluralismo sin precedentes. Ante esto podemos reaccionar de diferentes maneras. Podemos asumir el pluralismo como un valor moderno y luchar para mantener significados compartidos y la armonía y diferencia en la tierra. O podemos considerar el pluralismo como una fuerza que mina la integridad de la religión y, con ello, el modo característico y distintivo de los modos de vida específicos. Desde esta perspectiva, el pluralismo es un aspecto de la modernidad al que hay que oponerse.

El enfoque de nuestros congresos, revistas, libros y de la Red de Investigación busca la mayor amplitud posible en el campo de los estudios religiosos. Todos estos foros buscan crear un espacio donde estén representados y cada uno de los puntos de vista sobre la religión y la espiritualidad en la sociedad. También buscamos la mayor inclusión interdisciplinar posible. Los enfoques abarcan un rango que va desde las perspectivas intrarreligiosas a las pan-religiosas o de religiones comparadas, pasando por lecturas no religiosas —empíricas o teóricas— sobre el rol de la religión y la espiritualidad. Sobre todo, proveen espacios para el diálogo abierto sobre las fuentes del sentido básico o esencial.
Bases religiosas
Sobre las fuentes, modos y manifestaciones de la religiosidad.

Problemas actuales:
- Valores religiosos y aspiraciones
- Lugares sagrados: sitios, textos, narrativas
- Filosofías religiosas y filosofías de la religión
- Fuentes teológicas y recursos
- Origen del mundo: Cosmologías religiosas y seculares
- Narraciones de la creación en la ciencia y la religión
- Destinos del mundo: Escatologías religiosas y seculares
- Razón y fe: Concordancias y conflictos
- Aproximaciones tradicionales, modernas y posmodernas a la religión
- Ciencia y religión: Concordancia y conflicto sobre el mundo natural
- Contrapuntos religiosos: Agnosticismo, ateísmo, materialismo y secularismo
- Profetas: Sus mensajes y sus significados
- Religiosidad: Medidas, formas y niveles de compromiso religioso
- Religión y ley
- Religión y comercio
- Lo natural, lo humano, lo sobrenatural
- Ritos y lugares de paso: Nacimiento, adultez, matrimonio, muerte
- Ética médica y bioética
- Antropología, psicología y sociología de la religión

Comunidad religiosa y socialización
Sobre el aprendizaje de los caminos religiosos, modos de vida espirituales e instituciones religiosas.

Problemas actuales:
- Gobierno religioso institucional
- Simbología en teoría y práctica
- Educación religiosa y estudios religiosos
- Escuelas religiosas y la religión en la escuela pública
- Religión en la identidad étnica, nacional y racial
- Congregaciones y comunidades religiosas
- Medios de comunicación y mensaje religioso
- Evangelismo y conversión
- Ritual, rito, liturgia
- Oración, contemplación y meditación
- La meditación como sanación y terapia
- Estilos de vida religiosos y prácticas mundanas
- Arte religioso y arquitectura
- Peregrinaje, turismo y la búsqueda del sentido espiritual
- Liderazgo religioso
Semejanzas y diferencias religiosas
Sobre la diversidad de las formas religiosas y las relaciones entre las distintas religiones.

Problemas actuales:
- Religiones comparadas
- Monoteísmo, politeísmo y religiones inmanentes
- Espiritualidades indígenas y aborígenes
- Armonía interreligiosa
- Diálogo interconfesional
- Diversidad religiosa, tolerancia y entendimiento
- Las religiones en la globalización
- Fuerzas centrífugas y centripetas: Diferencia e interdependencia
- Denominacionalismo: Tendencia a la fractura y a la recombinación
- Lecturas literales y metafóricas de los Textos Sagrados
- Religión, identidad y etnicidad
- Educación religiosa
- La nación y el excepcionalismo religioso
- Doble pertenencia religiosa
- Ecumenismo
- Diálogo interconfesional y organizaciones internacionales interconfesionales

La política de la religión
Sobre la relación de la religión con el estado y la sociedad civil.

Problemas actuales:
- Religión en política y política de la religión
- La modernidad y los marcos religiosos
- Libertad religiosa y estados secular
- Las capellanías y el estado
- Política, sociedad y religión en estados religiosamente posicionados
- Las minorías religiosas y el estado
- Agendas sociales y religión: Sostenibilidad, justicia, paz
- Divisiones religiosas y conflictos sociales
- Violencia religiosa y no-violencia
- Género, sexualidad y religión
- Mujeres, patriarcado y lo sagrado femenino
- La religión como fuente de cohesión o división comunitaria
- Terrorismo, extremismo político y religión
- Religión y seguridad humana
- Religión y ética global
- Religión y derechos humanos
- Religión y reconciliación
- El futuro de la religión
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Grado en Derecho (Universidad de Granada), Grado en Teología (Universidad de Granada), Grado en Filosofía (UNED), Doctorado en currículum, profesorado e instituciones educativas. Investigador del Centro de Estudios Bizantinos, Neogriegos y Chipriotas, Universidad de Granada, España. Profesor de la Universidad de Jaén y de la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, España. Su interés académico gira en torno a Religiones Comparadas, Estudios Neoplatónicos, currículum escolar, filosofía de educación, origen de sociedades, cultura en antigüedad tardía y filosofía del derecho.

La Red de Investigación de Religión en la Sociedad agradece las contribuciones para su fundación, el apoyo constante y la asistencia continua de los siguientes expertos y académicos de renombre mundial.

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- Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, Universidad de Córdoba, España
- María Paz López Martínez, Universidad de Alicante, España
- Rafael Fernández Hart, Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, Perú
- Enrique Santos Marinas, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España
XIII Congreso Internacional sobre Religión y Espiritualidad en la Sociedad
El XIII Congreso Internacional sobre Religión y Espiritualidad en la Sociedad examina la relación entre la sociedad y la cambiante naturaleza de la espiritualidad. Como Red de Investigación, nos definimos por nuestro enfoque temático y la motivación para construir estrategias de acción determinadas por los temas comunes.

