

American Academy of Religion (AAR) 2015 Conference Call for Papers

Religion and Ecology Group

Call Text:

The Religion and Ecology Group invites panels and papers that take up these themes: 1) the contribution of religion and ecology to the field of religious studies; 2) international law, ethics, and development; 3) emotions, aesthetics, affect theory, and 'new materialism'; 4) environmental racism and injustice; 5) environmental conflict and violence, such as eco-terrorism, environmental conflicts around extractive economies in Africa and Latin America, and the relationship between Islamism and petroleum economies (co-sponsored with the Religion and Violence Group); and 6) post-growth religious thinking in relation to alternative economic and environmental concerns in Europe, which includes (but is not limited to) how these concerns influence values, nature-based spiritualities, etc. (co-sponsored with the Religion in Europe Group); 7) postcolonial studies and animals (for a possible cosponsored session with Religion, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism Group; Animals and Religion Group). We welcome proposals for complete panels and plan to devote at least one session to individual paper proposals. All proposals must explicitly indicate each paper's methodological approach, central thesis, as well as their contribution to the field of religion and ecology.

Mission Statement:

This Group critically and constructively explores how human–Earth relations are shaped by religions, cultures, and understandings of nature and the environment. We are self-consciously inter- and multi-disciplinary and include methods found in the work of theologians, philosophers, religionists, ethicists, scientists, and anthropologists, among others.

Anonymity: Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

Method of submission:

E-mail with Attachment (proposal is in attachment, not in body of e-mail)

Leadership:

Chair - Miller, James, Queen's University, james.miller@queensu.ca

Chair - Berry, Evan, American University, berry@american.edu

Contemporary Pagan Studies Group

Call Text:

We invite proposals related to all aspects of Pagan studies (including historic) from different parts of the globe. We welcome papers using diverse methodologies: theoretical and practical, qualitative and quantitative, normative and descriptive. In particular, we seek proposals related to the three following themes.

“Valuing Paganism in the Public Sphere”

How is Paganism represented, engaged, and valued in public spaces such as policy arenas, lobbying, news media, popular culture, schools, prisons, and courtrooms? How do Pagans engage with these publics? What roles do Pagan studies academics have in these forums? What implications do such engagements have for academic practices, including ethical and methodological concerns?

“Tradition and Resistance in Paganisms”

Some Pagan groups are highly traditionalist, resisting change and eclecticism. Other Pagans are much more eclectic, combining Paganism with practices from a variety of other religious traditions. What role does theology play in these different forms of Paganisms? What motivates both commitment to tradition and the desire to experiment and transform Pagan practice? Conversely, in what ways are new or old Pagan traditions used to inform resistance to modernity in general or to specific examples of injustice?

For a proposed joint session with the Indigenous Religious Traditions Group, we invite proposals for a panel on the problem of “religion” in the study of indigenous and polytheistic traditions. This includes considerations of other critical terms such as “spirituality,” “sacred,” “tradition,” “culture,” “animism,” “Pagan,” “shaman,” etc. and indigenous perspectives on “religion” or equivalents (or lack of). We welcome papers on other problematic terms in the study of indigenous and polytheistic religions, too.

Mission Statement:

This Group provides a place for scholars interested in pursuing studies in this newly developing and interdisciplinary field and puts them in direct communication with one another in the context of a professional meeting. New scholars are welcomed and supported, while existing scholars are challenged to improve their work and deepen conversation. By liaising with other AAR Program Units, the Group creates opportunities to examine the place of Pagan religions both historically and within contemporary society and to examine how other religions may intersect with these dynamic and mutable religious communities.

Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Salomonsen, Jone, University of Oslo, jone.salomonsen@teologi.uio.no

Chair - Clifton, Chas, Colorado State University, Pueblo, chas.clifton@mac.com

Ritual Studies Group

Call Text:

The Ritual Studies Group encourages submissions from scholars whose research focus on the study of ritual, and from scholars keen to develop theoretical sophistication in the study of ritual. This year, we particularly invite papers on:

(1) Ethical questions in the study of ritual: We are particularly interested in papers or panel proposals which examine the particular ethical and normative issues in the study of ritual and ritual traditions. We are also open to papers taking on broader questions of the relationship between ritual and ethics.

(2) Ritual, body, movement, and space: We are interested in papers that look at various embodied practices, such as walking and dancing within ritual contexts and, more broadly, papers examining the sensual dimension of ritual. In this context, we are also interested in paper providing new or innovative ways of examining possession or trance.

(3) Ritual and Social Change: We are interested in research examining the role of ritual in social change or the contributions ritual studies can make to understanding social change. We are particularly interested in papers attending to ritual and climate change.

In addition, we are interested in the following topics for potential joint sessions with other program groups:

(1) Ritual and Film: Building from 2014 presentations on ritual and film we are interested in proposals on film in the study of ritual, especially with regard to the use of film in fieldwork or ethnographic filmmaking, for a potential joint session with Anthropology of Religion.

(2) Ritual, Sex, and Gender: We are interested in proposals that look at the relationship between ritual, sex, sexuality, and gender for a potential co-sponsorship with Men, Masculinities, and Religions.

(3) Ritual and Esotericism: We are interested in proposals that might contribute to a joint panel with Western Esotericism that focus on the ways in which esoteric discourses often oscillate between normativity and transgression when they become embodied in rituals. Any other aspect of the relationship between western esotericism and ritual studies will also be considered (for a possible joint session with the Ritual Studies Group).

In addition to the listed topics, the Ritual Studies Group is also open to reviewing any proposals that might contribute positively to the academic study of ritual. We are interested in both individual paper proposals and proposals for full panels. Panel proposals should include full proposals for individual papers. Please note, because we are exploring alternative formats for our sessions, contributors may be asked to submit their papers in advance of the meeting to be available to attendees, and to present a short summary instead of a full paper at the meeting.

