INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGION, NATURE, AND CULTURE

FOUNDATIONS *and* FLUIDITY

20th Anniversary Conference

VENICE, ITALY

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

10 – 14 OCTOBER 2026

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

with the patronage of
Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Wake Forest University

ISSRNC International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture

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This conference is organized by the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture (ISSRNC) with the patronage of Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Wake Forest University. We would also like to extend a special thanks to all of our sponsors for their help making the 2026 "Foundations and Fluidity" conference possible.

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ISSRNC President's Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Twenty years have now passed since our first gathering in Gainesville, Florida. While much has changed in that time, the fundamental questions we have been asking remain urgent and pertinent. The dramatic drawdown in biodiversity continues. Climate patterns fluctuate in unforeseen ways. Social inequality grows unabated. Corporations increasingly function as supra-governmental policy makers. As scholars, we persist in asking questions about the linkages between these interconnected ecological crises and the ways they intersect with cultural expressions of religion and their analysis.

These crises demand precisely the kind of interdisciplinary, collaborative scholarly work that this community embodies. If you have read the Counterpoint blog created by former ISSRNC President Kocku von Stuckrad and current President-Elect Whitney Bauman, you can find reflections from each of our Society's Presidents and you will find connection woven through nearly every entry. We find connection in this scholarly community, in interdisciplinary work, and in the places we gather. These conferences have been the beating heart of our Society.

Yet we need not depend solely on in-person gatherings to sustain these vital connections. We can reinvigorate our Working Groups where collaborators might organize conference panels, pursue collaborative research, explore particular geographies and literatures, and maintain networks of collegial support. We can forge new partnerships through co-sponsorships with organizations that share our scholarly interests. We invite members to propose ideas for such collaborations—to imagine new horizons alongside our twentieth-anniversary celebration.

To accomplish these goals, we depend on you. We need more people to get involved, to explore new scholarly terrain, and to imagine collaborative opportunities. It is in that spirit of connection and collaboration that we gather in Venice.

None of this would be possible without the Board of Directors and Conference Committee, who have generously devoted their time to making this gathering a reality. We are also grateful to our co-sponsors at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Wake Forest University, whose resources have helped to make this event possible.

I look forward to seeing you in Venice, and to the conversations and collaborations that await us.

Warmly,

Lucas F. Johnston
ISSRNC President

Acknowledgements

This conference was made possible through the generous help and support of a number of individuals, who dedicated their time to help plan, organize, and carry out this event. Many people have been involved at different stages since the conference was first discussed in 2025. We would like to extend a special thanks to the following individuals for their help making the conference possible:

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Special Thanks to Our Partners in Venice

A special thanks is due to our partners across organizations in Venice that have helped us to plan and organize this event.

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ISSRNC Mission & Prospects

The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture (ISSRNC) is an international and interdisciplinary community of scholars, founded in 2006, who are engaged in critical inquiry into the relationships among human beings, their diverse cultures and environments, and their religious beliefs and practices.

The ISSRNC facilitates scholarly collaboration and research and disseminates research findings through workshops, lectures, conferences and its affiliated, peer reviewed journal, the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*, which has been published quarterly since 2007. In the coming years, the society intends to continue to grow our social media platforms to better connect with our members and to develop additional ways to make our research and conferences digitally accessible.

The ISSRNC was organized and is governed through democratic processes. Our Board of Directors cordially invites all individuals interested in the scholarly investigation of religion, nature, and culture to join and to participate in ISSRNC activities. Members not only enjoy a growing number of benefits, including free online access to the Society's journal; they also increase the profile and strength of this important and growing scholarly field and help create further opportunities for religion and nature scholars.

After its inception in 2006 the society grew steadily, reaching 215 members by the end of 2008. Although annual membership declined after that due to the global economic crisis, society numbers grew dramatically in 2016 and 2017. They dipped again during the first two years of the Covid-19 pandemic but are now approaching our previous high point. We urge conference participants and current members to strengthen the ISSRNC by renewing their memberships, donating to the society when possible, submitting their scholarly work for consideration by the reviewers and editors of the *JSRNC*, and in other creative ways by offering talents that could advance the mission of the society.

The ISSRNC is recognized by the United States Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c)(3) charitable / educational organization.

Keynote Speakers

Professor Kate Rigby

Photo credit: Sara Penrhyn Jones

Catherine (Kate) Rigby is Alexander von Humboldt Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Cologne. There, she leads a research hub for Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities (MESH), which integrates disciplines such as Literary Studies, Linguistics, Education, and Anthropology. She is Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and visiting scholar in the Research Centre for Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University.

Her research lies at the intersection of environmental literary, philosophical, historical, and religious studies. She has a specialist interest in European Romanticism, Australian studies, ecopoetics, multispecies studies, and disaster studies, which she considers from feminist and decolonial perspectives. Within these fields she digs deep into the cultural, religious and historical foundations of human interrelationships with non-human others and our shared environs. Her recent co-edited book, *Narratives of Resilience* (2025), critically investigates different concepts and instantiations of 'resilience' and its potential to foster transformative adaptation, whilst the co-edited anthology, *Unsettling Extinction* (2026), reconsiders biodiversity loss through the lens of Environmental Humanities.

A founding co-editor of the journal *Philosophy Activism Nature*, Rigby also co-edited the University Press of Virginia series, *Under the Sign of Nature*. Her books include *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (2004), *Dancing with Disaster: Environmental Histories, Narratives, and Ethics for Perilous Times* (2015), *Reclaiming Romanticism: Towards an Ecopoetics of Decolonization* (2020) and *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction* (2023).

Keynote Speakers

Professor Allison Carruth

Allison Carruth is Professor of American Studies and the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton University, where she directs the Program in Environmental Studies and is co-founder and director of Blue Lab, an environmental storytelling and media production studio.

For over a decade, her research and creative practice have bridged ideas from and reimagined the boundaries between the environmental arts, humanities, and sciences. From 2016-2020, she was the founding director of UCLA's Laboratory for Environmental Narrative Strategies (LENS). While leading LENS, she was an executive producer/producer of an environmental series featuring original essays and documentary films, developed in partnership with KCET, the country's largest public media outlet. She is the author of three books: *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (Cambridge 2013), *Literature and Food Studies* with Amy L. Tigner (Routledge 2018), and *Novel Ecologies: Nature Remade and the Illusions of Tech* (University of Chicago Press 2025). Her articles have appeared in *American Literary History, ASAP/Journal, Modernism/ modernity, npj: Climate Action, Public Culture, Public Books,* and *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities,* among other venues.

California on the Edge

A Work-in-progress Climate Documentary Screening and Filmmaker Discussion

Husband-and-wife filmmakers Barron Bixler and Allison Carruth will premier the work-in-progress opening sequence from their feature-length documentary film *California on the Edge,* which explores how climate change and other environmental crises are damaging ecosystems and upending lives along the California coast. Narrated in a lyrical key by Bixler and Carruth, the film follows the stories of people who, confronting this inflection point, are rolling up their sleeves to protect, repair, and salvage the places they love and call home.

The stories that commingle throughout *California on the Edge* invoke, but also resist, a worst-case climate future—one in which California's marine and terrestrial ecosystems collapse, its sacred places are destroyed or defiled, and only the most affluent and powerful lay claim to what remains of the coast's natural riches and cultural meanings. The people at the heart of *California on the Edge* are staking out provisionally more hopeful futures rooted in generative ideals of community, ingenuity, and the profound meaning of work, often alongside feelings of grief, anger, and futility. Through their small-scale acts of world-making and world-salvaging—which cumulatively are a force to reckon with—the film poses an urgent question: What future are we going to build from the wreckage of our climate-changed present?

Following the screening, Bixler and Carruth will join in a conversation and audience Q&A moderated by Amanda Nichols.

Documentarian

Barron Bixler

Barron Bixler is a social-environmental documentary photographer, filmmaker, writer, designer, and curator. He is co-founder and creative director of Blue Lab at Princeton University, where he also holds an appointment in the Effron Center for the Study of America.