Congresos anteriores
- 2011 - University Center, Chicago, USA
- 2012 - University of British Columbia-Robson Square, Vancouver, Canadá
- 2013 - Arizona State University, Tempe, USA
- 2014 - Universidad Nacional Costa Rica, Heredia, Costa Rica
- 2015 - University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
- 2016 - The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., USA
- 2017 - Imperial College London, London, UK
- 2018 - University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
- 2019 - Universidad de Granada, Granada, España
- 2020 - UBC Robson Square, Vancouver, Canadá (Virtual)
- 2021 - Universidad de Córdoba Córdoba, España (Virtual)
- 2022 - Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba, España
La **Red de Investigación de Religión en la Sociedad** agradece la contribución y el apoyo que le brindan las siguientes instituciones.
Religión en la esfera pública: Desde la antigüedad hasta la era posmoderna

Desde la Antigüedad la religión ha sido un factor crucial en la cultura humana y en la vida social y personal. Aunque la modernidad quería marginalizar la religión a las esferas privadas, las tradiciones religiosas y las comunidades de fieles están todavía en la esfera pública, y como señaló Habermas, han ganado “una importancia política inesperada”. En diferentes contextos, por todo el mundo han emergido diferentes formas de relación entre la religión la sociedad civil, el sector privado y el estado, y la religión ejerce su papel en la educación, la atención sanitaria, y las instituciones sociales o de beneficencia. También han aparecido debates y conflictos, además de terrorismos y fundamentalismos relacionados con la religión. El congreso de este año sugiere a los investigadores de estudios religiosos, ciencia política, teología, educación, estudios culturales, estudios históricos, filosofía y legislación explorar el papel de la religión en la esfera pública, desde la Antigüedad a la Postmodernidad, así como la construcción de identidad, el desarrollo de narrativas, derechos legales, políticos y humanos relacionados con la religión y la fe, la imagen pública de los grupos religiosos y la contribución de la religión a la cultura y la educación.
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Marios studied Theology (BA, MA, PhD) Greek Literature (BA), and Social Pedagogy (PostDoc). He is an Assistant Professor of Religious Education at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). He worked as a Religious Education teacher and as a Consultant to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs.
Gert Biesta
Professor, Educational Theory and Pedagogy, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, UK

"Religious Education in the Impulse Society: On the Need for Transcendence"

Gert Biesta is Professor of Public Education in the Centre for Public Education and Pedagogy at Maynooth University, Ireland, and Professor of Educational Theory and Pedagogy at the Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. He is co-editor of the British Educational Research Journal and the Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, and associate editor of Educational Theory. He currently advises the Dutch government on the reform of the curriculum for primary and secondary schools. His work focuses on the theory of education and the theory and philosophy of educational and social research. He has a particular interest in teaching, teacher education, citizenship education, arts education, religious education, and education policy. Recent books include: World-Centred Education: A View for the Present (Routledge 2021), Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction (Bloomsbury 2020), Religion and education: The forgotten dimensions of religious education (co-edited with Patricia Hannam, Brill 2021). So far his work has appeared in 20 different languages.

James Walters
Founding Director, Faith Centre and the Religion and Global Society Research Unit, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

"Postsecular Temporalities and the Clash of Futures"

James Walters is founding director of the Faith Centre and the Religion and Global Society Research Unit at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is a Professor in Practice in the Department for International Relations and an affiliated researcher in the Department of International Development. The LSE Faith Centre promotes religious literacy and interfaith leadership among the LSE’s global student body, in government and to wider global publics. Religion and Global Society conducts research in the field of religious pluralism, including the intersections of climate change and women’s leadership in the creation of religiously plural institutions. Their work is currently focused on Egypt, Israel, Palestine, and Indonesia, as well as in the UK. Professor Walters’ books include Loving Your Neighbour in an Age of Religious Conflict (2019), Religion and the Public Sphere: New Conversations (2018), and Religious Imaginations: How Narratives of Faith are Shaping Today’s World (2018). He is a priest in the Church of England and a Canon Theologian at Chichester Cathedral in West Sussex, UK.
Aristotle Papanikolaou is professor of theology, the Archbishop Demetrios Chair of Orthodox Theology and Culture, and the Co-Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University. He is also Senior Fellow at the Emory University Center for the Study of Law and Religion. In 2012, he received the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the Humanities. Among his numerous publications, he is the author of Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion, The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy, and Η Πολιτική της Θέωσις? He is also co-editor of Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity, Fundamentalism or Tradition: Christianity after Secularism, Christianity, Democracy and the Shadow of Constantine (Winner of 2017 Alpha Sigma Nu Award in Theology), Orthodox Constructions of the West, Orthodox Readings of Augustine, and Thinking Through Faith: New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars. He enjoys Russian literature, Byzantine and Greek music, and is a bit of a foodie.

"Political Communion: The Proper Role of the Church in a Democratic Public"
Cada año se otorga un mínimo de Becas para Investigadores Emergentes a estudiantes de posgrado e investigadores que tienen interés en los temas del congreso. Aquí les presentamos a los ganadores de beca de 2023.

Vladislava Spasova Ilieva  
Instituto de Etnología y Estudios Folclóricos, Academia Búlgara de las Ciencias, Sofía, Bulgaria

Maritza Eridania Espejel Pineda  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México

Rosa María Siabato  
Universidad de la Salle, Colombia

Jonás Cuesta  
UNED, España
Resúmenes de 2023
El Papa Francisco y la crítica de la economía liberal: El caso del Presidente de México

Saul Manuel Albor Guzmán, Docente e Investigador de Tiempo Completo, Estudios Culturales, Demográficos Y Culturales, Universidad de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, México

El presidente de México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, en su discurso político recurrentemente utiliza las categorías conceptuales del Papa Francisco, generando críticas por el presunto entredicho al Estado laico. El político mexicano, a pesar de su origen liberal y de su evangelismo, refleja una influencia del catolicismo social y liberacionista propio de Latinoamérica donde la religión influye en la esfera política.

Derechos de las mujeres y libertad religiosa: Experiencias de católicas, evangélicas y testigos de Jehová en Cuenca (2022-2023)

Karen Antonella Andrade Bracero, Estudiante, Universidad de Cuenca, Azuay, Ecuador

