

Call for papers for the Third International Conference MEDIA and RELIGION

Bucharest, 10-12 November 2017

Theme:

MEDIA, RELIGION and POPULAR CULTURE: from extraordinary to extra-ordinary

Our conference is addressing religion, the construction of con-sacrated icons and media/popular culture - three fundamental concepts that have become important throughout recent debates on religious and media studies. It is well known the fact that media, through informative or entertaining content, brings **extraordinary** events, people, actions or stories to the forefront. These attract the public and allow mass-media messages to pendulate between news and eternal stories that give meaning to our daily lives. At the same time, religion is built around **extra-ordinary** people, moments, places and actions, which show us the limits of life and profane world and open in front of us a gate towards a different world order. In this media sphere where we are immersed through new technologies, religion and popular culture are connected through a peculiar dialogue: on one end there is the avoidance tendency and the reciprocal stigmatization and on the other, often surprising forms of dialogue and syncretism.

Religion is more and more present online in the form of static informing websites (dominant situation), or in the form of interactive sites, on which a congregationist shares common religious capital and common religious experiences. Social media offer the advantage of a space where the interactions between and among believers, and between believers and non-believers can be easily observed in their spontaneous forms and un-mediated by other institutions. The online allows expressing directly the most diverse forms of religiosity, from those connected to recognized religions, to the hyper-religion types (para-religion, invented religions).

Analyzing the way religion is enacted in media and popular culture one can see the contribution of these different discourses on the consecration of celebrities, political personalities, heroes and church representatives. Despite the apparent heterogeneity, these issues

are stressing the processes of the usage of religious symbols, in order to communicate a specific construction of new "islands" of sacrality. How are these (as if) sacred icons preserved and changed in the larger system of symbols that constitute the popular culture? How does popular culture influence religious discourse? Are they really integrated or just and only juxtaposed? How are the new hagiographies constructed? Is media capable of sacralizing heroes, celebrities, political martyrs?

The conference would address topics such as:

1. The usage of religious symbols in popular culture: news stories, advertising, gaming, movies, music, sports, and so on;
2. The usage of popular culture elements in Church activity: advertising religion, marketing and branding different churches, music and religious messages, movies and TV shows that spread religious messages, and so on;
3. Religious and the digital sphere: Religious usage of social media, religious sites, mobiles and religion, online churches, and so on;
4. The (popular) life of religious rituals and festivals;
5. Image of religious figures in media and online;

The workshop is organized by the Media and Religion TWG of ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), in cooperation with the Doctoral School in Media Studies of Bucharest University and the AFCOM (Romanian Association of Educators in Journalism and Communication) and will be held in Bucharest (Romania) on 10-12 November 2017. The best papers will be published in *Revista romana de journalism si comunicare*, which is included in EBSCO, ProQuest and Scopus databases

Deadlines:

- a. June 15, for extended abstracts (up to 500 words)
- b. July 15, for Scientific Committee confirmations
- c. October 15, for full papers

Send your abstract to PHD Mihai Coman University of Bucharest at mcoman53@yahoo.com

More informations on www.mediaandreligion.ro

Scientific committee

Stefan Bratosin, Universite de Montpellier, France

Mia Lovheim, Uppsala University, Sweden

Knut Lundby, University of Oslo, Norway

Terézia Rončáková, Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia

Eric Rothenbuhler, Webster University, USA

Marica Spalletta, Link Campus University in Rome, Italy

Johanna Sumiala, University of Helsinki, Finland