Through his multifaceted artistic practice, Bixler has explored a range of environmental problems—from water and wildfire to mining, industrial agriculture, chemical pollution, and anti-GMO seed activism. In 2021, he was selected for the Magnum Photos Longterm Mentorship Program, during which he developed his project "Watershed: A Speculative Atlas of California," which was the subject of a major solo exhibition. More recently, his work has been featured at *Review Santa Fe* and the *New York Portfolio Review*, and in juried exhibitions organized by CENTER, American Photographic Artists, FotoFest Houston, Photographic Center Northwest and the Center for Photographic Art. His work has appeared in *High Country News, Dwell, Lenscratch, aPhotoEditor, Fraction Magazine, Analog Forever Magazine, the Journal of Environmental Media* (forthcoming), *BOOM: A Journal of California, Gastronomica: the Journal for Food Studies, Civil Eats, KCET Artbound, KUSC Arts Alive, LAist, The Fresno Bee,* and *The Stockton Record*.

Bixler is the director of two documentary films, both currently in production: *California on the Edge* explores how climate change is damaging ecosystems and upending lives along the California coast, and *Chasing an End to Forever* follows two teams of scientists working with microbes that appear capable of biodegrading forever chemicals, known technically as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), at scale.

Field Trip—Lazzaretto Nuovo

The Lazzaretto Nuovo today. Photo courtesy of Lazzaretti Veneziani.

ISSRNC conference attendees will take a guided boat trip to Lazzaretto Nuovo, a historic island located in the Northern Venice Lagoon. Established in 1468, the Lazzaretto served as one of the world's first permanent quarantine facilities during the bubonic plague. Ships suspected of carrying disease were held here for a period of isolation, and their cargoes were aired and disinfected in long roofed structures known as teze. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, the island is now a protected nature reserve and archeological site.

Field trip participants will meet at the Zattere Incurabili dock at 8:30 am and depart promptly for Lazzaretto Nuovo Island via boat at 9:00 am. Once they arrive, participants will be led on a guided tour of the eco-museum, including its archeological sites. Participants will also have the opportunity to enjoy a self-guided nature walk along The Path of the Barene. The boat will depart the island by 12:30 pm. On the return trip, participants will experience a guided tour through the Venetian Lagoon salt marshes and past the M.O.S.E. flood barrier system. Marine oceanographer Luca Zaggia will explain the hydrodynamic aquastructure and offer insights about the biodiverse wetland ecosystem. We will return to San Polo by 14:00.

The salt marshes, known as *barene*, are among the lagoon's most distinctive habitats and serve as important resting points for migratory birds such as the black-winged stilt, which arrives each spring after a long transcontinental journey. Roughly seventy percent of the original *barene* have disappeared over the past century, making the island a vivid reminder of the migration and climate themes at the heart of this year's conference.

We recommend that all participants bring water and sunscreen, wear comfortable shoes with good tread, and dress in layers for variable weather. Please be aware that lunch will not be provided on this trip and that there are no food service facilities available on the island. Participants are permitted a single carry-on bag or backpack on the boat and are encouraged to pack and bring their own lunch, though single use plastic bags are not permitted. For those who enjoy birding, we recommend bringing binoculars. Participants who choose to participate in this trip do so at their own risk, and the trip will take place rain or shine, so please prepare accordingly.

Photo courtesy of Lazzaretti Veneziani.

Conferences 2006—2026

2006 **Exploring Religion, Nature, and Culture**
In collaboration and with the support of University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA

2008 **Re-Enchantment of Nature Across Disciplines: Critical Intersections of Science, Ethics and Metaphysics**
In collaboration and with the support of CIGA-UNAM, Morelia, and with Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, Mexico

2009 **Religion, Nature, and Progress**
In collaboration and with the support of University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2010 **Living on the Edge**
In collaboration and with the support of the University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

2011 **Religion, Nature, and Art**
Co-sponsored with the Ethnological Museum of the Vatican Museums, Vatican City State

2012 **Nature and the Popular Imagination**
In collaboration and with the support of Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, USA

2016 **Religion, Science, and the Future**
In collaboration and with the support of University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA

2017 **Mountains and Sacred Landscapes**
Co-sponsored by the India China Institue, The New School, New York City, USA

2019 **Religion / Water / Climate: Changing Cultures and Landscapes**
In collaboration and with the support of University College Cork, Ireland

2021 **Religion and Environment: Relations and Relationality**
Hosted virtually by Arizona State University's Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Lab

2023 **After Earth? Religion and Technology on a Changing Planet**
In collaboration and with the support of Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA

2025 **Crossing Borders, Transgressing Boundaries: Religion, Migration, and Climate Change**
In collaboration and with the support of the University of California, Santa Barbara

2026 **Foundations and Fluidity**
With the patronage of Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Wake Forest University, Venice, Italy

Graduate Student Paper Award

At each conference, the ISSRNC selects one graduate student paper to receive merit-based award for best graduate student paper. Several previous winners have gone on to publish their papers in the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*, which we hope will be the case this year as well. Graduate students were asked to submit their full conference papers, and the submissions were anonymously reviewed by the Awards Committee. This year, the first-place winner will receive a $500 monetary award. The 2026 winner will be announced during the conference banquet.

Previous Graduate Student Paper Award Winners

Andi Alfian – 2025 Winner

"Decolonizing Human-Animal Relations in Indonesia: Insights from the Bara, Cindakko, and Tobalo Indigenous Peoples of Sulawesi"

Andi Alfian is a PhD student in religious studies at Syracuse University in New York, USA. His research explores Indigenous religious traditions, environmental ethics, more-than-human philosophies, and multispecies relations, with a current focus on crocodile-human relationships in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Alfian's paper examined multispecies relations in three Indigenous communities in Indonesia: the Bara, Cindakko, and Tobalo communities of Sulawesi. The concept of multispecies religiosities reconfigures human-animal relations beyond hierarchical and universalizing discourses, with implications for environmental ethics, Indigenous diversit(ies), and situated planetary understandings.

Mai Lootah (now Mina Çınar) – 2023 Winner

"Cosmic Chaos and Transformation in Islamic Apocalyptic Eschatology"

Mina Çınar holds a doctoral degree from the Department of Religion at Rice University (2026). She is currently a Joint Postdoctoral Fellow at the Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz–Max Planck Institut (KHI). Çınar's work focuses on the intersections of science and religion, the history of wonders and marvels, and responses to extraordinary natural phenomena. Çınar's paper investigated the impact of the scientific-interpretive approach of Islamic modernism on the modern conceptualization of the Last Day cosmic portents (*ashrāṭ*) mentioned in Islamic scriptures.

Travel Grant Awards

Whenever we are able to do so, the ISSRNC offers in person conference presenters the opportunity to apply for a competitive, need and merit based travel grant award to help offset their conference related travel expenses. All travel grant applications are anonymously reviewed by the ISSRNC International Travel Grant Awards Committee and applicants are notified of their awards approximately four to six months in advance of the conference. Funding priority is given to graduate students, international scholars, contingent faculty, and independent scholars without institutional support.

This year, ISSRNC is pleased to provide over $10,000 in travel grant awards.

Anna Ballatore
Ph.D. Student, Università della Svizzera Italiana (Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano), Italy

Juan Martinez Benavides
Ph.D. Student, Drew University, USA

Pakhuri Bhatt
Lecturer, Universität Graz, Austria

Patrick Curry
Independent Scholar, UK

Annie Delville
Masters Student, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Carrie Dohe
Affiliated Researcher, University of Cologne, Germany

Marco Fiorletta
Graduate Student, Universität Wein, Austria

Giovanni Franceschini
Ph.D. Student, Università degli studi di Modena-Reggio Emilia, Italy

Nour Farrar Haddad
Lecturer, Lebanese University, Lebanon

Mario Orospe Hernandez
Postdoctoral Researcher, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico

Alba Siguero Lizano
Ph.D. Candidate, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

Octavian Machidon
Assistant Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Elia Maggang
Lecturer, Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana, Indonesia

Margaux Crider Robinson
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Kentucky, USA

Evan Sandsmark
Academic Staff. Universität Wein, Austria

Benjamin Schmidt
Graduate Student, Rachel Carson Center, Munich, Germany

Conference Schedule

Saturday, 10 October

All Saturday events will be hosted in Aula Magna Silvio Trentin

3:00—6:00pm **ISSRNC Conference Check In**
When you arrive, please stop by to the ISSRNC welcome desk to check in and pick up your conference name badge.

