

## 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

# INTERNET, AUTHORITY, AND RELIGIOUS CONTACT

11-12 February 2019 | CERES Conference Room *Ruhrpott*  
Convener: Giulia Evolvi

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## Internet, Authority, and Religious Contact

The current proliferation of media, especially digital media, has an impact on how religion is perceived, experienced, and negotiated. Scholars in the field of religion and media are increasingly interested in exploring aspects that are relevant to understand digital religion, such as religious authority. Some questions are central to understand various facets of contemporary religion: how does the Internet affect religious authority? Do digital media reproduce existing structures of authority, or do they challenge traditional authority?

In discussing religious authority and the Internet, this workshop aims at reflecting upon instances of religious contact. Existing academic works on media and authority, indeed, seldom explore how authority can kindle – or hinder – religious contact. The workshop will gather experts in religion and digital media from Europe and the U.S., who will explore the topic with case studies about Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In particular, the presentations will analyze how digital media facilitate endorsement or rejection of religious authority in a given religious tradition, and how online-mediated negotiations of religious authority mutually influence different religious groups. By so doing, the workshop aims at adding complexity to the current understanding of authority and digital media, and discussing new methodological and theoretical perspective in the field of religion and media.

## Monday, 11 February 2019

- 10.15 - 10.30 **Welcome Address & Introduction**  
Giulia Evolvi (Bochum)
- 10.30 - 10.45 **Presentation of the *Käte Hamburger Kolleg & Entangled Religions***  
Tim Karis (Bochum) & Julia Reiker (Bochum)
- 10.45 - 11.00 **Presentation of the *Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS)***  
Nina Hahne (Bochum)
- **Chair: Licia di Giacinto (Bochum)**
- 11.00 - 12.00 **The Reconstruction of Authority through the Work of Religious Digital Creatives**  
Heidi Campbell (College Station, TX)
- 12.00 - 01.30 **Lunch**
- 01.30 - 02.30 **On Influencers. Insights and Opportunities for Religious Organization**  
Alba Sabaté Gauxachs (Barcelona)
- 02.30 - 03.00 **Coffee Break**
- **Chair: Jessie Pons (Bochum)**
- 03.00 - 03.45 **Online Authority and Religious Contact - Findings from Research on Christian Web Boards**  
Frederik Elwert (Bochum) & Anna Neumaier (Bochum)
- 03.45 - 04.30 **“Bring your proof, if ye are truthful!” (Quran 27:64) Interreligious and Intra-religious Relations in Salafi Online Forums**  
Samira Tabti (Bochum)
- 04.30 - 05.00 **Coffee Break**
- 05.00 - 06.00 **The Transparent Muslim: Muslims Between the Blackmail of Visibility and The Right to Opacity**  
Nabil Echchaibi (Boulder, CO)
- 06.00 **Dinner**

## Tuesday, 12 February 2019

- **Chair: Giulia Evolvi (Bochum)**
- 10.00 - 11.00 **The Shifting Terms of Religious Authority in the Digital Age**  
Stewart Hoover (Boulder, CO)
- 11.00 - 11.30 **Coffee Break**
- 11.30 - 12.30 **Personal and Political. Gender, Religion and Authority in Digital Media**  
Mia Lövheim (Uppsala)
- 12.30 - 02.00 **Lunch**
- **Chair: Eduard Iricinschi (Bochum)**
- 02.00 - 03.00 **Religious Authority and the Self-Representation of Neoconservative German Christians Online**  
Maren Freudenberg & Judith Stander-Dulisch (Bochum)
- 03.00 - 04.00 **Algorithmic and Existential Authority: New Patterns of Power and Influence in Contemporary Digital Christianity**  
Tim Hutchings (Nottingham)
- 04.00 - 04.30 **Coffee Break**
- 04.30 - 06.00 **Roundtable Discussion**  
Moderator: Tim Karis (Bochum)
- 06.00 - 07.00 **Dinner**
- 07.00 - 08.00 **Concluding Remarks and Future Outlook**

## Wednesday, 13 February 2019

- 11.00 - 12.30 **Presenting the Research Structure and Academic Activities of KHK/CERES and CMRC**  
Stewart Hoover & Nabil Echchaibi (Boulder, CO)  
Volkhard Krech, Tim Karis & Giulia Evolvi (Bochum)
- 12.30 - 01.30 **Lunch**
- 01.30 - 03.30 **Exploring Collaborations between KHK/CERES and CMRC**