

## Call for Papers: **Rethinking Media, Religion and Secularities**

Conference of the International Society for Media, Religion and Culture Conference location:  
Sigtuna Foundation, Sigtuna, Sweden

Conference dates: 4-7 of August 2020

Deadline for Paper proposals: 6 December 2019

Notification of acceptances: Mid February 2020

The globalization of our lifeworld has brought attention to how we think about religion and non-religious contexts. The existence of secularity in contemporary society and culture is contested in many fields in which scholars of media, religion and culture studies engage. Some strongly argue the secularization thesis is dead, as digital media and globalization help give rise to a post-secular condition that enables new forms of spirituality and religious sensibilities throughout networked cultures. Yet other thinkers contend secularization and secularism are actually on the rise, and argue scholars supporting post-secular views rely on overly simplistic definitions of religion.

The 2020 ISMRC conference theme "*Rethinking Media, Religion and Secularities*", seeks to interrogate these assertions and debates and the role media plays in communicating and mediating secularity in contemporary society. We suggest there is not just one, but multiple forms and understandings of the secular at work within global society and culture. We encourage presentations that explore cross-societal, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary investigations of the concepts "secular", "post-secular" and "non-secular". For example, ideas of the post-secular need interrogation in the face of the decline of mainstream churches in North America and yet the rise of popular-folk religions in Nordic and European countries, which challenge the notion of European secular culture. Such trends give rise to contested definitions, and call for considering the very definition of "religion", and the role various forms of media play in communicating, amplifying and/or shaping secular and post-secular manifestations.

The conference, which represents the biennial meeting of the International Society for Media, Religion and Culture, will explore these issues from a range of disciplinary perspectives. International participants from such disciplines as media studies, journalism, religious studies, anthropology and sociology of religion, as well as history, literature and public policy are welcome. Since its first meeting in 1996, the conference has become the leading international gathering for the discussion of research in religion, media and culture.

Confirmed key notes and speakers include:

**Professor Linda Woodhead**, Lancaster University;

**Professor Marwan Kraidy**, University of Pennsylvania;

**Associate Professor Titus Hjelm**, University of Helsinki

The conference invites 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).

Please note that conference attendees are not allowed to make more than two presentations (i.e. present on a panel and offer a paper, take part in a panel and a roundtable, have their name listed on two papers). Paper and panel sessions conducted in other languages than English will be considered, however abstracts should be provided both in English and proposed language for such submissions.

Potential panel, workshop and paper proposals may address, but are not limited to the following themes:

- Media and the contested visibility of religion
- The role of media in framing and promoting various notions of the secular
- The role of media in the formation of post-secular tendencies and contexts
- Digital religion and the rise of secular religious-like practices
- Secular and post-secular themes in entertainment media
- Media and the politicization of the secular
- Rethinking media, religion and secularities in public theology
- Secular journalism and new religious and secular diversities
- Theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of religion, media and secularities
- Religious and secular (il)literacy among media audiences
- Media and varieties of non-religion
- Media, religion and secularities in a global perspective
- Material and symbolic mediations of sacred and secular

More information about conference abstract submission and registration will be available here: <https://www.ismrc.org>

The conference will be held at the Sigtuna Foundation, Sigtuna, Sweden.  
<https://sigtunastiftelsen.se/en/>

For information about the venue, housing and transportation see:  
<https://www.ismrc.org/2020-conference/>

We warmly welcome you to Sweden and ISMRC in 2020!

Johanna Sumiala, Associate Professor, University of Helsinki, President, International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture

Heidi A Campbell, Professor, Texas A&M University, Conference Program Planner and Vice President, International Society for Media, Religion, and Culture: [heidic@tamu.edu](mailto:heidic@tamu.edu)

Local hosts:

Director Alf Linderman, Sigtuna Foundation, [alf.linderman@sigtunastiftelsen.se](mailto:alf.linderman@sigtunastiftelsen.se)

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