Call for Papers and Proposals

Religion and Environment: Relations and Relationality


February 4th – 7th, 2021

Hosted by Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

Proposals Due August 3, 2020

The ISSRNC welcomes papers, panels, and proposals from all disciplines that address the intersections of religion, nature, and culture. For our tenth conference, to be held at Arizona State University, we are especially interested in engaging questions of relationality: relations between human and other-than-human beings (including animals, spirits, gods, places, etc.), among cultural groups, among academic disciplines, etc. We seek to advance scholarship that explores how communities and ecosystems function and flourish as systems of kinship. There is no unidimensional way to understand these troubled times: environmental crises are closely linked to social and political inequities, knowledge about earth systems science is relevant to work in community organizing. Concepts of the human person as an interdependent element within complex systems of social and ecological relations are challenging the dominant norms in the social sciences and humanities. To meet the challenges we collectively face, we invite and encourage scholarly reflections on integrative, holistic, and radically plural ways of knowing.

The “Religion and Environments: Relations and Relationality” conference provides a space for these conversations, showcasing cutting-edge theory and research necessary
to meaningful interdisciplinary exchange on these critical issues. This conference advances the ISSRNC’s mission to “promote critical, interdisciplinary inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse cultures, environments, and religious beliefs and practices.” Our network includes anthropologists, philosophers, scholars of religion, geographers, literary critics, as well researchers from many other fields. At this conference, we hope to deepen intellectual exchange among these disciplines by critically engaging the patterns of social, economic, and religious organization that precipitate environmental degradation and identify emerging alternatives. The conference location—Arizona State University—offers an opportunity to situate these exchanges in a desert context, attending to the interconnectivity of the Southwest borderlands and the ecologies of human mobility in the region.

Possible paper and panel proposals topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- concepts of kinship, reciprocity, and relational ontologies across cultural traditions, especially Indigenous cultures;
- multispecies ethnography and relations between humans and other-than-human-beings, including creatures, plants, and inanimate beings;
- the ontological turn in the social sciences and relations between animate and non-animate matter and/or persons;
- environmental jurisprudence, the rights of nature and the legal personhood of other-than-human entities;
- the religious and ecological dimensions of immigration, migration, and asylum;
- the social and cultural ecology of the borderlands region and of diaspora communities;
- structural racism and anti-racism in environmental movements and religious imaginaries;
- religion and environment in critical race theory and black studies;
- interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity in the environmental humanities and sustainability research;
- interfaith and interreligious relations with respect to climate change and other environmental challenges;
- global intersections of politics, environment, religion, and culture;
- the complex and changing relationships that emerge from devastated landscapes;
- the cultural and ethical implications of interrelatedness in earth systems science and sustainability studies;
- environmental representation in media, journalism, and digital communications;
- relations between utopian or apocalyptic futures and the present;
• as always, papers examining other aspects of the religion, nature, and culture nexus are welcome.

Proposals and Deadlines

Paper proposals must include two documents: The first should be a 150-word abstract that includes the title, as well as the name and contact information of the participant. The second should be a 500-word (or less) description of the paper that includes the title, and indicates the methods, argument, relevant literature, and findings. Panel proposals should include paper proposals for each participant as well as an overview document describing the session title, theme, contributors, presider, and order of presentation.

Proposals for sessions or events that depart from the traditional panel format are also encouraged. For instance, we invite proposals for online sessions that would enable ISSRNC members to present at the conference without physically attending. All conference participants, both online and in-person, will be encouraged to view and discuss the online presentations. We expect the proposal process to be competitive and it will not be possible to switch from an in-person to an online presentation after the deadline for proposal submissions. In addition to online sessions, other alternative format panel sessions—including panels with pre-circulated papers, lightening-round presentations, etc.—are also welcome. We also plan to reserve space for panels developed through new or existing ISSRNC working groups. More details online: www.issrnc.org/working-groups/.

Please submit your proposal by 3 August 2020 using the online form on the ISSRNC Conference webpage:

https://www.issrnc.org/conferences/2021-conference/

Papers will be anonymously peer-reviewed by an international scholarly committee and decisions announced by 8 September, 2020.

All presenters must be registered for the conference and be members in good standing of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture by October 5, 2020. All scholars interested in religion, nature and culture are encouraged to support the Society by joining or renewing on the ISSRNC website. Presenters and session organizers are encouraged to submit their articles for publication, or their sessions for special issues, to the official publication of the ISSRNC, the Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture. Further information about the society and journal can be found at www.issrnc.org. Please contact secretary@issrnc.org if you have any questions.
Interested scholars are also encouraged to connect with us via social media:

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ISSRNC/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/ISSRNC
- Academia.edu: https://independent.academia.edu/InternationalSocietyfortheStudyofReligionNatureandCultureISSRNC