Negotiating Religion: Inquiries into the History and Present of Religious Accommodation

Workshop Series

A cooperation between:

- Research Initiative Religion and Society @ UCL’s Grand Challenge of Intercultural Interaction
- UCL European Institute

Project outline and coordination:
Dr Claire Dwyer, Dr François Guesnet, Dr Myriam Hunter-Henin, Prof Cécile Laborde, Dr Robert Morris, Dr Uta Staiger
RATIONALE

Throughout history, religious belief and religious affiliation have been extremely powerful factors in shaping human societies. They have defined individual identities and communities, governed the relationship between commonwealths, and inspired human creativity. Religious hopes and fears have also contributed to the unleashing of conflict and violence. For an overwhelming and growing majority of people living on our planet today, religious belief answers questions central to the human existence and allows it to cope with difficult or decisive moments as well as with the rhythm of everyday life. Over the past generations, however, stark regional and social differences have emerged regarding the place and impact of religious belief. In a world marked more than ever before by migration and global connectivity, societies which tend towards religious neutrality or indifference need to define anew their relationship to communities with strong religious commitments. In the past as well as today, the relationship between individual and community, between different confessions and religious communities, between these communities and the state, are negotiated in complex processes of moderation, sometimes involving conflict or even violence.

This series of four workshops presents and debates the complex processes through which religious communities create or defend their place in a given commonwealth, both in history and in our world today. The focus is thus on the communities’ ability to formulate and present their claims, to identify potential spokespeople and their addressees, to secure their institutions and assert their physical and political presence, as well as on the epistemological, political and social conditions facilitating or complicating processes of negotiation. The workshops thus intend to focus on the agency of both sides in processes of negotiation, broadly understood as all societal and political interactions that not only concern a religious community but directly involve it. The workshops hopes to engage UCL’s community in a discussion about what London’s global university could or should contribute to a reflection of these issues as a leading institution in research and in higher education, and as an academic community.

SERIES OUTLINE

The series discusses the relationship between religion and society in four areas of investigation.

The first workshop Negotiating Religion: European Legacies, European Challenges addresses the history of religious conflict and religious accommodation, gauge the impact of religious scepticism and secularization in Europe, and engage a group of outstanding experts and the public in a discussion on the prospects for Religious Studies at UCL.

The second workshop Accommodating Religious Communities in Contemporary Europe: Constitutional and Philosophical Dimensions investigates both the tremendous impact of religious tradition and thought on contemporary constitutions and constitutional aspects in accommodating religious diversity.

The third workshop Negotiating Religion in Urban Space investigates the role of spatial integration of religious communities, documenting their intention to negotiate their insertion by spatial practices, such as processions, architecture, celebrations, festivals.

Because litigation is a privileged arena in attempting to limit or assert the status of religious communities, the fourth and final workshop Legal Frameworks: Schools and Religious Freedom will explore the impact of legal arguments in shaping the relationship between religious communities and society.
OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this series of workshops is to stimulate a debate about the complex relationship between religion and society. Throughout their history, European commonwealths have been shaped by religious identity, community, and conflict. Constitutions and legal systems to this very day are deeply affected by religious traditions. Secularization has reduced religious tension within Western societies. However, these find their spiritual and cultural identity challenged by communities marked by stronger religious commitment, notably communities belonging to the world of Islam. Instead of reducing present day conflicts to essentialised notions of religious community, the organizers of this series of workshops hope to stimulate a reflection about the impact of religious legacies in European history. They also wish to contribute to a more precise understanding of the role of the multilayered processes of moderation and negotiation in the shaping of contemporary societies. It is the intention of the organizers to publish the proceedings of this series of workshops, preferably in cooperation with a scholarly journal.

