'Politics of Religious Knowledge and Ignorance'

Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR) Conference, Victoria College, University of Toronto, May 21-23, 2019

Knowledge has always been a central concern of the anthropology of religion, touching on questions of rationality, myth, ethnographic evidence, and local forms of observation and explanation. Earlier approaches to anthropological knowledge have been productively challenged by important gendered, material, affective, cognitive, ethical, and ontological turns in recent decades. The time is ripe to re-examine the status of knowledge in our sub-discipline, and simultaneously to address increased scholarly interest in regimes of ignorance, where supposed lack of knowledge—in parallel with debates about 'non-religion'—must often be understood not as absence but as ideologically charged presence.

This conference invites contributors to examine these and related questions at a time when the social sciences as forms of knowledge are being placed under political scrutiny, but when new opportunities are also emerging. Given the continued role of religion in the public realms of most societies, how might the anthropology of religion—alongside or distinct from theology and the natural sciences—articulate an equally public voice? We invite papers and panels covering, but certainly not restricted to:

- Knowledge and/or ignorance as regimes of religious power and authority

- Connections and distinctions between knowledge, ignorance, secrecy, and the un-knowable

- The prophetic voice in the wilderness?: who do anthropologists of religion speak to, how do they speak, and who listens?

- Competing forms of reality: 'mythical', 'alternative', and 'fake'?

- Post-colonial politics of knowledge production about religion

- Indigenous forms of 'religious' knowledge and the limits of anthropological imagination

- The ethics of knowledge creation and dissemination about religion

- Religious languages and the circulation of knowledge and ignorance

- Ritual as knowledge-making or knowledge-masking

- Relations between religious, spiritual, magical, and/or scientific modes of (un-)knowing

- (In-)commensurabilities between anthropology, theology, philosophy, psychology

- Queering knowledges in the anthropology of religion

- Gendered spaces of religious knowledge and ignorance

- Questions of race, religion, and varieties of knowing or not knowing

- Embodying knowledge and/or ignorance

- Religious planning and infrastructures: temporalities, aspirations, knowledges

- The impact of mobilities and transnational networks on religious forms of knowing and not-knowing

General inquiries about the conference should be sent to simon.coleman@utoronto.ca.

Proposed abstracts should be sent to chandman@austin.utexas.edu by **January 21, 2019 at the latest, preferably earlier**.

We accept individual paper proposals or proposals for single or double panels. The format for all panel proposals is 500 words and for all papers is 250 words, including title. Panel proposals should include both a general panel abstract and abstracts for individual papers. Please do not include references.

Layout is single-spaced and font is Times New Roman, 12pt. All proposals should include name and email address(es) of author(s). Single panels are 105 minutes and double are 210. We recommend 15 minutes for each presentation, and that you include time for discussion. Proposed panels should include suggested Chair(s). We also accept more flexible panels, include author-meets-critics and roundtable discussions, or another format you may wish to suggest. Within reason, we do not intend to restrict multiple roles of participants. If you wish to advertise a panel proposal on the SAR list-serve contact simon.coleman@utoronto.ca in the first instance.

Please consider including people who are not currently members of SAR in proposals.

We intend to offer small travel scholarships to graduate students, based on the program committee's assessment of the best student abstracts. Please indicate if you are a graduate student and wish for your abstract to be put into the competition.

We intend also to offer some mentoring sessions for graduate students: if you have ideas for topics to be covered please email saliha.chattoo@mail.utoronto.ca and simon.coleman@utoronto.ca.

The conference will take place during Ramadan (May 5-June 4), and we are keen to ensure that members of the Muslim faith will be accommodated in every way possible. We hope to provide more details closer to the time, but please do contact us (simon.coleman@utoronto.ca) with any concerns and suggestions you may have.

Registration details will in due course go through the American Anthropological Association website. Excellent inexpensive accommodation will be available at Victoria College itself, and you should consider booking as early as possible after acceptance of your proposal to guarantee a place.