

Situating Philosophy of Religion

University of Toronto, April 21-22, 2018

Keynote Speakers:

Thomas A. Lewis (Brown), Mark Kingwell (Toronto)

The Graduate Student Association at the University of Toronto's Department for the Study of Religion invites graduate students from all disciplines to participate in a symposium that explores the history, place, and task of philosophy of religion.

Ever since its identification as a distinct branch of philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century, philosophy of religion has led an ambiguous existence. Early efforts in philosophy of religion, for example, were made in the shadow of philosophical theology, and struggled to attain autonomy in establishing an approach to religion no longer premised on theoretical speculation about the nature of "God." Furthermore, philosophy of religion has in more recent contexts tended to appear too narrowly focused on abstract intellectual questions reminiscent of this (especially Christian) theological heritage. However, in the midst of growing attention to the history and power dynamics involved in the construction of the category "religion," as well as to the material, social, and embodied aspects of religious practice, current developments in philosophy of religion have become significantly more methodologically self-reflective, not only in exploring the social and historical contexts of its "classic" questions, but also in attempting to make connections beyond its predominantly monotheistic origins. Such developments, moreover, are increasingly sensitive to the interdisciplinary nature of the study of religion, and attempt to establish dialogue between philosophy and other approaches such as history, sociology, and anthropology.

This conference aims to provide a forum in which to explore the question of how to situate philosophy of religion in contemporary academic contexts in light of these developments. Participants are encouraged to submit proposals for papers that reflect on questions such as the following:

- What is philosophy of religion? What does it do, and where does it belong? How do new developments in the philosophy of religion affect how we conceive of its role today?
- How does philosophy of religion define its object(s) of study, and how does it relate to other branches of philosophy?
- What is the significance for philosophy of religion of its historical relationship with philosophical theology, and how has this ancestry affected the development of philosophy of religion?
- What challenges do religion and issues involved in the academic study of religion pose to philosophical inquiry?
- What is the role of philosophy in the interdisciplinary context of the academic study of religion?
- Given recent methodological and theoretical shifts in philosophy and the academic study of religion, what is the future of philosophy of religion?

Guidelines for submissions: Please submit a 250-word abstract outlining the topic and main arguments of the paper by January 19th, 2018. Proposals should include all contact information and institutional affiliation. Please send proposals, as well as any questions, to dsrsymposium18@gmail.com.