POTENTIAL OUTPUT

At present, the academic coordinators envisage a threefold potential output of the workshops and the discussion they hopefully engender. Thus, a publication of selected presentations as well as comments and reactions will be made public as electronic resource, including (edited) podcasts. A publication as a collected volume with an academic publisher is intended. The potential perspectives for a MA Religion and Society at UCL will be discussed at a consultative meeting after this series of workshops. In case of appropriate support, the outlines of such a programme will be developed in consultations with interested colleagues, departments and faculties. Furthermore, the academic coordinators see the potential for developing an executive training course addressed to enterprises and administrative agencies addressing issues of religious diversity in professional contexts.
WORKSHOP 1: Negotiating Religion: European Legacies, European Challenges

Date: 23 November 2011, 3-7 pm
Venue: Chadwick Lecture Theatre G08, UCL

The workshop opens with a reflection on the relationship of public reasoning and religious commitment, discussing the role of forgiveness in economic relations and the impact the notion of the journey of the soul has for setting health care priorities. Four lectures reflect on historical examples of religious communities and attitudes negotiating their place in state and society. The concluding panel discussion should reflect on UCL’s specific tradition to refrain from theological investigations, and the College’s potential mission in researching and teaching the broad range of issues involved in the investigation of the relationship of religion and society.

Academic lead: Dr François Guesnet (Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Reader in Modern Jewish History at UCL, and Research Initiative Religion & Society, Grand Challenges, UCL)

3 pm: Welcome

Prof David Price, UCL Vice-Provost (Research)

Keynote

Prof Albert Weale FBA (UCL School of Public Policy):
Can There be a Public Reason of the Heart?

4 pm: European Legacies, European Challenges

Prof David d'Avray FBA (UCL History):
Religious and Secular Values - A Historical Sociology of the West

Prof Benjamin Kaplan (UCL History):
Negotiating Religious Difference in Borderland Settings

Dr François Guesnet (UCL Hebrew and Jewish Studies):
Speaking for Religious Minorities: Jews and Protestants in the 18th century

Prof Helen A Hackett (UCL English)
Seventeenth-century English Catholics at home and abroad – the case of the Aston Thimelby circle

Chair: tba

6 pm: Round table: Envisioning Religion & Society at a Global University

Prof Albert Weale FBA (UCL School of Public Policy)
Dr Charis Boutieri (Theology and Religious Studies, King's College)
Dr François Guesnet (UCL Hebrew and Jewish Studies)

Chair: Dr Uta Staiger (UCL European Institute)
WORKSHOP II: Accommodating Religious Communities in Contemporary Europe - Constitutional and Philosophical Dimensions

Date: 10 February 2012, 10am-5pm
Venue: Old Refectory, UCL

This workshop will examine the character of the contemporary European state in its relation with religions and religious pluralism, and the general policies developed by states to address religious affairs. With an increasing diversity in attitudes towards religious commitments manifest in today’s Europe, liberal democratic governments are increasingly under pressure to define how they should accommodate their citizens qua religious believers or non-believers. The key questions which the state – in principle regarded perhaps by most as a secular and neutral authority – faces regard the extent to which policies are to address religious communities and their demands. How are majority religions – established churches – enshrined within constitutional settlements and what implications does that have for the secularist attributes of modern European states? Is a minimum common denominator of liberal toleration of all religions sufficient? Can the state truly aspire to a universally accepted neutrality or will its secularity be regarded by the religious as fundamentally hostile to religions whatever is claimed to the contrary? Should the state attribute special rights to religious groups, particularly where they are minority communities facing assimilationist pressures, or grant formal recognition to them?

Academic leads: Prof Cécile Laborde (UCL School of Public Policy), Dr Robert Morris (UCL Constitution Unit), Dr Uta Staiger (UCL European Institute)

10:00-11:15  Six degrees of separation? Variants of religious establishment in Europe
Speakers: Mr John Madeley (LSE), Dr Robert Morris
Discussants: Professor Jim Beckford (Warwick), Lucian Leustean (Aston)

11:15-11:45  Coffee break

11:45-13:00  Testing the Limits: Religion and Constitutional Neutrality
Chair: Prof Cécile Laborde (UCL)
Speakers: Lorenzo Zucca (King’s College London)
‘Exploring the Neutrality Dilemma’
Saladin Meckled-Garcia (UCL)
‘What is Just Establishment?’
Discussant: Jonathan Quong (Manchester)

13:00-14:00  Lunch

14:00-15:15  Justifying Religious Exemptions
Chair: John Horton (Keele)
Speakers: Stuart White (Oxford University)
‘Religious Exemptions: An Egalitarian Demand?’
Jonathan Seglow (Royal Holloway)
‘Accommodating Religion: The Case of Legal Exemptions’
Discussant: Cécile Laborde (UCL).

