

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONFERENCE

In the 10 years since the publication of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* and the beginning of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation, religious diversity has become an increasingly divisive topic in Quebec and much of Canada. There are fears that what began as a peaceful exercise in public democratic governance may degenerate into violence as demonstrated by the mosque shooting in Quebec City in January, 2017. Such fears are not unique to Quebec; indeed, religious diversity is increasingly problematized in political and public discourses around the world, with secularism/laïcité posited as "the solution" to the challenge of fostering social cohesion in multicultural environments. This categorization of secularism as "solution" ultimately places religion in the category of "the problem". However, there are other ways of thinking about diversity - such as that offered by Charles Taylor - as itself a "solution" to multicultural society's problems. This conference seeks to rethink how the categories such as "solution" and "problem" are constructed, designated, and utilized by scholars, politicians and religious communities, as well as how they have shifted overtime.

This conference reflects on the following questions and themes: How does the problematization of religious diversity affect particular religious communities? How are secular discourses shaped by their context, cultures, histories, and/or language? How have religious communities responded to and adapted to the political management of religion, from ancient times to the present? How is religious diversity approached in non-secular contexts? Is secularization Westernization? How can academics contribute to the political/public discourses on secularism? Who is left out of these discourses and why? What is the role of the media in this debate and how is it involved in the construction of categories of "good" and "bad" religion? How does the representation of "secularism" as "the solution" affect visible/non-visible religious persons/communities? How are society's values represented, constructed and shaped by the debates over religion and secularism? Is the focus on secularism/laïcité making us blind to other possibilities?

ABOUT CREOR

The principal goal of the Centre for Research on Religion (CREOR) is to study the world's religions in their constantly changing historical manifestations. The Centre's aim is to create a broad academic platform to coordinate and support research on the identities of the main religions of the world, their differences and their common grounds, and how they contribute to a better understanding of past and present-day culture, ethics and politics.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 th	
Registration: 9:00-9:45	
Opening remarks: 9:45 – 10:00	
Birks Chapel	
Plenary Panel 1: 10:00-12:00	
Birks Chapel	Quebec’s Religious Communities: Religious Diversity & Public Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mukhbir Singh • Samira Laouni • Adam Scheier • Carmen Chouinard
Lunch break: 12:00-13:30	
Plenary Panel 2: 13:30-15:30	
Birks Chapel	Situating Academia in the Debates on Religious Diversity in Quebec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Weinstock • Patrice Brodeur • Pauline Côté
Reception: 15:30-16:30	

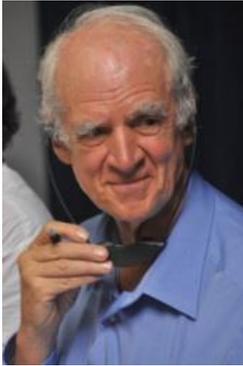
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 th	
Registration: 8:30-9:00	
Session 1 – 9:00-10:20	
Birks Chapel	Panel 1: The law dealing with “secular” and “religious” values I
Birks 017	Panel 2: Secularism and Religious Diversity in Pop Culture
Coffee break: 10:20-10:40	
Session 2 – 10:45-12:00	
Birks Chapel	Panel 3: The Legal Power of the State
Birks 205	Panel 4: Fundamentalism & Extremism
Lunch break: 12:00-13:15	
Keynote Event: 13:30-15:30	
Moyse Hall	Charles Taylor and Rowan Williams in Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Taylor • Rowan Williams Moderated by: Victor Muñiz-Fraticelli
Coffee Break: 15:30-16:00	
Plenary Panel 3: 16:00-18:00	
Moyse Hall	Charles Taylor’s Legacy to Québec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Abbey • Jocelyn Maclure • Jacob T. Levy
Reception: 18:00-19:00	