El estudio “Derechos de las Mujeres y Libertad Religiosa”, tiene como objetivo conocer la experiencia religiosa de mujeres adultas y adultas mayores católicas, evangélicas y testigos de Jehová en Cuenca (Ecuador) durante el periodo septiembre 2022-febrero 2023. Con fines de responder a un problema de investigación que cuestiona el impacto de la corporalidad de las mujeres en el ejercicio de su derecho a la libertad de culto, explora por medio de sus discursivas el panorama social-comunitario donde se materializan derechos humanos fundamentales de las mujeres participantes. Para la investigación se optó por un enfoque etnográfico y la aplicación de entrevistas interpretativas a profundidad (con uso de guión) por bola de nieve discriminatoria exponencial. A través del análisis de discurso aplicando el programa MAXQDA 2022 se sistematizará la experiencia religiosa-institucional de las mujeres a través de las categorías necesidades, aspiraciones y preocupaciones. Los resultados del estudio estarán destinados a repensar el derecho a la libertad de culto más allá de la autodeterminación de las mujeres y considerar las obligaciones de las instituciones públicas y religiosas. También se estudiarán los derechos vinculados con la libertad de culto y su efectivización en espacios religiosos. Finalmente, su aporte académico responderá a la aproximación desde las entrevistas a profundidad y el humanismo existencial en contraposición con una producción de conocimiento local y nacional históricamente orientada desde el afrontamiento religioso. La investigación persigue el fomento de la participación efectiva en la vida institucional y comunitaria de las mujeres desde un enfoque de género.
Actualmente, la ciudadanía europea se caracteriza por su creciente heterogeneidad. Las políticas socioeducativas europeas son un pilar fundamental en la búsqueda de la integración y los centros escolares deben afrontar la tarea de facilitar la integración más allá de la mera escolarización del alumnado inmigrante. Se manifiesta la necesidad de replantear cómo manifestar en la esfera pública la identidad cultural, social y religiosa. Esta situación se vio agravada tras el 11 de septiembre de 2001. Las sociedades democráticas occidentales deben dar una respuesta a los ataques del extremismo terrorista que, en ocasiones, se realiza en nombre de una afiliación religiosa o étnica. La oleada de violencia surge de causas complejas con motivos tanto individuales como estructurales. La mayoría de los atentados los han cometido “combatientes domésticos” pertenecientes a segundas o terceras generaciones de inmigrantes musulmanes que, aún nacidos en medio del liberalismo europeo, se encuentran estancados socialmente. En esta comunicación se propone el enfoque de la sociología relacional de Pierpaolo Donati como el medio que fundamenta un modelo de integración y de educación intercultural que, por encima de las estructuras sociales, culturales y políticas, respete, acepte e integre al otro por ser quien es, persona humana. Esta perspectiva implica un importante arraigo ontológico en la que adquiere relevancia el sujeto personal como actor social responsable y libre. Asimismo, supone el desarrollo de una pedagogía del encuentro entre identidades culturales y religiosas diversas favorece la inclusión del currículo de religión en la escuela como un medio favorecedor de la integración.
La libertad religiosa en la historia constitucional y legislativa cubanas desde inicios del siglo XIX hasta la constitución de 2019: Retos en pos de su perfeccionamiento

Marcia Del Carmen Campos Jardines, Sacro Arzobispado Ortodoxo en Cuba, La Habana, Cuba

Esta ponencia analiza la evolución del derecho a la libertad religiosa en la historia constitucional y legislativa cubanas. Su estudio es importante por su novedad en sede jurídica. Se utilizó el método histórico-jurídico para caracterizar históricamente el tema como derecho fundamental; el teórico-jurídico para definir su contenido y alcance desde lo conceptual y doctrinalmente, además para argumentar los presupuestos que delimitaron sus limitaciones y aciertos; la comparación jurídica permitió delimitar las posturas de respeto o intolerancia religiosa de diversos Estados, en lo individual y en reconocimiento jurídico de sus asociaciones, en lo colectivo; el analítico jurídico facilitó examinar la diversidad de sus regulaciones jurídicas en su historia y la inexistencia de la personería a las asociaciones religiosas. Las técnicas de análisis documental, nacional y foránea permitieron validar los resultados alcanzados, al igual que la de observación participante, que incluyó a líderes religiosos y expertos. Inicialmente se profundizó en los presupuestos históricos, doctrinales y comparados de la doctrina: en la civilización greco-latina, la época feudal, la Revolución Francesa, la Ilustración y el Derecho Natural; así como sus presupuestos en la doctrina moderna del Derecho Constitucional, Internacional y Comparado. Y en un segundo momento se logró una sistematización de su desarrollo histórico en Cuba durante cuatro períodos desde: inicios del siglo XIX-1851, 1851-1888, 1888-1976 y 1976-2019. En los cuatro periodos estudiados se identificaron las limitaciones y aportes de su tratamiento jurídico, con la premisa de que su perfeccionamiento deberá partir de su legado histórico.

La religión como un elemento fundamental en la construcción de género de la madre sobreprotectora: El caso de la libertad sexual de la adolescente

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En la presente se ofrece un análisis crítico sobre la religión como elemento fundamental en la construcción de género de la madre sobreprotectora, en particular en el caso de la libertad sexual de la adolescente. Se partió de la idea de que el ejercicio de la sexualidad en la adolescencia suele enfrentarse a un doble discurso entre la necesidad de proteger al adolescente y reprimir su libre ejercicio sexual. De acuerdo con Climent, desde la moral-religión se intenta “preservar los valores tradicionales y religiosos” con el propósito de que los sujetos se ajusten a ellos a través de un conjunto de normas que sirven de parámetro en la clasificación de lo prohibido y lo permitido y que finalmente restringen la sexualidad, en este caso la de la adolescente. En la presente se observó que la mayor parte de los motivos por lo cual el adolescente suele reprimir su sexualidad están relacionados con la moral religiosa, en ocasiones disfrazada de la importancia de la primera vez como “algo especial” en una variable del complejo de virginidad.
Mapeo crítico del discurso sobre las políticas de prevención de la radicalización en Europa

Adoración Merino Arribas, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, España
Arantxa Azqueta, Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, España

Naciones Unidas impulsa Planes para la Prevención del Extremismo Violento a través de la Educación, cuyo objetivo es fortalecer las capacidades de los sistemas educativos para prevenir la radicalización. PISA (2018) evalúa la “competencia global” y cómo los sistemas educativos conducen a los jóvenes hacia una sociedad diversa y pacífica. Esta investigación analiza la presencia de las actitudes de la competencia global en los planes de prevención de la radicalización de Alemania, Bélgica, Dinamarca, España, Francia, Países Bajos y Reino Unido. Estas actitudes definen a una ciudadanía democrática e interculturalmente competente. Se utiliza una metodología comparativa con análisis lexicométrico del discurso mediante técnicas de clustering con el software Iramuteq junto al análisis crítico-interpretativo que contextualiza los documentos. Los resultados indican que, aunque las políticas socioeducativas europeas son un pilar en la búsqueda de la integración, en la práctica, se muestra una política centrada en la amenaza del terrorismo, que prioriza la vigilancia y donde el papel de la educación se limita a la detección temprana de signos de radicalización y se evidencia una tendencia securitaria que otorgan responsabilidades de vigilancia a escuelas y universidades. Se recomienda impulsar una política de integración holística y transversal que desde un enfoque intercultural revalorice el papel de las escuelas como espacios de integración proactiva, y que desvincule el quehacer educativo de las agendas de seguridad, evitando las connotaciones políticas que permean el discurso preventivo de radicalización en el ámbito educativo.