Official Opening of the 20th Anniversary Conference of the ISSRNC

4:00pm **ISSRNC Conference Welcome**

Lucas Johnston, ISSRNC President

Opening Remarks from our Partners at Ca' Foscari University

Office of the Rector

Department of Humanities

Daniele Brombal, Director of the Environmental Humanities Master of Arts

Valentina Ciciliot, Associate Professor of History and Christianity

4:30pm **Opening Keynote Address**

Kate Rigby (University of Cologne)
"Changing Course: Rivers, Religion, and Ecological Conversion"

Whitney Bauman, ISSRNC President-Elect, Presiding

6:00–7:30pm **ISSRNC Welcome Reception**
Reception attendance is limited to those who registered in advance.

Conference Schedule

Sunday, 11 October

All Sunday Plenary Sessions will be hosted in Auditorium Santa Margherita

8:00—10:30am **ISSRNC Conference Check In**
If you did not check in on Saturday, make sure to stop by the ISSRNC welcome desk to check in and pick up your conference name badge.

8:30—10:00am **Plenary Session 1**

Facing Destruction: Religion and Nature as Witness to the End of Worlds

How can research and teaching in the field of Religion and Nature respond realistically to the contemporary state of global environment and political systems? This panel reflects on that question in conversation with the Genesis story of Lot's wife, who looked back as fire rained down on her city. We argue that the field of religion and nature requires honest assessment of worsening climate change, extinction, environmental injustice, colonialism, and fascism. We also argue that environmental humanists must admit that we do not have solutions to these challenges. But we believe it is possible to accept these realities without becoming "doomer dudes," without embracing apathetic, simplistic, or monolithic worldviews. The panel argues that our field should focus on building, sustaining, and advocating for communities that nurture creativity and resilience in challenging times.

This Plenary Session is comprised of three scholars who have each been working in the field for over 20 years, and who began collaborating at the initial organizational meeting for the ISSRNC in Cocoa Beach, Florida, in 2005. Our stories as scholars and as teachers are one source for these papers. We wrestle with what the field has accomplished in that time and the limits we have found in our work and in ourselves. We also note the importance of scholarly and university communities as a resource to deal with the challenges that have grown over our careers. Our respondent, a longtime mentor and colleague, also at the infamous Cocoa Beach event and one of the grounding members of the field, will draw on her own experience to help us find the gaps and challenges we have not seen.

Whitney Bauman (Florida International University)
"Thinking without Progress"

Richard Bohannon (Metro State University)
"Vision without Resolution"

Kevin O'Brien (Pacific Lutheran University)
"Teaching without Morals"

Respondent: Laurel Kearns (Drew University)

Conference Schedule

10:00—10:30am **Break**

10:30am—12:00pm **Plenary Session 2**

The 'Human' in Flux: Culture, Authority, and Meaning in the Age of AI

Artificial intelligence has shifted from specialized application to ambient infrastructure, now shaping how people encounter information, evaluate evidence, form judgments, and produce meaning. But AI is not only an epistemic phenomenon; it is also a social, material, and ecological one. The computational systems underlying AI require vast resources: rare earth minerals, water, land, and energy, potentially exacerbating norms of treating the nonhuman natural world as raw substrate for human advancement. In this sense, AI participates in historical patterns of resource extraction where costs and benefits have always been distributed unevenly—across communities, species, and ecosystems.

This plenary session takes AI as a lens for examining the conference theme of foundations and fluidity, and does so with attention to both human and nonhuman stakes. Inquiry, interpretation, and meaning-making have always depended on shared practices, institutional arrangements, and distributed epistemic labor. AI unsettles those arrangements: redistributing authority in knowledge production, blurring boundaries between creation and technical production, and introducing new intermediaries into the transmission and contestation of cultural and religious meaning. But the roundtable also asks what AI's rise means for how we conceptualize nature itself—whether as a resource to be optimized, as a field to be modeled and managed, or as something that exceeds and resists those framings. The question is not only what AI does to existing human structures, but how its emergence clarifies and intensifies relationships between technological development, ecological extraction, and the more-than-human world.

Anna Ballatore (Università della Svizzera Italiana)

William Connelly (Catholic University of Paris)

Jessica Lombard (Côte d'Azur University)

Octavian Machidon (University of Ljubljana)

Sara Polak (LIMINAL, CIIRC, Czech Technical University in Prague / School of Archeology, University of Oxford)

Evan Sandsmark (Universität Wein)

Moderating: Jeremy Sorgen (Northeastern University, Mills College), ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Conference Schedule

————————————Lunch | 12:00—1:30pm ————————————

Meals are not provided by ISSRNC—See the Conference Welcome Packet for a list of nearby dining options.

1:30—2:15pm JSRNC and ISSRNC Working Group Interest Meetings

Interested in learning more about the Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture or one of the ISSRNC Working Groups? Please join us for the interest meetings to engage with representatives from these groups and to find out more about how you can get involved.

2:30—4:00pm Plenary Session 3

Islands of Decolonial Love

In response to the conference's theme of foundations and fluidity, this plenary session offers ecological, cultural, and religious responses to stable foundations that have begun to liquify under the pressures of contemporary polycrisis. The thinkers, texts and rituals at the heart of our respective presentations appeal to temporal orientations that circumvent the linear timeline of Western historical consciousness, and, along with it, the proposed universalist declarations that have both established and circumscribed "foundational stability" and "crisis liquidity." Borrowing the title of a 2013 collection of short stories by Mississauga Nishnaabeg author Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, the panel presenters propose an arrangement of sites (islands) from which to engage with enamored entanglements that unsettle/decolonize influential Eurocentric concepts of human exceptionalism, personhood, and territoriality. From our respective theoretical vantage points, we come together as an archipelago which supplants this normative logic with webs of sociality and relationality that illuminate realities rendered invisible or left unattended.

Mary Keller (University of Wyoming)

Yianna Liatsos (University of Limerick)

Carol Wayne White (Bucknell University)

4:00—4:30pm Break

4:30–6:00 Plenary Session 4

Hybrid Cosmologies and the Religious Landscape of Repair in Africa

Modes of knowing, caring, and healing in Africa are undergoing profound transformations, driven by intersecting pressures, including ecological degradation, enduring legacies of colonialism, economic struggles, and disenchantment with mainstream religion. Long-standing ecological, biological, and other models are being tested, while alternative imaginaries and orientations, grounded in a recognition of the webs of connectivity enmeshing entities of all kinds, participate in the making and unmaking of people's lives and stories. Inspired by the work of social theorists who draw on "eco-intimacy," "animacy," experiential anthropology, and other lexicons to push against anthropocentric models of nature and reconfigure environmental politics, this panel considers how new ethics of relationality, alternative practices of care, and hybrid cosmologies of repair are forged in an age of environmental degradation.

We have been called to rethink the anthropological object: world-making projects in fluid environments. Based on ethnographic research conducted in Namibia, Niger, and South Africa, the contributors examine how African communities (re)design grammars of sustainability and spiritual recalibration amid environmental crises that have uncovered the anthropocentric limitations of Enlightenment-based narratives of nature. They explore the texture of African experience in contexts of intensifying interests in (imported or vernacular) religious frameworks that, by questioning prevailing secular conservation models, offer alternative responses to current ecological disturbances.