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

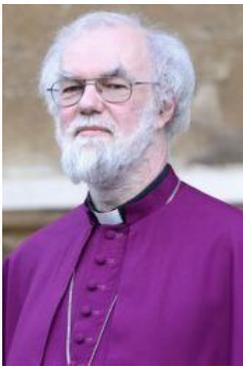
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 th	
Registration: 8:30-9:00	
Session 1 – 9:00-10:45	
Birks Chapel	Panel 5: Religious Diversity and Secularism in Quebec
Birks 111	Panel 6: Constructing and Delimiting the Secular Space
Birks 203	Panel 7: Religion & Education
Birks 205	Panel 8: Questioning Secularism from a non-Western Perspective
Coffee Break: 10:45-11:00	
Session 2 – 11:00-12:45	
Birks Chapel	Panel 9: Quebec’s Religious Heritage and Social Imaginary
Birks 111	Panel 10: Debating the Boundaries between Religious & Secular
Birks 203	Panel 11: Religion & Violence
Birks 205	Panel 12: Eastern Politics and Secularism
Lunch: 12:45-13:45	
Session 3 – 13:45-15:30	
Birks Chapel	Panel 13: Liberalism, Religious Pluralism & Toleration
Birks 111	Panel 14: Islamophobia
Birks 203	Panel 15: New and Emerging Forms of Religion and Spirituality
Birks 205	Panel 16: Religious Diversity and Toleration in the Ancient World
Birks	Panel 17: Religious Diversity and Secularism in Quebec II
Coffee Break: 15:00-15:45	
Session 4 – 15:45-17:30	
Birks Chapel	Panel 18: Liberalism, Democracy & Citizenship
Birks 111	Panel 19: Being a Minority: Religions Dealing with Diversity
Birks 203	Panel 20: Religion, Secularism & Modernity
Birks 205	Panel 21: The Law Dealing with “Secular” and “Religious” Values II

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



CHARLES TAYLOR, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at McGill University

A Canadian philosopher and public intellectual from Montreal, Quebec, Charles Taylor is best known for his contributions to moral philosophy, the philosophy of the social sciences, political theory, philosophy of language, and intellectual history. In 2003, Prof. Taylor received Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Gold Medal for Achievement in Research. For his 2007 book, *A Secular Age*, he was awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize. Most recently, Prof. Taylor became the first-ever recipient of the Berggruen Prize in recognition of his many contributions to human self-understanding. Some of his most prominent works are *Sources of the Self* (1989); *A Secular Age* (2007); and *The Language Animal* (2016).



ROWAN WILLIAMS, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge

From 2003-2012, Williams served as the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury of the Church of England. An academic, theologian, and playwright, Williams has lectured at Cambridge University and Oxford University. He has written extensively on a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, theology, religious aesthetics, contemporary culture, and religious pluralism. Some of his most prominent works are *The Worlds We Live In: dialogues with Rowan Williams on global economics and politics* (2005); *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology* (2007); and *Faith in the Public Square* (2012).

PLENARY SPEAKERS

RUTH ABBEY, Professor, University of Notre Dame

Ruth Abbey is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. She is a political theorist with research interests in the areas of Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Taylor, Feminist Political Thought, Liberal Political Thought, and Animal Ethics.



PATRICE BRODEUR, Professor, Université de Montréal



Patrice Brodeur is an associate professor at the Institute of Religious Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Montreal (Canada) as well as Senior Adviser at the International Dialogue Centre in Vienna, Austria. He holds a B.A. in Religious Studies and an M.A. in Islamic Studies, both from McGill University, as well as a second Master's Degree in Comparative Religion and a Ph.D. in Islam & Judaism from Harvard University. He co-authored, with Dr. I. Merdjanova, *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans, 1990-2008* (London: Continuum Press, 2009)

(paperback 2011) [in Bulgarian, 2010; in Bosnian, 2015]). He co-edited: with Solange Lefebvre, *Public Commissions on Cultural and Religious Diversity: Analysis, Reception, and Challenges*, (London: Routledge, 2017); with S. Amor and D. Tsvetkova, *Migrations et croyances : entre inculturation et acculturation* (Montréal: Association Francophone pour le Savoir (Cahiers scientifiques de l'ACFAS), 2016); with S. Amor and M. Fadil, *Islam : Regards en coin* (Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015).