Nuevas sensibilidades judías en Buenos Aires: Entre lo étnico, lo estético y lo político

Lorena Peña Jiménez, Doctoranda, Universidad de Granada, Granada, España

Esta ponencia analizará las nuevas propuestas articuladas en respuesta a la crisis del judaísmo institucionalizado en Buenos Aires (Argentina). Como lo fue desde 2005 el Proyecto YOK, muchas de ellas (entre las que podemos incluir, por ejemplo, los distintos de eventos de LimudBA), se definen como contrarias a cualquier forma de pensar lo judío en términos tradicionales y normativos. Antes bien, estas se plantean como una deconstrucción capaz de derribar los muros de judaísmo tradicional y, así, dar voz a aquellos judíos que no encuentran acomodo en las infraestructuras institucionales de la comunidad. Mi hipótesis es que estas propuestas que tienen por objetivo conseguir la total liberación de las formas identitarias judías que, además, cuentan con un fuerte anclaje en la dimensión étnica, terminan legitimando una nueva servidumbre, esta es: la adaptación de lo identitario a la fluidez del mercado en base a un judaísmo basado en un trabajo de autocreación incesante que apela a lo plural, a lo abierto y a lo emancipado de toda norma y de todo dogma. Esto me permitirá demostrar cómo la autocreación es fruto de las dinámicas postmodernas de transformación de la subjetividad cimentadas sobre la emoción y la individualidad creadora.
Madame de Staël y Benjamin Constant: La religión en tiempos de crisis

Encarnación Ruiz Callejón, Profesora Titular, Departamento de Filosofía II, Universidad de Granada, Granada, España

La investigación actual sobre la obra y la figura de Anne Louise Germaine Necker, Madame de Staël, se ha venido centrándose, principalmente, en sus aportaciones como escritora y teórica de la literatura y, más recientemente, como pensadora política, señalándose, por ejemplo, su defensa de las mujeres, su contribución al liberalismo o sus análisis sobre la Revolución francesa. La presente comunicación se centra en la reflexión de Madame de Staël y Benjamin Constant sobre la religión. Benjamin Constant fue una figura muy importante en la vida privada de la autora, pero además fue un interlocutor intelectual para la autora y estuvo muy presente en su salón de París y en el Grupo de Coppet. El objetivo de esta comunicación es doble: 1) Analizar la contribución de ambos pensadores a la filosofía de la religión, área de la filosofía que se forma precisamente en el siglo XIX. 2) Analizar el papel de la religión que Madame de Staël y Benjamin Constant señalan para esta en tiempos de profundos cambios, como la época en la que ambos vivieron: todo el periodo revolucionario y posterior en Francia. Se trata de determinar si la religión tiene un papel en la esfera pública y cómo. Para cumplir los anteriores objetivos, se analizan los escritos políticos de Madame de Staël y su novela Corinne y la obra fundamental de Constant sobre las fuentes, formas y desarrollo de la religión, así como los ensayos del autor sobre la libertad y sobre el espíritu de conquista y de usurpación.

Contribución de la libertad religiosa a la regeneración de la democracia: Pluralismo y progreso moral de la sociedad

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La libertad religiosa es un tema controvertido, sobre todo en Europa. Se plantean nuevas preguntas acerca de cómo desarrollar mejor este derecho e incluso de la relevancia actual de la libertad religiosa en una sociedad moderna laica. ¿Realmente necesitamos un derecho que aborde específicamente las cuestiones de religión y creencias? ¿No sería suficiente garantizar a cada individuo la libertad de expresar sus distintas convicciones? ¿Qué relación tiene la libertad religiosa con el resto de derechos? ¿Cuál es el papel de la libertad religiosa dentro de las agendas más amplias contra la discriminación? Para responder parto de 3 constataciones: 1) la democracia es el mejor sistema de gobierno para garantizar un marco de libertades y la libertad religiosa es la base de la coexistencia pacífica y elemento esencial de la verdadera democracia, 2) La democracia está sufriendo una grave crisis que afecta a su legitimidad y eficacia (postverdad, relativismo ético y polarización) y produce resentimiento: populismo y radicalismo violento, 3) La teoría de la secularización pronosticó el fin de la religión por el progreso. Por el contrario, la religión tiene un nuevo protagonismo en la escena pública nacional e internacional. Ello evidencia importantes carencias de las democracias liberales para gestionar la diversidad religiosa. Necesitamos abandonar el paradigma de la secularización y reemplazarlo por nuevos desarrollos conectados al pluralismo (derecho a la diferencia) y a una laicidad positiva, que garanticen la plena participación de las expresiones religiosas en la formación de la ciudadanía democrática y de los valores cívicos.
Bases religiosas

El infierno y sus tormentos: Imaginarios en la pintura novohispana del siglo XVI

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Introducir al cristianismo a pueblos que nunca habían tenido noticias sobre esa religión provocó errores de interpretación y representaciones que no tuvieron los efectos deseados, y más bien generó imaginarios religiosos poco ortodoxos sobre las postrimerías, que involucraron la demonización de deidades prehispánicas y de grupos minoritarios. Esta comunicación abordará las manners en que, a través de las representaciones pictóricas, los misioneros pretendieron comunicar a los neófitos nociones abstractas, implantar normas de comportamiento, educar sobre los principios cristianos sobre las postrimerías y los efectos reales que tuvieron, que no necesariamente se correspondieron con la ortodoxia del magisterio.

República Islámica de Irán – El debate en torno a la compatibilidad entre Islam y democracia: Implicaciones orientalistas

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El Irán de hoy es el resultado de sendas transformaciones a lo largo de los siglos. Ejemplo de ello es el cambio por el que este país atravesó en la década de 1970, cuando una movilización multi ideológica logró derrocar a la monarquía Pahlavi. Con este cambio, al establecerse la República Islámica de Irán, surgieron una serie de debates relacionados con la naturaleza y la esencia de la nueva forma de gobierno y cómo se llevaban a la práctica las bases ideológicas sobre las cuales se apoyó. Uno de los debates más importantes al respecto es el que se dio entre Islam y modernidad, ya que, con base en algunos apuntes teóricos, como el orientalismo, se ha afirmado que el Islam es incompatible con la modernidad, sobre todo en lo referente a la forma de gobierno de la democracia. En este sentido, el objetivo de esta propuesta es reflexionar acerca del debate que se ha formado en torno a la posibilidad, o imposibilidad, de establecer una democracia en un país islámico como Irán.
El delito de sevicia en el México virreinal y la España peninsular en el siglo XVIII

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La presentación examina de manera comparativa el fenómeno de la sevicia o crueldad excesiva, ocurrida en casos de maltrato físico entre cónyuges en el México virreinal y la España peninsular en el siglo XVIII. Nuestro trabajo utiliza tratados eclesiásticos y civiles, escritos por teólogos y moralistas, para estudiar la construcción ideológica de la vida maridable ideal que todos los casados católicos debían seguir. En este aspecto, también exploraremos las expectativas que hombres y mujeres tenían de su respectivo cónyuge y las razones más usuales por las cuales se producían episodios de violencia dentro del matrimonio. Por otro lado, la ponencia utiliza registros judiciales producidos por provisoratos de ambos lados del Atlántico para descubrir cómo los jueces de la Iglesia Católica, junto a sus homólogos seculares, persiguieron y castigaron a aquellos individuos que perpetraron el delito de sevicia y amenazaron el sacramento del matrimonio. Debido al espíritu comparativo de la ponencia, exploraremos distintos casos de sevicia en España y el México virreinal para subrayar las semejanzas y diferencias con las que los tribunales eclesiásticos dirimían este delito.