Agnieszka Kedzierska Manzon (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes)
"Rivers of Spirits, Gardens of Ancestors: Ecological Challenges and Resilience in South Africa"

Adeline Masquelier (Tulane University)
"Trouble in the Borderlands of History: Foregrounding the Place of Spirits in Ecological Narratives"

Michael Shirungu (University of Namibia)
"Medicine of Our Ancestors, Knowledge in Motion: San Healing and Relational Ecologies in Namibia"

Rosalind Hackett (University of Tennessee)
Respondent

Moderating: Elaine Nogueira-Godsey, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Conference Schedule

Monday, 12 October

9:00am—2:00pm **Conference Field Trips [Optional] or Free Morning**
**Advance registration for field trips is required.

Lazzaretto Nuovo

Participants who signed up for the Lazzaretto trip should meet at Zattere Incurabili dock at 8:30 am. The boat will depart at 9:00am sharp. We will return by 2:00pm. Participants should plan to bring lunch with them.

Biennale Arte

Participants who signed up for the Biennale Arte exhibition should pick up their tickets at the conference check in desk on Saturday or Sunday. Your ticket provides you with unlimited access all day [one day only]. The Biennale exhibitions open at 10:00am and close at 6:00pm. This is a self-guided field trip so you may arrive and leave at any time you choose.

If you would like to travel to the Biennale together as part of a group, two of our ISSRNC board members, Mary Keller and Matt Hartman, have kindly agreed to lead a group over to the Biennale exhibition. Those interested should meet at 9:30am at Campiello dei Squelini. Please wear your ISSRNC name badge so that you can be easily identified as part of the group. Together, the group will walk from the Campiello to the Giardini della Biennale entrance located at Viale Trento 1260.

The walk is about 40 minutes, so please bring comfortable shoes. Once there, participants may choose to go their own way or make their way through the exhibition with others. Please be mindful of the time and make sure to plan you return for enough time to get back for the afternoon events.

Walking Directions from Campiello dei Squelini to Giardini della Biennale

See the Biennale Arte website for more details.

Casa dei Tre Oci Museum

Participants will meet at Tre Oci at 10:00am for the guided tour. Please arrive early. From San Polo, participants should travel toward Giudecca / Tronchetto / P.le Roma via vaporetto Line 2 and get off at the Zitelle stop. From there, participants will walk to Tre Oci and meet with the rest of the group for the guided tour. The trip will take about 20—25 minutes. See here for Directions and Vaporetto Timetable.

Conference Schedule

3:45 pm **Meet at Zattere Incurabili for Chartered Boat to San Servolo**

Note: The ISSRNC Keynote, Documentary Short Film Screening, and Conference Banquet will take place on San Servolo Island.

ISSRNC has chartered a boat to take participants from San Polo to San Servolo. The boat will leave promptly at 4:00pm from Zattere Incurabili. Please plan to arrive at the dock by 3:45 pm to allow plenty of time for everyone to board. There is only one chartered boat, so if you miss it, you will need to find your own transportation to San Servolo.

4:30–6:30pm **Keynote Lecture and Documentary Short Film Screening**

Allison Carruth (Princeton University)
"The Ocean Remade: 'Blue Tech' Utopias, from Coastal California to the Mariana Trench"

Barron Bixler, Executive Producer (Princeton University)
"*California on the Edge*: A Work-in-progress Climate Documentary Screening and Filmmaker Discussion"

Amanda M. Nichols, ISSRNC Treasurer, Presiding

Note: If you plan to attend the keynote but did not register in advance for the conference banquet, you will need to arrange your own transportation for the return trip. See here for the **Vaporetto Schedule** from San Servolo.

6:30—8:00pm **ISSRNC Banquet and Awards Ceremony**
Banquet attendance is limited to those who registered in advance.

Opening Remarks

Lucas Johnston, ISSRNC President, Presiding

Graduate Student Paper Award

Elaine Nogueira-Godsey, ISSRNC Member-at-Large, Presiding

Lifetime Achievement Award

Whitney Bauman, ISSRNC President-Elect, Presiding
Amy Whitehead, ISSRNC Member-at-Large, Presiding

8:30pm ISSRNC chartered boat back to **Zattere Incurabili**

Conference Schedule

Tuesday, 13 October

8:30–10:00 | Concurrent Session 1

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Of Species and Spirits: Fieldwork Methods for Studying Religion, Spirituality, and Multispecies Relations

Anthropologists in multispecies studies and studies of religion share an interest in expanded notions of agency beyond the human. In the former, studies attend to the ordinary and the microscopic—forms of life and material processes that routinely escape notice. In the latter, studies have long grappled with the agency of spirits, showing how the boundaries between material and immaterial, human and nonhuman are fluid and often subject to high-stakes relationships. Despite this conceptual point of overlap, multispecies studies and anthropology of religion have operated largely in parallel, apart from some work on what is often termed Indigenous cosmologies. Recently, that separation is lessening. More multispecies studies ethnographers notice how their fieldsites are infused with religious, spiritual, and moral significance. More ethnographers of religion are grappling with the presence of non-human species and elements.

This roundtable brings together ethnographers who work at the intersection of multispecies studies and studies of religion. Some participants work with Indigenous people, in ways that have laid the groundwork for a discussion across subfields. Other participants are new to this conversation, having been trained in either multispecies studies or anthropology of religion. Together, we pause to ask what this growing fluidity across subfields means for the methodological foundation of ethnographic fieldwork. Our panelists discuss methods-in-the-making and roads not taken, as much as techniques with a proven track record. We converge on a common set of concerns: How does the present/absent quality of spiritual beings and moral imaginaries co-create multispecies worlds? How are relations between multiple beings implicated in intensifying social, ecological, and technological transformation? And, importantly, what methodological tools are scholars finding most useful as they explore the relations among humans, species, and spirits that enliven their fieldsites? Collectively, our contributions deepen a discussion of methods and practices for engaging across disciplines, working toward a more robust methodological toolkit for studying the more-than-human.

Ana Mariella Bacigalupo (SUNY Buffalo)

Mayanthi Fernando (UC Santa Cruz)

Eric Hoenes del Pinal (UNC Charlotte)

Hillary Kaell (McGill University)

Carlota McAllister (York University)

Martin Miller (McGill University)

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Politics, Religion, and Nature

Marion Grau (MF Specialized University of Theology, Religion, and Society)
"Steps to A Political Spirituality of Climate Action"

Christophe Monnot (University of Strasbourg)
"Religion and Ecology: A Subpolitical Alliance?"

Margaux Crider Robinson (University of Kentucky)
"The Politics of Population: Malthus Meets the Modern Childfree American"

Noel Salmond (Carleton University)
"Mark Carney, Values and the Fluidity of Values 2021–2026"

Moderating: Matthew Hartman, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Religion, Spirituality, and Waterscapes

Elizabeth Allison (California Institute of Integral Studies)
"Limnology and Liminality: High Elevation Lakes and Wetlands as Monitors and Mediators of Environmental Relations"

Marita Furehaug (University of Oslo)
"Bodies of Water and Waste through the Lens of Trans-corporeality in Egypt"

Gerrit Lange (Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum) +
Pankhuri Bhatt (University of Graz)
"Foundational Myths and Fluid Metaphors: Western Quests for the Sources of Mother Ganga in the 21st Century"

Bron Taylor (University of Florida)
"The Sea and the Sublime"

Moderating: Victoria Machado, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

10:00—10:30 Break

Conference Schedule

10:30—12:00 | Concurrent Session 2

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Fluid Animisms (Roundtable Panel)

Animism has been reclaimed as a critical term in the interpretation and analysis of diverse phenomena of interest to the ISSRNC community. Since the pioneering work of Philippe Descola and Nurit Bird-David, it has become a fluid provocation of attention to relational ontologies and epistemologies. It flows with currents like the new materialism and environmental humanities to address and contest notions of human exceptionalism, separatism and individualism. It has enabled revisitations to longer-term debates about personhood, nature/culture dualisms, world-making and constructions of religion. While its burden of colonial deprecation of Indigenous knowledges and lifeways raise significant objections, "animism" is also enabling new approaches to Indigenous and other literatures (oral/aural as well as written) and ritualisation. Animism is, then, already a fluid term. Additionally, it has overflowed the banks of academic discourse and nourished some eco-spiritual movements. Indeed, erudite and influential books by David Abrams and Daniel Quinn (among others) were deploying "animism" contemporaneously with its innovative scholarly reclamation. In many places worldwide, terms like "animist Pagans," "Christian animists," "Heathen animists," "new animists," and "neoanimists" are increasingly presented as identifiers of emphases on restorative relationships with(in) the larger-than-human community.

