

CALL FOR PAPERS
HOFSTRA CULTURAL CENTER and the DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
present a conference

The Politics of Religion-Making

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
October 4, 5 and 6, 2007

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Talal Asad (The Graduate Center, City University of New York)

José Casanova (The New School)

Hent de Vries (Johns Hopkins University)

Tomoko Masuzawa (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)

This conference aims to create a forum for discussing the historical and contemporary politics of religion-making. Broadly conceived, the term “religion-making” refers to the ways in which religion(s) is/are conceptualized and institutionalized within the matrix of a globalized world-religion discourse. We are particularly interested in exploring the consequences that follow when non-Western elites adopt Western-style objectifications of religion and its dialectic other, the secular.

There is a growing scholarship dedicated to rethinking the politics of religion-making in ways that demonstrate the shortcomings of the standard religion/secular paradigm. New genealogies of religion and analyses of the concept of world-religion are part of a broader theoretical debate in the study of religion over the translation of the term “religion” into non-Western contexts during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Still, the religion/secular paradigm continues to thrive in public discourses, among indigenous practitioners, and even within certain lines of scholarly analysis. The tension between theoretical deconstructions and everyday practical reifications of the religion/secular paradigm is a challenge for critical scholarship since it points to its role and limitations within global and local political contexts.

The panels within this conference will be designed to bring innovative reflection on the concept of world-religion – particularly reflection that takes into consideration the post-religious/post-secular movement in the study of religion(s) – into critical dialogue with empirical research that is interested in practical local appropriations of the world-religion discourse. While theoretical discourses for deconstructing religion(s) have become increasingly sophisticated, there has, as yet, been relatively little application of such discourses to the practical and historical workings of religion at the local, national or global level. And vice versa, established empiricist scholarship (mostly by social and political scientists) has remained relatively disengaged from recent developments concerning the category of religion. The aim of this conference is to initiate a productive

engagement between theoretically oriented and empirically grounded approaches in the study of religion in order to better understand the politics underlying the various projects of religion-making.

We encourage and invite papers that touch upon (but are not limited to) the following questions/aspects:

- How exactly were the concepts of religion and world-religions discursively validated in particular non-Western localities?
- How does the continuing globalization and appropriation of religion affect religious claims of authenticity and particularity?
- In what ways have marginalized communities adopted locally valid concepts of religion as a means of religio-political emancipation?
- How does religion continue to function in the contemporary global economy of ideas and commodities?
- More specifically, what are strategies with which the institutionalized study of religion (academe) responds to the theoretical deconstruction of the concepts through which it is legitimized?
- Can new theoretical work on the politics of religion-making impact upon our understandings of contemporary multiculturalism?
- To what extent can locally specific, nationalized/ethnicized conceptions of religion respond to the idea of religion as a universal, and contribute to larger political and philosophical debates about the nature of democracy?

The deadline for submission of abstracts is **November 30, 2006**. Applicants should e-mail an 800-word proposal and a short biographical sketch (one-page maximum) to the conference co-directors:

Conference Co-Directors

Dr. Markus Dressler

Department of Religion
Hofstra University

E-mail: Markus.Dressler@hofstra.edu

Dr. Arvind Mandair

Department of Asian Languages and Cultures
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor

E-mail: amandair@umich.edu

Conference Coordinator

Athelene A. Collins

Associate Director
Hofstra Cultural Center

A limited travel stipend will be available for selected presenters. We plan to publish an edited volume of innovative conference papers with a major university press. Please direct any questions to the conference co-directors.

For more information please contact the Hofstra Cultural Center at (516) 463-5669.



Hofstra University continues its commitment to extending equal opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, marital or veteran status in the conduct and operation of its educational programs and activities, including admission and employment.

3688-8/06



HOFSTRA
UNIVERSITY™

CALL FOR PAPERS

HOFSTRA CULTURAL CENTER and the DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

present a conference

The Politics of
Religion-Making

Thursday, Friday and Saturday
October 4, 5 and 6, 2007



HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Politics of
Religion-Making

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, October 4, 5 and 6, 2007

HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK 11549



HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY™

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hofstra University