Proceso de formación académica en el diálogo entre razón y fe

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La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar el proceso de formación académica en el diálogo razón-fe para estudiantes universitarios basados en cuatro asignaturas del currículo, para determinar el impacto que tiene en su perfil de salida. Se pretendió distinguir el proceso de diálogo razón-fe en la formación de los estudiantes universitarios; para ello, se utilizó una investigación cuantitativa. Este estudio se apoyó en la observación participante, registro anecdótico, encuestas, etc., como técnicas propias de esta investigación. En un primer momento, se analizó el contexto de la formación académica en el diálogo razón-fe para estudiantes universitarios y la metodología utilizada por las asignaturas del Área Razón y Fe. En un segundo momento se realizó el análisis de los resultados de las encuestas aplicadas a 2117 estudiantes que tomaron estas asignaturas. En un tercer momento se estableció una discusión sobre los resultados y los nuevos hallazgos. Entre las principales conclusiones encontradas constan: se valoraron algunas asignaturas que significativas: Ética, Antropología Filosófica-Teológica, que contribuyen al desarrollo de la criticalidad y los valores; se destacó el uso de metodologías preventivas en su proceso de formación humana-cristiana; se destacó la considerable capacitación de docentes con títulos de cuarto nivel Ph.D en estas asignaturas; se evidenció una incidencia importante en los nuevos profesionales como buenos cristianos y honrados ciudadanos.
Comunidad religiosa y socialización

Musulmanes, jóvenes y radicales, de las TIC a las mezquitas: Una comparativa entre jóvenes residentes en Almería (España) y Sarajevo (Bosnia)

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Esta ponencia es fruto de parte de los resultados obtenidos en el proyecto de investigación: “Musulmanes jóvenes y radicales: de las TIC a las mezquitas” subvencionado con fondos FEDER. En el mismo se partía de la hipótesis de que en la actualidad las redes sociales son un subterfugio para la difusión de islam de corte fundamentalista y que los jóvenes encuentran en este espacio las principales vías para la radicalización (sustituyendo a las mezquitas). En concreto, se presentan los resultados de 80 entrevistas en profundidad realizadas a jóvenes musulmanes residentes en Almería (España) y en Sarajevo (Bosnia y Herzegovina) en las que, por un lado, estudiamos si nuestra hipótesis se cumple y, por otro lado, estudiamos si hay patrones parecidos de posible radicalización en ambos colectivos de jóvenes que residen en lugares con diferencias socio-históricas y culturales significativas.

La religiosidad del Perú profundo: La fiesta de Santiago

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La fiesta de Santiago es una manifestación cultural religiosa del Perú profundo que retrata cómo los elementos de la cultura hispana se asimilaron a la cultura indígena. El gran objetivo de esta investigación es describir la adaptación de la figura de Santiago en la cultura indígena; otro objetivo es describir la fiesta de Santiago en la actualidad y su convivencia con elementos indígenas. Esta investigación se enmarca en el contexto de una tesis doctoral en desarrollo titulada “Análisis pragmático de la expresión Perú profundo” y su importancia radica en que ayuda a conocer mejor el Perú profundo, en este caso, por medio de su religiosidad. Este estudio pertenece al campo de la historia, la etnología y la antropología, todo enmarcado en las humanidades. Se analizaron textos sobre la figura del apóstol y santo Santiago desde su aparición en España hasta su llegada y asimilación en América, asimismo se tomó información de videos que retratan la fiesta de Santiago en el Perú profundo. Se llegó a los siguientes resultados: La figura de Santiago se asimilar gracias a su relación con elementos de la naturaleza. Esta fiesta supuso el encuentro y asimilación de dos culturas: la indígena y la hispana. En la actualidad, esta fiesta celebra la figura de Santiago en armonía con la devoción a los apus. La religiosidad de la fiesta de Santiago ayuda a entender qué es el Perú profundo y cómo en algunas partes del Perú la cultura hispana se asimiló de manera casi natural.
Relación entre deporte y religión para el crecimiento integral de la persona

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La relación entre deporte y religión es un tema de interés y estudio. La práctica deportiva, con su enfoque en la superación personal, el trabajo en equipo, la gratitud, la humildad y la disciplina, puede ayudar a la persona en el desarrollo de valores y virtudes humanas semejantes a los aspectos espirituales de la vida. El deporte va mucho más allá de la mera actividad física. A medida que los deportistas se esfuerzan por superar determinados límites físicos y mentales, pueden experimentar un sentido de trascendencia; incluso algunos de ellos, expresan públicamente su fe religiosa a través de declaraciones o gestos durante entrenamientos o partidos. Estas manifestaciones pueden ser interpretadas como una expresión de gratitud hacia un ser superior o una búsqueda de fuerza y protección divina. Pero esta relación no solo se da en el propio deportista y en la práctica, sino que también se puede comprobar cómo cada vez existen más espacios sagrados en contextos deportivos, como capillas en estadios o lugares de oración. Estos espacios ofrecen a los atletas y aficionados o espectadores la oportunidad de conectar lo trascendental con lo terrenal en el deporte, proporcionando consuelo espiritual y un sentido de propósito en medio de la competición. Por tanto, la religiosidad en relación con el deporte refleja la necesidad humana de encontrar significado y trascendencia en diferentes ámbitos de la vida. El deporte puede ser un camino para explorar y trabajar aspectos espirituales de la existencia humana, así como un medio para encontrar significado y plenitud.