This panel engages with people and communities who might be named (by themselves or by researchers) "new animists." The panel's selection of animist examples resonates with animism's core relationality which typically directs participants to engage with specific locations, bioregions, other-than-human communities or species. The same relationality also links the animism of one place to others – some shared in literature, social media, or conversation with like-minded but elsewhere-located others. These dynamics increase the diversity and fluidity of animist worlding.

Yael Dansac (Université libre de Bruxelles)

Julia Itel (University of Fribourg)

Rune Hjarnø Rasmussen (Independent Scholar)

Amy Whitehead (Massey University)

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Questioning Epistemic Assumptions

Camille Liederman (University of Fribourg)
"Fixed and Fluid Stars: Astrology, Water Crises, and Cosmologies of Climate Instability"

Mark Schunemann (University of Exeter)
"Sacraments in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: A Comparative Ethnography"

Jason Sexton (University of California, Los Angeles)
"Eugenic Legacies in Environmental Sciences and Religion: Preliminary Findings from the Faith, Flourishing, and the Environment Project in Los Angeles"

Thounaojam Somokanta (Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur)
"Wetland Grabbing in the Global South: Transforming Meetei–Loktak Relations, Manipur"

Moderating: Mary Keller, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Traditions in Motion: Religion, Ecology, and Environmental Practice

Flavia Cecchini (Ca' Foscari University)
"Practice Oriented Ecotheology: The African Earthkeeping Movement in Zimbabwe"

Nguyen Ba Dieu Linh (Ca' Foscari University)
"Eco-Cosmological Syncretism in Buddhist and Christian Literature: A Comparative Analysis"

Marco Odinotte (University of Padua)
"Born under the Sign of the Times: Anti-New Age Discourse and the Shaping of Catholic Environmentalism in the United States (1988-2004)"

Michele Rigodanzo (University of Piemonte Orientale)
"Religion and the Monitoring of Unequal Access to a Healthy Environment: The United Church of Christ's Reports on Toxic Exposure (1987–2020)"

Moderator: Valentina Ciciliot (Ca' Foscari University)

————————————Lunch | 12:00—1:30pm ————————————

Meals are not provided by ISSRNC—See the Conference Welcome Packet for a list of nearby dining options.

Conference Schedule

1:30—3:00 | Concurrent Session 3

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Rhetorical Genealogies of the Nuclear Age: Foundational Logics and Nebulous Socio-Ecological Futures

This roundtable considers how scholars interpret the amorphous 80 year history of nuclear technologies, considering the foundational logics of their creation and the fluidity of their continued invocation. Amid rapidly shifting global politics and climate change insecurity, myriad nuclear narratives continue to rely on religious rhetorics of technological progress and the revolutionary potential of scientific advancements. Today, nuclear technologies are concurrently portrayed as the salvific solution to climate change, indispensable to the evolution of AI, and a legitimate global geopolitical threat of (potentially) catastrophic and apocalyptic proportions. Planned resurrection and upscaling of nuclear power including through the introduction of SMNRs, weakening of radiation protection standards in the US, and growing threats of nuclear war have contributed to disintegrated and diffused narratives about the role that nuclear plays in our world today.

Drawing on key terms profuse in our nuclear histories, panelists will critically analyze how religious rhetorics have informed and changed perceptions of nuclear technologies over time. We demonstrate the tensions, synergies, and unlikely alliances that have emerged since the genesis of the bomb, and how these terms have both shaped and been informed by the continuously shifting legacy of nuclear proliferation and anti-nuclear resistance. Engaging a range of disciplinary perspectives across the environmental humanities and social sciences, panelists reflect on the Promethean-like myths that emerged about the need for humans to harness and master nuclear technologies and the problems that develop from a lack of critical distance from their application. We consider the established norms of how nuclear technologies are used today and how different actors, including scientists, activists, politicians, and industry workers, permeate those normative bounds. Panelists further investigate the "deep time" implications of nuclear technologies for human and non-human subjects and how decolonial future visions may help us to think beyond the present nuclear order.

Florian Eblenkamp (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons)

Jacques Linder (College of the Holy Cross)

Amanda M. Nichols (Generational Radiation Impact Project)

Ben Schmidt (Rachel Carson Center)

Adam Stone (Rutgers University)

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Literature, Religion, and Nature

Patrick Curry (Independent Scholar)
"Wonder and Nature: A Perspective from Tolkien"

Ryan Darr (Yale Divinity School)
"Dystopian Hope on the Water"

Jurij Dobravec (Independent Scholar)
"Contemplation of Natural Order in Lo cunto de li cunti (1634–1636) by Giambattista Basile"

Amy Erickson (Iliff School of Theology)
"When the Land Keeps Time: Multispecies Temporality and Nonhuman Agency in Priestly Literature"

Moderating: Catharina de Pater (Wageningen University and Research)

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Mythologies and Cultural Memory

Bhumshik Gyal (Rice University)
"Nature as Gnosis: Exploring the Concept of Nature within Tibetan Buddhist Worldviews"

Karsten Schulz (University of Groningen)
"The Role of Myth in Societal Transformations Toward Sustainability"

Joseph A. P. Wilson (University of Massachusetts, Amherst)
"Volcanism and Dene Ethnogenesis: Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Insights"

Moderating: Andi Alfian, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

3:00—3:15 **Break**

Conference Schedule

3:15–4:45 – Concurrent Session 4

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Animals and Religions

Although the field of animal studies has a certain history, the emergence of multispecies studies has recently given it new momentum. In addition to studies focusing on the representations and roles attributed to animals and the ways they are treated, more recent approaches examine their place within the broader category of living beings, their interactions with humans and other non-humans, as well as their sentient experience, their agency, and their position within intersectional power relations. In connection with religion, these approaches intersect with classical themes such as symbolic and totemic figures, sacrifice and hunting, animism and shamanism, taboos and ritual prescriptions, purity and pollution, as well as existential questions of life and death, violence and suffering, ethics and justice.

The contributors to this double panel come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and explore the intersections between religious studies and animal studies through one or more of these themes (the list is not exhaustive), situating their analyses within the broader context of contemporary polycrises and the erosion of established equilibria. For example, if we consider the treatment of the animal world in religions, what visions emerge from it? To what extent and in what ways is it articulated with the notion of nature? How is "nature" represented in these contexts? How can the study of animals in religions help us better understand the parameters of current ecological challenges? Around which practices are relationships between humans and non-humans defined, and what ritual innovations make it possible to reconfigure these relationships? The aim of the panel is to offer a variety of disciplinary perspectives on the presence and role of animals in religions as well as their relationships with nature in their own understanding.

