

Call for Papers: **Media, Religion and Publics**

Conference of the International Society for Media, Religion and Culture

Conference location: Seoul, Korea

Conference dates: 1-4 of August 2016

Deadline for Paper proposals: 15 December 2015

Notification of acceptances: end of January 2016

The new visibility of religion in the public square has been, in recent decades, a recurrent theme in academic research. Drawing on a modernist idea of the public and private sphere, this discourse depicts religion has moved from a marginalized position in individual life to a central concern in the political, juridical and economic sectors of society. During this same period, the study of media, religion and culture has expanded from interest in media representation of religion to the uses of religion for various types of audiences. Building on these two strands, the conference will explore how scholars can theorize and develop the concept of “publics” in societies where boundaries between the private and public spheres have blurred, and in which religion is represented, experienced and practiced through a wide range of media, from mass media to digital media and popular culture. How do different media content, aesthetics, technologies and networks shape the idea of a public? How do media work in conjunction with various social, cultural, political and historical factors to shape the ways in which “public” and “private” religion is understood and practiced? How do different kinds of mediated publics shape the access and agency of various religious actors?

The conference, the biennial meeting of the International Society for Media, Religion and Culture (<http://ismrc.colorado.edu/>) will explore these issues from a range of disciplinary perspectives. International participants will represent disciplines including, media studies, journalism, religious studies, the anthropology and sociology of religion, history, the study of literature and public policy. The conference, since its first meeting in 1996, has become the leading international gathering for the discussion of research in religion, media and culture.

We invite proposals for panels and roundtable sessions as well as individual papers of up to 350 words. Panel and roundtable proposals should include paper titles, 150 word abstracts for each paper, and names and titles of up to four participants (a moderator/respondent might be added). Sessions will be 1½ hours in length. The conference will also feature as a keynote speaker professor Pradip Thomas, University of Queensland, Australia and Professor Jinhong Jung at Seoul National University. Also planned is a banquet with an address from Inaugural Society President Lynn Schofield Clark, plenary panels involving well-known contributors in this area, and the screening of a recent Korean film.

Some of the questions that may be addressed in panel, workshop and paper proposals include:

- Religion, media and globalization
- Diasporic media and transnational religious and spiritual communities
- Religion, media and politics
- Religion, media, and the global marketplace
- Media, religion, and authority
- Religious conflict and media representation
- Mediatization and religion
- Religion and spirituality in popular culture
- Religion and entertainment media (film, tv-series etc)
- Religious audiences: class, gender, ethnicity, race, age and sexuality
- Media rituals and media events
- Digital religion and spirituality (social media, digital games etc)
- Theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of religion and media

The conference will be held at the Samjung hotel in Seoul in South Korea. In Korea, historical sites which have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage and global popular culture through the “Korean Wave” meet. As one of the most wired cities in the world, Seoul is a modern, friendly and vibrant metropolis with a distinct culture and architecture. Thriving spiritual communities, striking religious monuments and places of worship make this place a fitting context for the conference. As part of the conference program, we will be visiting Yoido Full Gospel Church (the World's largest Protestant congregation), the Yongmunsa Buddhist temple and the Unification Church.

Seoul has good international transport links to all major cities through the Incheon International airport. Excellent public transportation is available from the airport to the City center, as well as to major cultural attractions.

Proposals for individual papers, panels, workshops and exhibitions should be sent to: ismrc@colorado.edu

Details about registration, the venue, housing and transportation for the conference are available on the conference webpage ismrc-seoul.com, and queries may be sent to the local organizing committee at ismrc2016@gmail.com.

To receive updates on the conference, like us on Facebook!

We warmly welcome you to Seoul and ISMRC 2016!

Mia Lövheim, Professor, Uppsala University, Conference Program Planner and Vice President, International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture:
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Local hosts: Professors Sunny Yoon, Department of Media and Communication, Hanyang University: syoon@hanyang.ac.kr
Associate professor Jin Park, School of Communications and Media, Seoul Women's University: jinpark@swu.ac.kr.