La religión yoruba y sus arquetipos femeninos: Su relación con las teorías de Carl Jung

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La religión yoruba es una tradición que data de más de 500 años, cuando los africanos fueron trasladados esclavizados a las Américas. Con ellos llevaron también todos sus secretos religiosos con sus mitos y leyendas, los cuales han sido transmitidos a través de todas sus generaciones hasta la actualidad en diversas formas. Esta ponencia dirige su argumento a la presencia femenina en los textos de IFA, buscando realizar un estudio a través de la teoría del psicoanálisis, de la cual se utilizarán los arquetipos de Carl Jung para codificar principalmente el rol de la mujer en estos textos, recreados con resúmenes de historias míticas extraídas de los ocho odduns femeninos de los dieciséis meyis de IFA.
Fe y prácticas asociadas con la religiosidad popular: El caso de Santa Raimunda do Bom Sucesso, Acre (Brasil)

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La religiosidad popular, la fe y las relaciones de las personas con el sagrado son campos de estudio religiosos en diversas áreas de la ciencia humana. El objetivo de este trabajo es mostrar las prácticas espaciales con enfoque geográfico relacionadas con el culto a Santa Raimunda, las motivaciones y estímulos para el desplazamiento en el territorio, así como los vínculos de las personas con el espacio por medio de los marcadores sociales que configuran las espacialidades y las relaciones sociales, dando la sensación de pertenencia al lugar. Los procesos de santificación popular que se viven en el territorio configuran la organización comunitaria en la Amazonia. El proceso de devoción popular es amplio y las relaciones con las diversas experiencias resultantes de los flujos migratorios tornan singulares esas experiencias. El recorte espacial es el estado de Acre, región norte de Brasil, Amazonía sur occidental, fronteras con los países Bolivia y Perú. El estado de Acre experimentó conflictos geopolíticos por posesión de tierras y por la naturaleza con las vecinas naciones, Bolivia y Perú, debido al ciclo económico del látex, responsable del proceso de poblamiento y relaciones socioeconómicas, factor que estimuló la difusión de las devociones populares en medio de la selva. El espacio de investigación se caracteriza por un proceso de mestizaje de los pueblos nativos con los migrantes brasileños del noreste, quienes fueron estimulados a adentrarse para trabajar en la extracción de látex. La presente investigación es fenomenológica, siendo el espacio de estudio la Reserva Extractivista Chico Mendes.

Estudio entre la influencia de la religión y el fútbol

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Se puede ver cómo el fútbol hoy en día es un deporte que se practica y se ve a nivel internacional. Asimismo, se puede observar cómo la gente que lo practica suele manifestar una creencia religiosa. Esto estaba presente en la antigua Grecia, ya que los deportistas vinculaban la competición al culto a los dioses y al lugar donde se realizaban los juegos: en los grandes santuarios consagrados a los dioses Apolo, Zeus y Poseidón. Objetivo: analizar la percepción del deportista en cuanto a la posible influencia de su creencia religiosa en su desempeño futbolístico. Muestra: 6 equipos de fútbol masculinos profesionales de España (N=132 jugadores de 18-32 años de media). Metodología: Cada jugador deberá realizar un cuestionario de 15 preguntas mediante Google Form que se las realizará un investigador y se utilizará para el análisis de dichas cuestiones el SPSS para poder recolectar los datos necesarios. Se deberían realizar más estudios de carácter práctico, porque la mayoría son históricos o antropológicos.
Ecumenismo, modernidad artística o pérdida simbólica: Algunas conclusiones acerca del despojamiento iconográfico en los templos católicos españoles desde 1950

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La reducción de imágenes sagradas en el interior de los templos es una característica extendida en la arquitectura católica española desde 1950. Lo que se observa es que los pujantes programas iconográficos que en otros tiempos poblaban la nave y el presbiterio han sido sustituidos por la imagen del Crucificado, acompañado en ocasiones de la figura de la Virgen. Aunque esta es la disposición más habitual en el caso de las iglesias españolas, también existen templos en los que se ha prescindido completamente de imágenes, quedando como única reminiscencia el signo de la cruz. La valoración de las implicaciones que ha traído consigo este despojamiento de los espacios litúrgicos continúan siendo objeto de debate. Por un lado, el despojamiento puede verse como una nota más la necesaria modernización de la arquitectura religiosa; pero, al mismo tiempo, la presencia de imágenes es para muchos un requisito ineludible del espacio litúrgico. Por otro, el despojamiento puede entenderse como un catalizador del ecumenismo y, del mismo modo, como una característica que no representa lo particular del templo y la fe católica. Finalmente, en los templos despojados se ha buscado generar un simbolismo por medio de la luz, la configuración de las plantas. Sin embargo, la ausencia iconográfica resulta, desde otra perspectiva, la pérdida del símbolo más importante y elocuente que el arte puede manifestar. Esta propuesta pretende exponer los principales argumentos en este debate y compartir algunas conclusiones sobre la modernización del arte sacro, el ecumenismo y la simbología del templo católico.

Análisis antropológico de la fábula fantástica mexicana "Macario" a partir de sus elementos religiosos

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El presente trabajo de investigación está enfocado al análisis antropológico a partir de la narrativa visual y los elementos religiosos del catolicismo, con el objetivo de precisar la forma en que se ha representado en la película Macario (1960) de Roberto Gavaldón, la identidad mexicana. El estudio se realiza a través de la propuesta metodológica de Erwin Panofsky, quien como sabemos trabajó también con obras cinematográficas y cuyo enfoque destaca la importancia de la imagen en la narración audiovisual mediante tres etapas de desciframiento de la imagen en la narración fílmica: la preiconográfica, la iconográfica y la iconológica. Esta última que implica la correlación de los elementos visuales y técnicos con la cultura del contexto de producción de la obra elegida. Dentro del análisis iconológico retomaremos los elementos definitorios de la fábula fantástica, que es ofrecida como relato costumbrista, ya que tales elementos constituyen factores culturales contextualizados en el entorno nacional relacionado con cierto tipo de tradiciones populares. En el caso de la película mexicana "Macario" (1960) existen elementos no solamente de carácter social sino también antropológicos y religiosos.
#Letustalk - Un análisis de redes: Mujeres contra el hijab

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La presente ponencia que se fundamenta en parte del trabajo de campo realizado en el proyecto de investigación "Musulmanes, Jóvenes y Radicales: De Las TIC a Las Mezquitas" realiza un análisis de redes sobre la campaña #Letustalk. Se basa en la exposición del descontento y la lucha de mujeres que usan o han usado hijab por imposición y los prejuicios y consecuencias que ha supuesto para ellas tanto su uso como su reticencia a ponérselo. Concretamente, nos centraremos en Twitter, analizando los tweets, retweets y citas de tweets vinculados a esta campaña y la respuesta que se dan a los mismos. Para la recolección de estos datos utilizamos programa NodeXL. Posteriormente, llevamos a cabo un análisis de discurso vinculado a las respuestas que dan las personas que difunden a través de Twitter esta campaña, tratando de poner de manifiesto cual es el perfil de las personas que reaccionan a los tweets vinculados a la misma (mujeres/hombre/jóvenes/europeos/no europeos, etc...) y de qué manera (apoyos, resistencias, etc...), prestando especial atención a las reacciones fundamentalistas.