Philippe Genequand (Université de Montréal)
"Liminal Creatures, Ontological Divides: Human Exceptionalism in Medieval Learned Culture"

Anne Létourneau (Université de Montréal)
"Donkeying or Divinizing?: Biblical Jennies and their Prophetic Embodiment in the Light of Multispecies Ethnography"

Denise Lombardi (École Pratique des Hautes Études)
"Totemic Animals and Mediumship: Reconfigurations of Human / Non-Human Relations in Neo-Shamanic Seminars in Europe"

Géraldine Mossière (Université de Montréal)
"Reconnecting to (One's Own-) Nature through Consultations with Horses: An Ethnographic Study of Neo-shamanism"

Organized and moderated by: Anne Létourneau and Géraldine Mossière

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

The Political Ecology of Relational Ontologies

Andi Alfian (Syracuse University)
"Following Crocodiles": Multispecies Memory and the Exclusion of Indigenous Religious Traditions in Sulawesi, Indonesia"

Virgile Delmas (Université de Lausanne)
"Navigating Ontologies: The Transformation of Lakota Ceremonies in Europe"

Lea Matthaei (University of Oslo)
"The Fosen Case in Norway: Green Colonialism, Legal Non-Implementation, and Sámi Relational Epistemologies"

Moderating: Amy Whitehead, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Fluid Foundations and Lived Relationships

Mina Çınar (Koç University's Research Center)
"From Venice to Amsterdam: Hydrocolonialism and the Dissemination of Protestant Eco-Apocalyptic Ideas in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean"

Rita Mancini (Ca' Foscari University)
"What Happens to the Environment When Social Change and Religious Institutionalisation Coincide? The Case of the Northeastern Himalaya"

Megnaa Mehtta (University College London)
"The Banglascapes of Venice: From the Bengal Delta to the Venice Lagoon"

Mark Peterson (University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee)
"Eroding Foundations: In Venice and Environmental Ethics"

Moderating: Jeremy Sorgen, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

4:45—5:00 **Break**

5:00—6:30 | Concurrent Session 5

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Troubling (Stable) Foundations: Engaging Liquefaction through Decolonial Lenses

The conference theme of "Foundations and Fluidity" invites reflection on how stable structures are liquefying under the pressures of the contemporary polycrisis. This panel complicates that framing by arguing that the analytical categories foundational to Religion and Ecology—"gender," "religion," and "ecology"—were never stable universals to begin with. They are constructs forged through colonial histories (Lugones 2007; Chidester 2014; Escobar 2020) and sustained through hierarchical dualisms (culture/nature, reason/emotion, male/female) that have long justified what Rosemary Ruether identified as the "logic of domination" (Ruether 1975; Plumwood 1993): the systemic subordination of women and the exploitation of the Earth through the same ideological architecture. Through a decolonial ecofeminist lens, the panel reframes liquefaction not as a symptom of modern crisis but as a necessary intervention that renders visible the coloniality these categories conceal.

The panel progresses through four thematic movements. First, we destabilize the conceptual foundations by interrogating how colonial history shaped the categories of "gender," "religion," and "ecology," revealing their fluid and co-constitutive character. Second, we ground this theoretical troubling in radical materiality through the communitarian feminist concept of *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) (Carvajal 2024; Sabsay 2025), which asserts that the sovereignty of women's bodies and the health of the land constitute a single, indissoluble ecological struggle. Third, we examine what happens when religion itself liquefies on the ground: in postwar El Salvador, the land acts as an active agent compelling a Pentecostal megachurch pastor and an ecofeminist activist lawyer into a provisional ecological alliance, demonstrating that solidarity can emerge through a praxis of *acompañamiento* (accompaniment) (Medina, 2023) rather than ideological agreement. Fourth, we turn the lens toward the scholar's own positionality, exploring how Indigenous-led cultural fire practices in California challenge non-Indigenous researchers to move from extractive methods toward relational accountability, transforming the researcher into a "self-in-coalition" (Lugones 2010) committed to *buen convivir*, the collective practice of living well within our shared, diverse environments (Pérez Orozco 2022). Together, the panel moves from the theoretical liquefaction of colonial categories to the radical, material reality of the land and the bodies that defend it, proposing a decolonial praxis that refuses to separate the symbolic from the material, the spiritual from the political, or the scholar from the struggle.

Nina Hoel (University of Oslo / University of Cape Town)
"Liquefying Foundations"

Juan Martinez Benavides (Drew University)
"Liquefying Religion/Ideology through Land Agency and Unlikely Alliances in Postwar El Salvador"

Elaine Nogueira-Godsey (Drew University)
"Liquefying Western Assumptions: Embodied Spiritualities and the Defense of Cuerpo-Territorio"

Sarah Pike (California State University, Chico)
"Ritualizing Reparations and Decolonization in California's Prescribed Fire Movement"

Conference Schedule

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Historic and Contemporary Ecotheological Resources

Piercamillo Falivene (Italian School of Religious Studies)
"Neoliberal Paradigms and Ecological Crisis: The Orthodox Response of Bartholomew I"

Alfredo Gabrielli (Independent Scholar)
"The Patriarch Bartholomew I and the Theological Foundation of Ecology as the Attempt to Resist to Contemporary Fluidity"

Jakub Kolacek (Charles University)
"Islamic Environmentalism and Islamism: Investigating Intertwined Historical Trajectories"

Laura Wickström (Polin Institute, Åbo Akademi University)
"Four Contemporary Voices of Eco-Islam on Climate Change"

Moderating: Joe Wiebe (University of Alberta)

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Intersubjectivity and the Ontological Turn

Marco Fiorletta (Universität Wien)
"From Ground to Flow: Hölderlin, Language, and the Ontological Turn"

Miriam Hamburger (University of California, Santa Barbara)
"Time and Indigenous Knowledges in the Ontological Turn"

Matthäus Leidenfrost (Freie Universität Berlin)
"Becoming Prey: Subjectivity Transformed through Animal Encounters"

Michael York (Independent Scholar)
"The Theological Foundation Question: Are Gods, Elves, Fairies, and AI Agents Skyhooks or Cranes?"

Moderating: Mark Peterson

Conference Schedule

Wednesday, 14 October

9:00—10:30| Concurrent Session 6

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Mediating Fluid Worlds

This panel examines mediation as a constitutive condition of more-than-human religion. Taking the conference theme of fluidity as a point of departure, it considers how relations among humans, deities, spirits, animals, landscapes, and elemental forces are at once unstable and enduring. These relations do not precede form. They are made perceptible, binding, and repeatable through mediating practices that include ritual performance, sonic articulation, material assemblage, and spatial emplacement. Bringing into conversation work on South and Southeast Asian and North American ritual ecologies, sacred landscapes, ethnomusicology, and Indigenous histories of place, the panel asks how mediation generates the conditions under which fluid relations become socially consequential and historically durable.

The panel contributes to a growing body of scholarship that treats more-than-human worlds as historically situated formations rather than abstract ontological claims (Ingold 2000; Kohn 2013; Tsing 2015; Descola 2013). Within this frame, relations are not given but emerge through practices that bind heterogeneous beings into shared fields of interaction. At the same time, the panel builds on work in the study of religion that foregrounds mediation as central to the production of presence, authority, and experience (Keane 2007; Meyer 2015). By placing these conversations in dialogue, the panel discusses the analytics of mediation that attends to substance, movement, and atmosphere. Water, in particular, recurs across the papers as a medium that both enables and unsettles relations. It carries memory, anchors claims, distributes presence, and reconfigures space. Yet its movements resist containment, complicating efforts to stabilize authority or fix meaning. This tension between circulation and grounding brings into focus the problem of foundation. Rather than treating foundations as stable bases, the panel approaches them as effects of repeated mediations that hold relations in place while remaining open to disruption.

