The Science, Religion, and Culture program at Harvard Divinity School announces the 5th annual “Ways of Knowing: Graduate Conference on Religion.” Inaugurated in 2012, this multi-day event is made up of thematic panels that cross religious traditions, academic disciplines, and intellectual and theological commitments. In addition, the conference features special panels on professionalization, addressing both academic and non-academic careers, and a keynote address. The conference aims at promoting lively interdisciplinary discussion of prevailing assumptions (both within and outside the academy) about the differentiation, organization, authorization, and reproduction of various modes of knowing and doing religion.

Last year, 128 students and early career scholars representing over 60 graduate programs worldwide gathered to present their research. Following the success of our previous conferences, we invite graduate students and early career scholars to submit paper proposals from of a variety of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives. This year is a particularly momentous year as the conference will celebrate its fifth anniversary alongside the bicentennial of Harvard Divinity School.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We seek papers that explore religious practices and modes of knowing, especially in relation to this year’s central theme, “Religion and Time.” We welcome the use of all sorts of theoretical tools, including discourse analysis, gender theory, race theory, disability theory, postcolonial theory, performance theory, and ritual theory. Papers may focus on any period, region, tradition, group, or person. They may address a set of practices, texts, doctrines, or beliefs. Projects that are primarily sociological, anthropological, theological, ethical, textual, historical, or philosophical are welcome, as are projects that draw on multiple disciplines.

Possible approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. an exploration of a specific way of knowing, being, and engaging the world in relation to religion
2. historical, sociological, and/or anthropological analyses of the cultural processes that support a specific religious discourse or practice, its authoritative structures, and/or its strategies of inclusion and exclusion
3. analyses of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, sexuality, and/or gender with respect to religious texts, practices, or performances
4. comparative examinations of religious texts and/or their interpretations, with attention to the historical, sociopolitical, cultural, and/or intellectual contexts that mediate and delimit different interpretative strategies and practices
5. analyses of the interplay between religion and scientific, moral, and/or legal discourses, practices, and authorities
6. a theological construction or analysis of a particular normative framework, which critically and/or comparatively engages one or more religious traditions
7. critical analyses of the scholarly production and dissemination of knowledge on religion.

Central Theme: Religion and Time

In keeping with the commemoration of the conference’s 5th anniversary and Harvard Divinity School’s 200th anniversary, the central theme for this year’s conference is “Religion and Time.” We take a capacious approach to understanding how human communities and religious have long engaged the question of time through multiply layered, richly differentiated and multifarious modalities and especially encourage papers that engage questions of time and religion. Papers might focus on religious archives and history; religious narratives about time; mythical, cyclical, linear conceptions of time in religious traditions; sacred and profane time; and religious pasts, presents and futures. Proposals might also interrogate the place of time in apocalyptic theologies and movements, scientific futures and the religious imagination, religious rituals and time, and methodological approaches to the study of time and religion. We welcome a broad range of papers that address the theme of religion and time from a range of methodological approaches and in the context of various religious traditions, historical periods, and geographical regions.
In addition to the General Call for Papers, the conference will also feature three special modules devoted to each of the following themes:

» **The Body in Religion** In a world lived increasingly online, where worshippers can log in to prayer services or missionaries can administer a conversion via Skype, questions about the tactile dimensions of various religious practices have gained new interest and urgency. This module addresses the body as a site for religious understanding, whether that body is living or dead, human or divine, exalted or denied. When does the human body aid religious seeking? When is it a stumbling block? In what ways does the body become a metaphor for spiritual perfection? Submissions might address disability in religion; ascetic practices such as fasting or celibacy; religious dress, physical aspects of prayer; demands of pilgrimage; purity rites such as baptism, menstruation rituals, burial practices, or death regulations; or theological conceptions of illness, possession, or divine incarnation. Seeking papers across a broad range of religious traditions, geographic locations, and historical periods, this module aims to explore the role of the body in religious thought and practice, and how its significance and symbolism have developed in different contexts.

» **Religion, Identity, and Social Transformation** Recent studies have discussed and analyzed the role of religion in effecting social change. In contrast, less has been done on how social change and transformation affect religious identity, religious communities, religious thought, and religious institutions, and on investigating the complex interplay between the two. Moving beyond this dichotomization, this module seeks to develop a more profound understanding, not only of how religion can influence social transformation, but also of how social change may affect religion, while also examining the complex interplay between the two. Questions for consideration might include: How do religious communities, institutions, individuals, and movements call for social change and how does change affect religious communities and individuals? What are the ways in which this is enacted (e.g. the practices of resistance and adaptation)? What vision do they have for the societies and cultures in which they are located? How is this vision represented and how does it affect religious identity? In what ways are religious identity and social transformation interrelated and how can this connection be considered beyond psychological and sociological perspectives? Proposals could include, but should not be limited to: studies on the interplay between religion and social justice movements; human rights; postcolonial movements; indigenous rights; and the fight against racism. They also might be focused on the ways that religions and religious identity have been transformed by social and cultural developments. Such interplay and transformation can be considered from either individual or group/community perspectives. A range of methodological approaches, historical periods, traditions and geographic locations are welcome and encouraged.

» **How Religion Matters: Critical Perspectives on Material Culture** Religious belief and practice are not abstracted from time and space but leaves material traces, produces material flows, and takes shape through multifarious engagements with the material world. As such, and especially with the new materialist turn, scholars have begun to understand that material culture generally and archaeology specifically are integral to understanding religion. Yet, some critical theorists have raised questions about how precisely matter matters. Is matter passive and immutable, as it is often characterized, or are there ways that agency, historicity, and contingency inhere within materiality? How might our accounts of religious meaning and mattering take seriously a broad set of potential interactions with and responses to materiality, viewing material remains not as singular and self-evident but as shaped by and shaping an array of entanglements among ideas, bodies, and material objects? In light of these and related questions, we invite papers that explore the intersections of major critical theories and material-oriented methods in the study of religion. Possible themes include but are not limited to: New Materialism; archaeology of gender and/or sexuality; temporality and material objects; thing theory; object biographies; religious art; architecture and space; and Foucauldian archaeologies of knowledge. We encourage precise engagements with archaeology / material objects and well-defined theoretical frameworks, such as feminist, queer, postcolonial, race, affect, and/or posthumanist approaches. Papers may treat any time period or geographical location. Because we are interested in exploring emerging ideas and less-trafficked intersections, we are open to a range of approaches.

**Submission Instructions**

**Individual Papers:** Please submit a 300-word abstract explaining the topic, main argument, and methodology of the project. You will be asked to specify whether you are submitting your proposal to the General Call or to one of the Special Call modules. Individual papers will be organized into panels and should not exceed 20 minutes in delivery.

**Pre-Organized Panels:** Proposals for panels on a particular topic may also be submitted to either the general or special calls. These can include three to five papers (including a respondent paper). Please submit: 1) a 300-word summary of the focus and purpose of the panel, specifying how each paper contributes to the overarching theme; 2) a 300-word abstract for each paper explaining the topic, main argument, and methodology of the project; 3) the name and contact information of the panel organizer/chair.

**Proposals due by July 17, 2016 at [http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/gradreligionconference](http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/gradreligionconference)**

Any inquiries can be directed to Khylie Brown and H. McLetchie-Leader, Conference Coordinators, at wokconference.harvardsrc@gmail.com