Religión y Deporte

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La pastoral deportiva cada vez está cobrando más importancia. En muchos países se están llevando a cabo iniciativas de pastoral deportiva de cara a promover los valores cristianos y fortalecer la fe a través del deporte. Lo que se busca, fundamentalmente, es integrar la dimensión espiritual con la práctica deportiva fomentando el desarrollo integral de las personas. Algunas de estas interesantes iniciativas son jornadas deportivas religiosas, a través de competiciones deportivas que reúnan a personas de la misma o diferentes creencias religiosas. Esta iniciativa puede ayudar a fomentar el respeto, la tolerancia y el diálogo interreligioso, así como compañerismo y fair play en el deporte. Torneos Inter-parroquiales, que son torneos deportivos entre parroquias para promover los valores del deporte, la inclusión, el respeto y el sentido de pertenencia a una comunidad. Se realizan junto con momentos de oración–agradecimiento. Proyectos sociales y de voluntariado deportivo: El voluntariado deportivo es una forma de vivir los valores religiosos a través del servicio y entrega a los demás. Suelen ser actividades que promueven la práctica deportiva, pero cobran sentido por la ayuda a los más necesitados. Conferencias en las que se aborden temas como la gratuidad del deporte, la importancia del deporte para la educación en virtudes, la relación entre fe y deporte, etc. Campamentos deportivos de verano como lugares de encuentro para los jóvenes en los que se produce una conjugación entre deporte y fe fortaleciendo de este modo la relación con Dios. Se pueden incluir momentos de formación, de competiciones deportivas, etc.
Semejanzas y diferencias religiosas

Saberces culturales, espirituales y capacitación en la Medicina Tradicional y Alternativa para su sobrevivencia

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Este artículo tiene como objetivo evaluar los impactos de la capacitación en Medicina Tradicional e Integrativa en la inserción económica de las integrantes de una organización con rescate de saberes. La investigación se realizó en Morelia (Michoacán) con terapeutas de la organización Medicina Natural Michoacana, realizando 34 encuestas sobre impactos de la capacitación en las terapeutas en ingreso, inversión, capitalización, organización, innovación tecnológica, calidad, gestión de mercados y empleo. La capacitación que realizan es en técnicas terapéuticas adicionando aspectos administrativos y rescate de saberes. Los resultados del estudio de caso permitieron comprobar la hipótesis. La capacitación en técnicas terapéuticas impactan la economía de la organización y rescata los saberes ancestrales. Se aprueba la hipótesis al existir correlación entre las variables analizadas. Se concluye que la capacitación es una variable con impacto positivo que ayuda a mejorar la economía de las terapeutas que rescatan los saberes ancestrales.

Resolución de conflictos religiosos: Una propuesta desde la espiritualidad y el Soft Diplomacy

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Con este artículo se busca recomendar un nuevo enfoque para la resolución de conflictos religiosos bajo el concepto de Soft Diplomacy o diplomacia blanda, conectada con aspectos como la espiritualidad, diversidad cultural, libertad religiosa y una ética global. Este estudio se basa en una metodología cualitativa de nivel descriptivo por medio de cuatro estudios de caso de conflictos religiosos, permitiendo analizar el nuevo enfoque en ellos. El mundo está viviendo una evolución y cambios en cada pensamiento y libertades. Asimismo, las teorías y fundamentalismos han hablado acerca de la resolución de conflictos a través de las Relaciones Internacionales; sin embargo, este nuevo enfoque ayudará a comprender la siguientes cuestión: ¿Cómo se podrían entender los conflictos religiosos desde la diversidad cultural y sus posibles resoluciones a partir de la diplomacia blanda y espiritualidad en los países de Turquía, Rusia, África e Irlanda del Norte? Este posible enfoque puede crear una forma de ver los conflictos religiosos y desarrollar su resolución desde otra perspectiva.
La función de la Virgen en la soteriología popular de los búlgaros, pomácos (musulmanes) y cristianos ortodoxos de los Ródopes: Reivindicaciones para la salvación según el manuscrito de Závet (Bulgaria del noreste)

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En la presente investigación canalizamos el enfoque del análisis comparativo de las creencias islamocristianas hacia un territorio concreto, donde la mayoría de los habitantes son los pomácos (musulmanes de habla búlgara), tratando de poner en cuestión el problema del alcance de la tolerancia religiosa en el contexto de la soteriología popular de una región específica de Bulgaria, en la que el cristianismo no pudo resistir a la islamización (los Ródopes) donde, además se ubica “la Jerusalén búlgara”, la así llamada Krstova Gora (la Montaña de la Cruz), lugar santo que en los últimos años llegó a cobrar importancia de sitio de peregrinación de alto rango, concentrando todas las miradas alrededor de la más valiosa reliquia cristiana, la Santa Cruz, a la que se remonta. En este contexto mixto, donde los cristianos, aparte de la Biblia usan como referencia también algunos apócrifos, siendo muy popular entre ellos “El andar de la Virgen por las penas” (s. VI), estudiaremos sus creencias acerca del destino de las almas después de la muerte, su salvación o condena; si los criterios para la salvación de unos excluyen o no la posibilidad de que se salven los otros, es decir, de la otra religión, y viceversa. Todo esto basándonos en los datos antropológicos de una investigación de campo en la región de los Ródopes y en mis propios estudios del Noreste de Bulgaria, de donde procede el inédito manuscrito de Závet, cuyo análisis comparativo permite constatar la presencia de dos sistemas fundamentales de creencias.
La violencia en los discursos fundamentalistas católicos en el Perú: Estudios de casos en Twitter

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La violencia en los discursos católicos del Perú —vía Twitter— se ha incrementado a partir del contexto político actual. Al debilitamiento progresivo de las organizaciones políticas partidarias y a las demandas sociales no resueltas que excluyen a grandes sectores de la población del acceso a los servicios indispensables (educación, salud) se suma la proliferación de una desinformación que fragmenta posiciones y confunde con noticias falsas o teñidas de ideologización; todo ello conduce a la creciente polarización sociopolítica. Esta situación genera una incertidumbre colectiva que toma la forma de posiciones radicales que a su vez, se multiplican gracias a la dinámica mimética de las redes sociales. De este modo, Twitter termina por ser el vehículo de proliferación de discursos católicos que acentúan las posiciones más extremas y fundamentalistas de tal modo que parecen contradecir el espíritu original del cristianismo, ya que azuzan emociones violentas y así incentivan la posibilidad de una crisis mimética.