Arya Adityan (Florida State University)
"Tidal Mediations: Water, Paddanas, and Bhūtakola on India's South-West Coast"

Elizabeth Cecil (Florida State University)
"The Return of the Eaglewood Goddess"

Kim Fromkin (Florida State University)
"Sewer Lines and Sacred Histories: Rethinking the Water Systems of Wakulla Springs"

Balakrishnan Raghavan (University of California, Santa Cruz)
"Worlding With Hers: The Hill, Tank, Turmeric, and the Fragrance of Sound in Karnataka's Jogappa Rituals"

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Religion, Spirituality, and Waterscapes

Claudio Carvalhaes (Union Theological Seminary in New York)
"Tamanduateí River - New Fluidities for New Foundations"

Claartje Ille (University of Basel)
"Still Waters Run Deep: Protestant Reactions to the 'Schweizerhalle Disaster' and the Ecological Disaster along the Rhine (1986)"

Victoria Machado (Rollins College)
"Painting New Perspectives: How Artists are Ushering in New Materialism with Florida's Water"

Elia Maggang (Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana)
"Inter-contextuality as Fluid Foundation for Eco-Spirituality: A Christian Perspective from Indonesian Indigenous Archipelagic Everydayness"

Moderating: Joe Witt (University of Tennessee)

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Plants, Animals, and New Materialisms

Carrie Dohe (University of Cologne)
"From Foundations to Fluidity: Relational Theology and the Reconfiguration of Human-Animal Worlds"

Mark Larrimore (The New School)
"Arboreal Flux: How the Accelerating Flows of Forests Can Ground Us in a Time of Climate Weirding"

Mario Orospe Hernando (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México)
"From Living Matter to Raw Material: Theology, Economy, and the Secularization of Nature"

Mio Takahashi (Université libre de Bruxelles)
"Ethnobotanical Landscapes: Reframing the Visible and Invisible Relationships between Plants and People in the Religious Culture in Japan"

Moderating: Catharina de Pater (Wageningen University and Research)

10:30—11:00 Break

Conference Schedule

11:00am—12:30pm | Concurrent Session 7

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

The Anthropocene and the Future

kai glenney (Boston University)
"How to Stay Fluid: Eco-Accompaniment Ethic as Resistance"

Julius Malin (University of Basel)
"Praying for the River: Religious Ritual and Ecological Grief in Appalachia's Pipeline Conflict"

Natalia Valdivieso Kastner (University of Bristol)
"A Greener Faith: Evangelising Nature in the Anthropocene"

Wendy Wiseman (University of California, Santa Barbara)
"Post-Anthropocene Sea of Marmara: The Mother of God, Jellyfish, and Ambivalent Iconophilia"

Moderating: Kim Carfore (University of San Francisco)

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Community and Activism

Matt Hartman (Independent Scholar)
"Religion and Climate Communication Building Community Solidarity in Southern California"

Alba Siguero Lizano (Complutense University of Madrid)
"Between System and Healing: How Holistic Visions of the Planet Travel Between Science, Spirituality, and Climate Activism"

Joe Witt (University of Tennessee)
"Rebuilding on Unstable Foundations: Memory, Affect, and Place in Appalachian Just Transition Movements"

Annie Delville (Independent Scholar)
"Praying the Earth: Faith, Land, and Ecological Life in a French Rural Community"

Moderating: Evan Berry (Arizona State University)

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Restoring Overlooked Histories and Constructing Hopeful Futures

Giovanni Franceschini (Università degli studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia – Università per Stranieri di Perugia)
"The Franciscanization of the Umbrian Landscape between Medievalism and Ecological Imagination (1900–1979)"

Julia Itel (University of Fribourg) and **Yael Dansac** (Université libre de Bruxelles)
"Ecospirituality as Soft Ecology: Non-Militant Forms of Environmental Engagement in Francophone Europe"

Kimberly Kirner (California State University, Northridge)
"Developing Place-Based Knowledge and Psychosocial Support for Environmental Action through the Relational Religion of Druidry"

Lienna Rowlatt (International Network for Training, Education, and Research on Culture)
"Connecting Climate and Religion: (Re)Introducing the Hybrid Interactive Model of Socio-Economic Metabolism"

Moderating: Elaine Noguiera-Godsey

————————————Lunch | 12:30—2:00pm ————————————

Meals are not provided by ISSRNC—See the Conference Welcome Packet for a list of nearby dining options.

Conference Schedule

2:00—3:30pm | Concurrent Session 8

Session A | Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

On The Myth of Sustainable Cities: Critical Engagement with Stephanie Pincetl

Author of the definitive account of the political history of California land use, the recent Los Angeles County Sustainability Plan, and architect of the UCLA Energy Atlas, urban geographer Stephanie Pincetl has written a new book on the future of cities. The new book *The Myth of Sustainable Cities: Losing the Holocene, Cities, and their Future in a Time of Climate Change* (Routledge) presents a visionary tour de force on how we arrived at our present moment and what the future of cities might be on our planet. Sobering analysis from her materialist reflection, the book begins with a big history through the development of civilization followed by a deep grappling with capitalism's naturalization and how urbanists over the last few centuries have drawn from both natural and social forces to build our current world. Dependent upon twentieth-century European political dominance for governance and Western science in the building of the modern nation state, the book offers a robust way of rethinking science's role in society, its tetheredness to technology, and a shift to work to better understand Earth systems and life for understanding more basic elements of kinship and interdependence, incorporating critical scholarship, religious practice, and a return to peasantry and rescaling of agriculture through practical examples from research and recent experience in California for re-founding our futures.

Chaired by theologian and cultural historian Jason Sexton, this Author-Meets-Critics session maps onto the 2026 ISSRNC conference theme of "Foundations and Fluidity" by bringing together three experts for their critical engagement with the book, both offering critical commentary as well as possibilities for extending the conversation. Norwegian-based German theologian Marion Grau, drawing from theoretical-philosophical and activist lenses and her own work theorizing energy, will offer the first response, discussing relevance to Pincetl's work to modern Europe as well as the relevance of Pincetl's work to ethics. This will be followed by the South African eco-theologian Ernst Conradie with reflections from an African perspective on social justice, governance, and sustainability, and how Pincetl's work relates to current and future courses in Africa and the Global Souths. And religion and nature-spirituality scholar Bron Taylor will reflect on how the book's argument fits within the discourse of religion and spirituality along with its relevance to the future of California and North American more broadly. Pincetl will offer responses to each of her critics followed by audience interaction.

Ernst Conradie (University of the Western Cape)

Marion Grau (MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society)

Bron Taylor (University of Florida)

Respondent: Stephanie Pincetl (University of California, Los Angeles)

Moderating: Jason Sexton (University of California, Los Angeles)

Session B | Sala Geymonat (1st Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Methods and Reflections on the Field

Evan Berry (Arizona State University)
"Theoretical Foundations and Disciplinary Fluidity in the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture"

Natasha Chawla (University of Oxford)
"Rethink and Refeel: The Knowledge-Action Gap at Twenty"

Tanhum Yoreh (University of Toronto)
"New Approaches to Measuring Environmental Action in Faith Communities"

Cristina Dragomir (New York University)
"Network-Spiritual Environmentalism: Reconfiguring Foundations and Fluidity in Global Soil Governance"

Moderating: Mina Çınar, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

Session C | Sala Milone (3rd Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Embodied Worlds: Ritual, Relation, and the More-than-Human

Matthew Elia (Saint Louis University)
"'A Terrible Rawness of Nerves': Environmental Ethics and the Difficulty of Reality"

Nour Farra Haddad (Lebanese University)
"Water as a Vector of Inter-religious Dialogue since Antiquity: Baraka, Pilgrimages and Devotional Practices"

Francesca Ciancimino Howell (Naropa University)
"Finding Kin and Coping in an Era of Climate Anxiety: Animism, Community, and the Arts"

Sarah McFarland Taylor (Northwestern University)
"Viewing Life Between the Ears: An Equine Cosmology of Resistance and Resilience in the AI Age"

Moderating: Yael Dansac, ISSRNC Member-at-Large

3:30—4:00 **Break**

Conference Schedule

4:00—5:30pm | ISSRNC Closing Plenary Session

Sala Morelli (Ground Floor), Malcanton Marcorà, Dorsoduro

Adaptive Scholarship and the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture

The ISSRNC's 20th anniversary conference theme on foundations and fluidity invites the field to reckon with what has held and what has shifted over two decades of scholarship at the intersection of religion, nature, and culture. This ISSRNC organized plenary session takes that invitation seriously by turning the question of fluidity inward: not just toward the ecosystems, cosmologies, and political formations that the field studies, but toward the field itself.

