

The [XXII Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR](#), hosted by the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions, will take place at the University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand from 23-29 August 2020.

[Submissions](#) and [registrations](#) for the Congress are now open. The deadline for submissions is 31 December 2019. The deadline for early bird registrations is 1 May 2020.

Congress Theme

While welcoming contributions on any topic in the academic study of religion, this year's Congress will have the theme of Centres and Peripheries.

From its earliest moments, the academic study of religion has consistently placed certain traditions, peoples, geographies, concepts, and institutions at the centre of its analyses, while at the same time relegating others to the periphery. The 2020 Congress invites scholars to reflect on these dynamics, to historicize and critique them, and to reconsider how, why and with what effects scholars of religion have engaged in acts of normalization and marginalization. The setting of New Zealand, distant from the historical centres of religious studies in North America and Europe, provides a fitting location for this examination as well as for considerations of other related dynamics. These include patterns of dominance and subjugation, transformation and repositioning and, especially, migration and indigeneity. While we welcome interdisciplinary, multi-method and comparative research, we ask that scholars submit within one of seven themed areas.

Locality and movement: Studies that focus on the emplacement and migrations of people, texts and traditions over spaces and times. This includes themes of migration, colonization and diaspora. We especially welcome submissions examining the category of indigeneity and indigenous religions.

Regulating and Debating: Studies that consider religion in the context of debates over the proper ordering of human society and the regulating of human behaviour, especially as it relates to the intersections of religion with legal regimes and/or structures of political power.

Historicizing and embodying: Studies that focus largely on situating religious communities, persons, practices and/or institutions in their historical and cultural contexts. We especially welcome submissions examining religion in places, times and contexts that have been historically overlooked or marginalized in the study of religion.

Interpreting and comparing: Studies whose main focus is on interpreting, clarifying, comparing and/or analysing texts, rituals, stories, material culture, art or other elements of religion. This includes studies that examine the place of religion in material and textual artefacts not normally associated with religion.

Innovating and transforming: Studies that focus on the transformations of religion over time, with particular attention to recent transformations in technology, communication and social organisations. We especially welcome studies that reflect on the influence of new media on religion and religious studies.

Measuring and Testing: Studies that focus on causal factors that lead to and shape systems of beliefs, behaviours, and institutions found in one or more traditions, regions, and/or across time. This includes studies that reflect on role and importance of scientific and empirical methodologies in the study of religions as well as studies that consider generally the interplay of science and religion (as methods, fields of expert knowledge, and historical constructs).

Reflecting and Critiquing: Studies that critically consider the field of religious studies, its methodologies, theories, patterns of production, historical development, scholarly composition, institutional embedding, and future possibilities. We especially welcome submissions that examine the dynamics of centring and marginalising, foregrounding and ignoring, authenticating and debunking, in the study of religions.

Submissions may be made for individual papers, or for full panels. For both individual and panel submissions, all abstracts should describe clearly the anticipated argument, the sources or data to be analysed (e.g., texts, ethnography, survey data, etc.), and how that argument engages with relevant scholarship in the academic study of religion. All abstracts should reflect the [mandate of the IAHR](#), namely: “to promote... the critical, analytical and cross-cultural study of religion, past and present.” The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.”

Format

Please upload submissions in Microsoft Word or pdf format (.doc/.docx/.pdf suffix). The font should be Times New Roman or similar, 12 point, single-spaced, fully justified. Please do not list the author names in the body of the file, nor in the file name (for purposes of blind review).

Individual Submissions

Abstracts should be no more than 150 words in length. You may submit a maximum of two abstracts. Presentations will be allocated 20 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions.

Panel Submissions

A panel is a coordinated set of papers (usually three or four in number), all dealing with a particular topic or theme. In most cases, a panel includes a chairperson (who can also be a panellist) and up to four presentations. A discussant can also be added. It is up to the panel chair how to use the allocated time: Three-paper panels will be allocated 90 minutes and a four-paper panel will be allocated 120 minutes. Panels with five or six short papers may also be submitted, but will only be allocated 120 minutes.

Panel abstracts must be submitted as follows:

The chair should submit, in one document, a panel summary (max. 150 words) followed by the abstracts of all the individual presentations (max. 150 words each).

Timeline

Abstracts will be reviewed on a rolling basis. We aim to give responses within four weeks of submission.

Please visit the [Congress website](#) for more information. We look forward to receiving your abstracts and to welcoming you to Otago in 2020!