Biblia, fe y familia en Barrancabermeja: Resistencia social al actor violento (1990-2008)

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El conflicto social, político y armado de Colombia, principalmente en Barrancabermeja, atravesaba como saeta al pueblo, desangrándose en iniquidad, exclusión e injusticia social, patrocinada por una cultura política que privilegiaba la violencia como instrumento de resolución de los problemas sociales. Por ende, las familias unidas en las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, desde la década del 90 hasta el 2008, iniciaron un proceso de resistencia social y civil fundamentados en la Biblia. Desde allí se procuraba orientar a la comunidad, desde la fe y con conciencia crítica, en la búsqueda de un Dios a favor del pobre y contra la injusticia social del opresor. Las CEBs reinterpretaron la palabra de Dios a partir de su historia de opresión en relación con la historia de las intervenciones liberadoras de Dios para con el pueblo de Israel. En otras palabras, ante un actor armado y violento, las familias de fe usaron la Biblia como un libro fundamental para las acciones de resistencia. A través de la Sagrada Escritura, la Iglesia encontraba que los valores del Reino de Dios servían como cuestionamiento crítico a la realidad social colombiana. Desde la Biblia la comunidad encontraba la presencia y el accionar de Cristo en la historia a favor de las víctimas de Barrancabermeja. Esta ponencia, tiene como propósito presentar cómo las familias de Barrancabermeja, resistieron al actor armado para superar la condición de víctimas y crear un mejor futuro donde la paz y el desarrollo social económico fueran los derroteros de las familias.
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Founded in 1984, Common Ground is committed to building new kinds of knowledge communities, innovative in their media, and forward-thinking in their messages. Heritage knowledge systems are characterized by vertical separations—of discipline, professional association, institution, and country. Common Ground Research Networks takes some of the pivotal challenges of our time and curates research networks that cut horizontally across legacy knowledge structures. Sustainability, diversity, learning, the future of humanities, the nature of interdisciplinarity, the place of the arts in society, technology’s connections with knowledge—these are deeply important questions of our time that require interdisciplinary thinking, global conversations, and cross-institutional intellectual collaborations.

Common Ground Research Networks are meeting places for people, ideas, and dialogue. However, the strength of ideas does not come from finding common denominators. Rather, the power and resilience of these ideas is that they are presented and tested in a shared space where differences can meet and safely connect—differences of perspective, experience, knowledge base, methodology, geographical or cultural origins, and institutional affiliation. These are the kinds of vigorous and sympathetic academic milieus in which the most productive deliberations about the future can be held. We strive to create places of intellectual interaction and imagination that our future deserves.
The Common Ground Media Lab is the research and technology arm of Common Ground Research Networks. Common Ground Research Networks has been researching knowledge ecologies and building scholarly communication technologies since 1984.

Since 2009, we have had the fortune of being based in the University of Illinois Research Park while building our latest platform – CGScholar. This is a suite of apps based on the theoretical work of world-renowned scholars from the College of Education and Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign. CGScholar has been built with the support of funding from the US Department of Education, Illinois Ventures, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The CGScholar platform is being used today by knowledge workers as diverse as faculty in universities to deliver e-learning experiences, innovative schools wishing to challenge the ways learning and assessment have traditionally worked, and government and non-government organizations connecting local knowledge and experience to wider policy objectives and measurable outcomes. Each of these use cases illustrates the differing of knowledge that CGScholar serves while also opening spaces for new and emerging voices in the world of scholarly communication.

We aim to synthesize these use cases to build a platform that can become a trusted marketplace for knowledge work, one that rigorously democratizes the process of knowledge-making, rewards participants, and offers a secure basis for the sustainable creation and distribution of digital knowledge artifacts.

Our premise has been that media platforms—pre-digital and now also digital—have often not been designed to structure and facilitate a rigorous, democratic, and a sustainable knowledge economy. The Common Ground Media Lab seeks to leverage our own platform – CGScholar – to explore alternatives based on extended dialogue, reflexive feedback, and formal knowledge ontologies. We are developing AI-informed measures of knowledge artifacts, knowledge actors, and digital knowledge communities. We aim to build a trusted marketplace for knowledge work, that rewards participants and sustains knowledge production.

With 27,000 published works and 200,000 users, we have come a long way since our first web app twenty years ago. But we still only see this as the beginning.

As a not-for-profit, we are fundamentally guided by mission: to support the building of better societies and informed citizenries through rigorous and inclusive social knowledge practices, offering in-person and online scholarly communication spaces.

**Supporters & Partners**

As they say, “it takes a village.” We are thankful for the generous support of:

And to our Research Network members!

[www.cgnetworks.org/medialab](http://www.cgnetworks.org/medialab)
Climate change is one of the most pressing problems facing our world today. It is in the interests of everyone that we engage in systemic change that averts climate catastrophe. At Common Ground Research Networks, we are committed to playing our part as an agent of transformation, promoting awareness, and making every attempt to lead by example. Our Climate Change: Impacts and Responses Research Network has been a forum for sharing critical findings and engaging scientific, theoretical, and practical issues that are raised by the realities of climate change. We’ve been a part of global policy debates as official observers at COP26 in Glasgow. And we are signatories of the United Nations Sustainability Publishers Compact and the United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative.

**Measuring**

In 2022 we start the process of tracking and measuring emissions for all aspects of what we do. The aim is to build a comprehensive picture of our baselines to identify areas where emissions can be reduced and construct a long-term plan of action based on the GHG Emissions Calculation Tool and standard established by the United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative.

**Reducing**

At the same time, we are not waiting to act. Here are some of the “low hanging fruit” initiatives we are moving on immediately: all conference programs from print to electronic-only; removing single-use cups and offering reusable bottles at all our conferences; working closely with all vendors, suppliers, and distributors on how we can work together to reduce waste; offering robust online options as a pathway to minimize travel. And this is only a small sample of what we’ll be doing in the short term.

**Contributing**

As we work towards establishing and setting net-zero targets by 2050, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement and United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative, and to make further inroads in mitigating our impacts today, we are participating in the United Nations Carbon Offset program. As we see climate change as having broad social, economic, and political consequences, we are investing in the following projects.

- Fiji Nadarivatu Hydropower Project
- DelAgua Public Health Program in Eastern Africa
- Jangi Wind Farm in Gujarat

**Long Term Goals**

We’re committing to long-term science-based net-zero targets for our operations – and we believe we can do this much sooner than 2050. We’ll be reporting annually via The Climate Neutral Now reporting mechanism to transparently communicate how we are meeting our commitments to climate action.

www.cgnetworks.org/about/climate-pledge
Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Conference on Religion & Spirituality in Society, hosted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece, 20-22 June 2023. The conference featured research addressing the following special focus: “Religion in the Public Sphere: From the Ancient Years to the Post-Modern Era” and annual themes:

• Theme 1: Interdisciplinary Approaches
• Theme 2: Human Rights and Policy
• Theme 3: Narratives and Identity
• Theme 4: Culture and Education