

## The Center for Religious Studies

The Center for Religious Studies (CERES) is one of Germany's leading institutions in the field of the scientific study of religions (German: *Religionswissenschaft*). Being part of the fifth largest German university, students and researchers alike can benefit from the vast expertise of a particularly large number of subjects. Both the independence of the center within the university structure as well as its close cooperations with various historical, socio-cultural, and philological disciplines and area studies of Ruhr-Universität Bochum and beyond ensures an in-depth and wide-ranging scientific focus on religions.



## The Käte Hamburger Kolleg

The Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* is the largest research project of CERES. It commenced its research activities under the direction of Prof. Dr. Volkhard Krech in April 2008. In addition to the visiting research fellows, numerous local scholars from Ruhr-Universität Bochum are involved in the institute's research programme, which brings together scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines. It's research programme focuses on the formation and expansion of religions, the mutual permeation of religious traditions and their densifications into the complex figurations called 'world religions.' Regionally, the research covers these phenomena in Europe and Asia. The academic goal is to establish and test a typology of contacts of religions and an overarching theory regarding the transfer of religions.

## Directions

**Public Transportation:** Take the U35 CampusLinie towards *Hustadt* from the center of Bochum or Hauptbahnhof (central station) and get off at the station *Wasserstraße*. From there turn right and cross the street, then left cross the crossroads passing by the copy shop at the corner and continue for approx. 200 metres until you reach *Universitätsstraße 90a*.

**By Car:** The quickest route is via the motorway junction Bochum/Witten, where the autobahns A43 and A44 meet. Simply take the exit Bochum-Querenburg, follow the signs to *Bochum Zentrum* to the crossroads of *Universitätsstraße* and *Wasserstraße*. Take a u-turn left. Continue this road for approx. 200 metres, until you reach *Universitätsstraße 90a*. Parking is possible in front and behind the building.



## CONVENER

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## ORGANIZATION

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Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe*, Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

RUB



RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

# DIGITALIZATION AND RELIGIOUS CONTACT

14 - 15 November 2019 | CERES Conference Room *Ruhrpott*  
Convener: Giulia Evolvi



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## Digitalization and Religious Contact

Religion in contemporary Europe is undergoing dynamic and compelling changes: for example, migrations are transforming the religious landscape, creating the need for minorities to enter in public debates; discrimination and racism compel scholars to reflect on the role of media and free speech; the risk of radicalization of certain minorities is an urgent social and political issue. These changes often regard contacts between religious groups, involving minorities that have to confront mainstream religiosity and different religious traditions that coexist in the same environment.

Digitalization has a central impact on these religious changes. As digital media became increasingly pervasive in the European public sphere, interpersonal relations and cultural actions are inevitably conditioned by the presence of the Internet. Religious groups address each other and frame their identities through digital spaces, which are often intertwined with physical spaces.

However, scholars still need to find compelling methods and theories to address the ethical and social consequences of digitalization on religious groups and religious contact. How can they collect data about digital religion and analyse them? Which framework can better capture the role of the Internet in relation to religious contact? What kind of impact does digitalization have on religion, and how can it be analyzed?

### Thursday, 14 November 2019

09:30 - 09:40 **Welcome Address & Presentation of the *Käte Hamburger Kolleg***  
Tim Karis (Bochum)

09:40 - 09:50 **Presentation of the *Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS)***  
Michael Baurmann (Bochum)

09:50 - 10:00 **Presentation of *Entangled Religions***  
Maren Freudenberg (Bochum)

10:00 - 10:15 **Introduction to the Workshop**  
Giulia Evolvi & Nina Hahne (Bochum)

**SESSION 1:**  
Chair: Michael Baurmann (Bochum)

10:15 - 11:15 **Digital Religion in the Era of Hybrid Media Environment - Mapping Theoretical and Methodological Challenges for Current Research**  
Johanna Sumiala (Helsinki)

**Response**  
Maren Freudenberg (Bochum)

11:15 - 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30 - 12:30 **Analysing Religious Discourse Online: Theories, Methods, and Challenges**  
Stephen Pihlaja (Birmingham)

**Response**  
Frederik Elwert (Bochum)

12:30 - 02:00 **Lunch**

**SESSION 2:**  
Chair: Eduard Iricinschi (Bochum)

02:00 - 03:00 **Social Capital and Religious Networks in the Age of Digitalization**  
Mehmet Karacuka (Izmir)

**Response**  
Mouli Banerjee (Duisburg)

03:00 - 04:00 **"Kill Jesus!": Imagining the Other in Christian Videogames**  
Tim Hutchings (Nottingham)

**Response**  
Anna Neumaier (Bochum)

04:00 - 04:30 **Coffee Break**

04:30 - 05:30 **The Politics of Affect & Online Contestations of Religious & Cultural Identities**  
Mona Abdel-Fadil (Oslo)

**Response**  
Abeer Saady (Dortmund)

06.00 **Dinner**

### Friday, 15 November 2019

**SESSION 3:**  
Chair: Ruth Ebach (Tübingen/Bochum)

10:00 - 11:00 **Religious Authority Online: Pope Francis' Instagram Account and Jewish Ask-The-Rabbi Sites**  
Oren Golan (Haifa)

**Response**  
Victor Khroul (Bochum/Moscow)

11:00 - 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30 - 12:30 **Of Modes and Materialities: A Media Anthropological Approach to Religious Change and Forced Migration**  
Susanne Stadlbauer (Boulder CO, Bochum)

**Response**  
Samira Tabti (Bochum)

12:30 - 01:45 **Lunch**

**ROUND TABLES**

01:45 - 02:00 **Introduction**  
Giulia Evolvi & Nina Hahne (Bochum)

02:00 - 03:30 **Round Table I**  
Moderator: Nina Hahne (Bochum)

**Social Media and the Religious Subjectivities of Minority Groups: A Case Study of Muslim and Druze Young Adults in Israel**  
Sawsan Kheir (Turku/Haifa)

**Fighting Polarization Online? The Rise of 'Muslim' Political Parties in the Netherlands and the Role of Social Media**  
Sakina Loukili (Amsterdam)

03:30 - 04:00 **Coffee Break**

04:00 - 06:00 **Round Table II**  
Moderator: Giulia Evolvi (Bochum)

**Problems and Challenges in Presenting Religious Heritage: The Case of Athos Digital Heritage Project**  
Lampros Alexopoulos (Athens)

**New Producers of Patriarchal Ideology: *matushki* in Digital Media of the Russian Orthodox Church**  
Nadia D. Zasanska (Lviv)

**Religion Contested in Hypermediated Spaces: A Dimensional Approach to Hashtag-based Hijab Controversies in Iran**  
Rasool Akbari (Mashhad)

**CONCLUSION:**

06:00 - 06:30 **Concluding Remarks**