Mission Statement:

This Group provides a unique venue for the interdisciplinary exploration of ritual — broadly understood to include rites, ceremonies, religious and secular performances, and other ritual processes — in their many and varied contexts, and from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives. To learn more about this Group, visit our Website at <http://www.ritualstudies.org>.

Anonymity: Proposer names are visible to chairs and steering committee members at all times

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Kreinath, Jens, Wichita State University, jens.kreinath@gmail.com

Chair - Potts, Grant H., Austin Community College, grant.potts@religiousthought.com

Science, Technology, and Religion Group

Call Text:

The Religion, Science, and Technology Group seeks paper and panel proposals on the following themes: Postcolonial Science Fiction, Speculative Fiction, and Religion; Science, Religion and Pluralism (with particular interests towards “traditional ecological knowledge”); Science, Technology, Religion and Hermeneutics; Globalization, Technology and Inequality; and Science, Religion and “Wicked” Problems.

In addition, we are looking for papers for a quad-sponsored session on the theme of “Religion, Emotion, and Belief” with the Religion, Affect, and Emotion Group; the Cognitive Science of Religion Group; the Religious Experience in Antiquity Group (SBL). How can recent approaches from the natural and social sciences help scholars of religion to better understand the religious experience of belief? Is belief a natural product of affective and cognitive processes? What role does emotion play in belief? Does the role of emotion and belief function differently in “science” and “religion”? How do religions use emotion in the cultivation of the believing religious-subject? Is there room for a model of self and subjectivity that goes beyond self-cultivation, in which a subject is being acted upon (ethics of passion)? How does work on emotions complicate or challenge the links between belief and religiosity? What are the distinct benefits and limitations to conceptualizing religious belief in these ways?

Mission Statement:

This Group supports scholarship that explores the relationship of religion, theology, technology, and the natural sciences. We support research that attempts to bridge the gap between religious and scientific approaches to reality and encourage the development of constructive proposals that encourage engagement and dialogue with the sciences, along with a critical assessment of the meaning and impact of technologies for the human condition and the natural world.

Anonymity: Proposals are anonymous to chairs and steering committee members during review, but visible to chairs prior to final acceptance or rejection

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Fredericks, Sarah, University of North Texas, sfrederi@unt.edu

Chair - Bauman, Whitney, Florida International University, whitneybauman@mac.com

Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Group

Call Text:

The Tibetan and Himalayan Religions Group promotes scholarship about all aspects of religion in Tibet and Himalaya, broadly defined. We solicit proposals for individual papers, fully formed panels, and roundtables in sessions lasting 90 or 150 minutes. Preference is generally given to complete panels. Additionally, we encourage proposals that make creative use of the ninety-minute session and that foster discussion and group engagement.

Possibilities include short sessions with just 1 or 2 presenters (or perhaps one presenter and a respondent), reading a text together, book panels, precirculating papers, etc. We further encourage proposals that seek cosponsorship with other AAR program units.

Specific topics of interest for 2015 mentioned at the recent THRG business meeting include:

- “Tibet and the Himalaya in Pop Culture”, contact Adam Krug (UCSB) at adam_c_krug@umail.ucsb.edu
- “Female Narrative Literature in Tibet,” contact Jue Liang (UVa) at jl4nf@virginia.edu
- Animals in Tibetan and Himalayan Religions. Eric Mortensen (Guilford College) emortens@guilford.edu
- Tibetan Teachers and Performativity in Narratives. Liz Monson (Harvard) elmonson@fas.harvard.edu

Mission Statement:

This Group’s mission is to create an environment that promotes discussion among scholars taking diverse approaches to the study of Tibetan and Himalayan religions. Our identity and cohesion derive from the fact that we deal with a delimited geocultural space, but the intellectual excitement comes from the fact that we are specialists in different historical periods and cultural areas, from the fact that we are interested in different religious traditions, and from the fact that we have different methodological approaches to the study of religion. In particular, we encourage scholarship that approaches Tibetan and Himalayan religions through a wide range of approaches:

Multidisciplinary Focus — we are committed to methodological diversity and to promoting scholarship that challenges the traditional disciplinary dichotomies through which the field has defined itself, such as text/practice, written/oral, philology/ethnography, and humanistic/social scientific study

Transregional Focus — we encourage a holistic approach to the study of Tibet and the Himalaya as a region, albeit a diverse one. One of the most important features of religious traditions in our field — perhaps in every field — is the degree to which they are inextricably connected, and it is only through the exploration of such interconnections that the phenomenon of religion in the Tibeto-Himalayan region can be understood. Such interconnections often cut across ethnonational boundaries

Focus on Cultural History — in the last decade, the study of Asian religions has taken a drastic cultural/historical turn. Nowhere is this more evident than in the study of Tibetan and Himalayan religions. A previous generation of scholars was concerned principally with elite religious institutions — and more specifically with their doctrinal/philosophical texts. Today scholarship is much more diverse. A new generation of scholars is concerned, for example, with folk religious practices, religion and material culture, the politics of religious institutions, the representation of Tibetan religions in the media, and the historical construction of the field itself.

This Group is committed to fostering such a multifaceted approach to the cultural history of Tibet and the Himalayas.

Anonymity: Proposer names are visible to chairs but anonymous to steering committee members

Method of submission:

PAPERS

Leadership:

Chair - Bogin, Benjamin, Georgetown University, bbogin@skidmore.edu

Chair - Jacoby, Sarah, Northwestern University, s-jacoby@northwestern.edu