15:15-15:45  Coffee break

15:45-17:00  Boundaries of Toleration: Moderating Multiple Religious Jurisdictions
Speaker: Prof Gillian Douglas (Cardiff)
Discussants: [Mark Hill QC], Frank Cranmer (Durham)
This one-day workshop will investigate the spatial incorporation of religious communities both through architecture and the built environment and through spatialised performances such as processions and festivals. This workshop will be organised around the two themes of (a) the architecture and the built environment and (b) performance and spatialised practice.

Questions which will be explored in this workshop include: How are new religious buildings incorporated into contemporary urban spaces? What continuities are there with the emergence of religious architecture in earlier times? What kinds of challenges are raised in terms of planning regulations, architectural norms or popular protest? What significance do religious buildings and other markers in the urban landscape have for different religious communities? How are existing and new forms of religious spatial practice (processions, festivals, pilgrimage) incorporated into the urban environment? What continuities are there between past and present processes and practices? How do municipal authorities incorporate or even celebrate religious spatial performances? What kinds of transformations of urban space are produced by religious spatial practices?

**Academic lead:** Dr Claire Dwyer (UCL Geography)

**10-1pm:** **Negotiating Religion in Urban Space (1): Architecture and the Built Environment**

- Dr Sharmin Kadish (Jewish Heritage Trust)
- Ali Mangera (Mangera Yves Architectural Practice)
- Dr John Zavros (Manchester)/ Multi-faith centre project
- Dr Claire Dwyer (UCL, Geography)

Discussant: Dr Richard Gale (Cardiff)

**2-5pm:** **Negotiating Religion in Urban Space (2): Performance and spatialised practice**

- Dr Alana Harris (Oxford University)
- Dr David Garbin (Surrey University)
- Dr Ann David (Roehampton University)
- Professor Sophie Watson (Open University)

Discussant: Professor Kim Knott (Leeds University)
WORKSHOP IV. Legal Frameworks: Schools and Religious Freedom

Date: 12 June 2012
Venue: Moot Court Room, Bentham House, UCL

Common thread: How and to what extent do legal frameworks- judicial reasoning, legal processes (excluding constitutional frameworks, focus of another workshop) allow a space for negotiating religious issues?

Does this negotiation take place with religious communities or directly with the individuals who claim that their religious freedoms have been infringed? What are the main actors of the negotiating process? Who benefits from it? What are the risks of «negotiating»? Is «negotiation» the best way to reach a fair compromise between conflicting rights and claims? Is negotiating with religious freedoms any different to negotiation in respect of other human rights? What special features/dangers derive from the school context in which this negotiation takes place? What does teaching in a secular institution imply?

These crucial questions will be addressed through analysis of topical case law and legal scholarship under four headings: religious symbols; religious education and teaching content; religion and staff; faith schools.

Academic lead: Dr Myriam Hunter-Henin (Laws, UCL)

9.15: Registration
9.45: Welcome

I. Seeing Religion: Religious Symbols and Clothing
Speaker: Dr Myriam Hunter-Henin UCL
Discussant 1: Professor Patrick Weil CNRS/Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne University
Discussant 2: Professor Maleiha Malik King’s College London

II. Teaching Religion: Religious Education, Religious Worship and General Syllabus
Speakers: Professor Norman Doe
Dr Russell Sandberg Cardiff Law School
Professor Ian Leigh Durham University
Peter Cumper Leicester University
Chair: Professor Eric Barendt UCL

III. Religion and Staff
Speaker: Professor Lucy Vickers Oxford Brookes University
Discussant 1: Colm O’Cinneide UCL
Discussant 2: Dr Ronan McCrea UCL
Chair: Dr Tobias Lock Surrey University

IV. Faith schools
Speaker: Professor Julian Rivers Bristol University
Discussant 2: Dr Peter Petkoff Brunel University
Discussant 2: Dr Julia Ipgrave Warwick University
Chair: Dr Javier Oliva Manchester University
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