This session proposes a collective reflection on how the study of religion, nature, and culture is adapting and what that adaptation requires by posing a generative question: What kinds of scholars and scholarship are needed now? This question arises from a specific set of pressures. The field has matured alongside ecological disruption, decolonial critique, and the fragmentation of disciplinary homes in religious studies. It has diversified its methods—absorbing community-engaged, place-based, and land-based frameworks—even as the institutional conditions that sustain research programs have grown more precarious. New forms of interdisciplinarity have opened the field's borders in productive ways, but have also raised questions about what anchors it. Expanding expectations around public engagement have transformed what counts as legitimate scholarly work without always clarifying what such work requires of researchers and institutions.

Whitney Bauman (Florida International University)

Nikki Hoskins (Harvard Divinity School)

Laurel Kearns (Drew University)

Victoria Machado (Rollins College)

Elaine Nogueira-Godsey (Drew University)

Moderating: Kim Carfore (University of San Francisco) and
Joe Wiebe (University of Alberta)

5:30pm **Conference Closing Remarks**

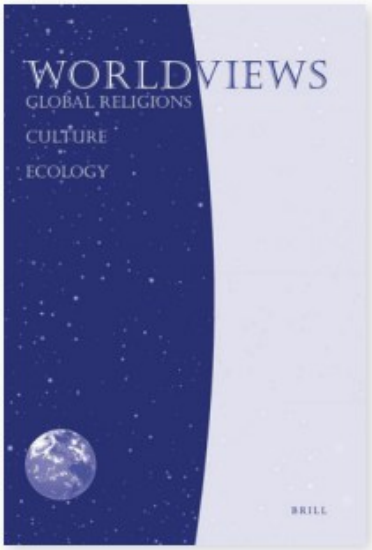
Lucas Johnston, ISSRNC President

5:45—6:30pm **Full Membership Business Meeting** (Optional)

Each year, our conference ends with a Business Meeting where we invite ideas for future collaborations, meeting venues, events, and anything else you wish to raise. We hope to see you there!

Worldviews

Religions, Culture, and Ecology



2025 Impact Factor: 0,4
5 Year Impact Factor: 0,6

Worldviews: *Religions, Culture, and Ecology* is an international academic journal that studies the relationships between religion, culture, and ecology worldwide. The journal addresses the role of religious and cultural worldviews in relation to ecological values, ethics, and practices, and the transition towards more ecologically just and sustainable forms of planetary living.

The journal welcomes submissions from all environmental humanities and interpretive social science disciplines that focus on global religions, indigenous lifeways, or emerging worldviews, but does not publish quantitative social science articles, or articles that presume knowledge of, or adherence to, a specific faith perspective, due to the diverse backgrounds of our readership.

Online submission: Articles for publication in *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* can be submitted online through *Editorial Manager*, please go to: **editorialmanager.com/wo**.

For more details on online submission, please visit our dedicated page: **https://brill.com/page/resources_submittingonline**.

Download Author Instructions (PDF)

Special issue *Worldviews*, Call for papers

The Planetary Costs of Nationalism
Special Issue of *Worldviews*

The arbitrary geo-political boundaries that cut our lands and oceans into various separate entities have very real material costs. In a time when these boundaries are being reinforced and reified, nations tend to spend more and more resources protecting the fragile border precisely because of how vulnerable it is.

The scale of the problems created by global climate change and the globalization of extractive, neo-liberal capitalism can only addressed from a planetary context. We are, all of us, human and more than human life, planetary citizens. Our emergent, entangled existence makes up the very planet of which we are a part. We can't escape this planetary entanglement. As Latour argued, the "critical zone" (2020) is the biosphere, and we can't escape that context without losing the very thing which makes us human.

Special Issue Editor: **Whitney Bauman**

This special issue of Worldviews is seeking essays that address these and other matters relating to the planetary costs of nationalism. Please contact the special issue editor, **Whitney Bauman**, wbauman@fiu.edu if interested.

Full essays are expected around May 1 2027.

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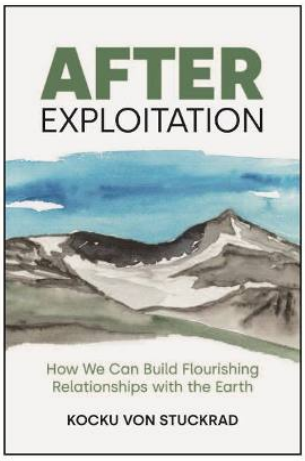

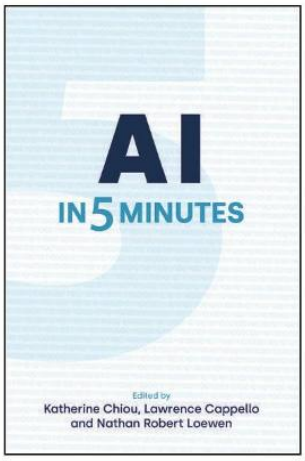

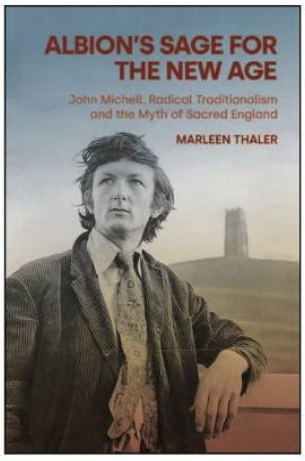

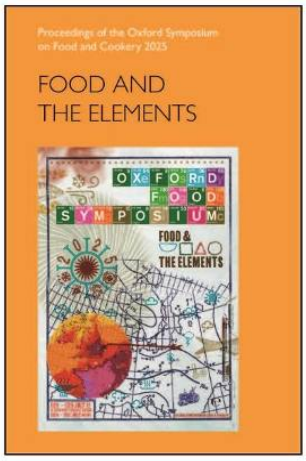

FORTHCOMING TITLES

From Equinox Publishing

After Exploitation: How We Can Build Flourishing Relationships with the Earth

Kocku von Stuckrad

The ecological, economic, political, and social challenges of the twenty-first century call for innovative responses and concerted effort. *After Exploitation* takes a "relational turn" that no longer sees humans as masters of the world, but integrates them into a complex network of relationships with the nonhuman world.

Originally published in German in 2024, *After Exploitation* has already proven to be essential reading for all those interested in explanations and solutions to climate change, the role of art and literature in scientific and social transformation, as well as global and environmental justice.

2026 224pp 234 x 156mm illus.
hb ISBN 9781800509245 / pb ISBN 9781800509252
eBook ISBN 9781800509269 / ePub ISBN 9781800509276

AI in Five Minutes

Edited by Katherine Chiou, Lawrence Cappello and Nathan Robert Loewen

This reader-friendly introduction to the many topics touched by artificial intelligence offers brief essays on over 50 questions that span the areas of culture, education, technology, business, politics, entertainment, governance, and ethics. Ideal for both classroom use and personal study, this book helps readers examine the implications and assumptions in common questions about generative AI. Readers will see how scholars from a variety of fields relate today's questions to their expertise with long-standing scholarship and science on artificial intelligence. Their concise and thoughtful responses conclude with suggestions for further reading.

2026 256pp 216 x 140mm
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Albion's Sage for the New Age: John Michell, Radical Traditionalism and the Myth of Sacred England

Marleen Thaler

John Michell influenced a swath of contemporary alternative religious belief. Yet many who are downstream from his ideas today are only vaguely familiar with the man himself.

This eccentric English writer and esoteric theorist ranged widely in his reading, drawing upon Plato, William Blake, Dion Fortune, and many others to weave a 1960s tapestry of UFOs, ley lines, megaliths, and lost ancient knowledge. His seminal ideas shape nearly all subsequent theories about Earth mysteries, sacred place, sacred geometry, Avalon, and the special role of Glastonbury. This book examines Michell's sources and explains the appeal of his ideas to world views ranging from conservative Traditionalism to progressive ecofeminism.

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Food and the Elements: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2025

Edited by Mark McWilliams

Grounded in a number of different disciplines, writers from around the globe examine not only the four elements of classical Western philosophy — fire, water, earth, and air — but also the elements of flavour, of chemistry, of culture, of care. In short, all the building blocks of the culinary world.

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