

CALL FOR PAPERS

Inaugural Conference on Ecological Spiritualities in Spring 2021

Call for Papers will open in Spring 2020

The Program for the Evolution of Spirituality at Harvard Divinity School is pleased to announce its inaugural conference in Spring 2021. Following a mini-conference held in 2020, this new branch within the HDS community seeks to support a range of scholarly approaches to the study of emerging spiritualities. The central theme for the 2021 conference is “Ecological Spiritualities.” The discussion will focus on the evolution of earth-centric systems as well as to explore innovative spiritual practices that are emerging in response to the painful realities of climate change, mass extinction, biodiversity loss, and the disruption of local and global ecosystems.

Proposals may be comparative, ethnographic, sociological, historical, textual, constructive, ethical, or practical in their methodologies. We are equally open to scholarship that is accountable to specific spiritual communities, scholarship that is sharply critical of emerging spiritualities, and scholarship that maintains a stance of academic neutrality.

Our aim is to present a broad range of papers that address the theme of earth-based spiritualities from a range of methodological approaches in the context of various religious traditions and geographical regions. We seek proposals that explore ecological themes and practices within new religious movements, emerging spiritual traditions, marginalized spiritualities, and the innovative edges of established traditions. Possible topics include the ecological revival of animist, shamanist, and pagan traditions; ecology in indigenous and diasporic spiritual traditions; ancient and contemporary practices of herbalism and alchemy; the spiritual consequences of climate change and mass extinction; spiritual sources for environmental activism; appropriation within plant medicine and spiritual tradition; spiritual practices in sustainable agriculture, and more.

We invite professors, doctoral candidates, graduate students, and undergraduate students in the study of religion and related fields to submit paper proposals from a variety of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives. We also welcome proposals from spiritual leaders, environmental activists, farmers, and others whose work places them at the intersection of spirituality and ecology.

Proposals may be for individual academic papers (20 minutes in length), panels consisting of 2-5 individual papers, workshops (60 minutes in length), or artistic performances (up to 60 minutes in length). To propose a paper, panel, workshop, or performance, please send a 500-word proposal, 100-word abstract (for the conference program), and a 50-word biography of each

presenter, to Dan McKanan at dmckanan@hds.harvard.edu. Panel proposals should include both a 500-word overview and full proposals for each paper. The deadline for proposals is October 1, 2020. To accommodate those who will seek funding from their home institutions during the summer, we will also conduct two preliminary proposal rounds. Those who submit proposals by April 1 will receive a decision by May 1, and those who submit proposals by July 1 will receive a decision by September 1.

Conference registration will open in the fall of 2020. Potential participants should be aware that registration fees will be kept under \$100. Some early registrants will have their registration fees waived, and graduate students and low-income participants will be eligible to apply for small travel stipends. Presenters will not, however, receive honoraria for their presentations.