CARMEN CHOUINARD, Consultant for C.O.R (Communication, ouverture et rapprochement interculturel)

Carmen Chouinard est détentrice d'une maîtrise en philosophie de l'Université Laval et d'un doctorat en Sciences des religions de l'Université de Montréal. Ses intérêts de recherche incluent le féminisme religieux, le dialogue interreligieux et l'éco-féminisme. Elle a été auxiliaire de recherche pour la Chaire de recherche du Canada : Islam, Pluralisme et Globalisation. Chargée de cours pour les cours Introduction aux grandes religions, Introduction à l'islam et Géopolitique des religions à l'Université de Montréal.



PAULINE CÔTÉ, Professor, Université Laval



Pauline Côté is professor in Political Science and member of the Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Publiques (Université Laval, CAPP). Her research focus on public agenda-setting with reference to religion in comparative perspective. Publications include policy initiatives such as "neutralité religieuse de l'État," "charte des valeurs et laïcité," "accommodements raisonnables," and "port du voile" (*Recherches sociographiques* LVII, 2-3, 2016 : 379- 425). Along with other specialists of controversial minorities, she has witnessed a growing salience of these and related polarized issues as they were fought notably in Europe (*Régulation ou ingérence? La nouvelle question religieuse\State Regulation or State Interference? Public Management of Religious Diversity*, Brussels, PIE- Peter Lang; Coedited with T. Jeremy Gunn, 2006). Pauline Côté has contributed to the ODIHR panel of experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

SAMIRA LAOUNI, Consultant for C.O.R (Communication, ouverture et rapprochement interculturel)

Samira Laouni, née au Maroc, installée au Québec depuis 1998, détient un doctorat en Économie internationale (Paris-1 Sorbonne). Son action s'exerce surtout dans le cadre du C.O.R. (Communication, ouverture, rapprochement interculturel) qu'elle a fondé en 2010. Celui-ci a présenté en Commission parlementaire plusieurs mémoires, dont *Exclure l'exclusion!* (2013), en appui à une laïcité inclusive, *La neutralité religieuse, condition du construire-ensemble en appui au projet de loi n° 62* (2016); *La vitalité du Québec exige un accueil réussi des nouveaux Québécois* (2016). Le C.O.R. a coordonné la Semaine d'actions contre le racisme (2017) et a organisé en particulier le forum *L'égalité, c'est notre affaire à tous!* Mme Laouni offre des ateliers à des jeunes musulmans afin de les aider à concilier leur identité culturelle et religieuse avec le milieu social québécois. Mme Laouni a participé au Symposium international «ISLAMOPHOBIE Race – Religion – Libéralisme» (INRS) ainsi qu'au colloque «L'islamophobie : (néo)racisme et systèmes d'oppression» (CRIEC – UQAM) (2015).



JACOB T. LEVY, Professor, McGill University



Jacob T. Levy is Tomlinson Professor of Political Theory, Professor of Political Science, and associated faculty in the Department of Philosophy at McGill University. He is the coordinator of McGill's Research Group on Constitutional Studies and Montreal's Groupe de Recherche Interuniversitaire en Philosophie Politique, and the founding director of McGill's Yan P. Lin Centre for the Study of Freedom and Global Orders in the Ancient and Modern Worlds. His areas of research include liberal and constitutional theory, federalism and local self-government, multiculturalism and nationalism, freedom of association, and the history of political thought, especially centered on the eighteenth century and Montesquieu. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from Brown University, an M.A. and Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University, and an LL.M. from the University of Chicago Law School.

JOCELYN MACLURE, Professor, Université Laval

Après avoir obtenu un baccalauréat à l'Université Laval (1997) et une maîtrise à l'Université de Victoria (1999), Jocelyn Maclure s'est vu décerné un D. Phil. à l'Université de Southampton (R-U) en 2003 (titre de la thèse : "Disenchantment and Democracy: Public Reason under Conditions of Pluralism"). Il a réalisé des stages postdoctoraux au Centre de recherche en éthique de l'Université de Montréal et à l'Université de Toronto (2003-2004) et il a été professeur ou chercheur invité dans plusieurs universités. Il est président la Commission de l'éthique en science et en technologie du Québec depuis janvier 2017. Il a œuvré comme analyste-expert pour la Commission Bouchard-Taylor sur les pratiques d'accommodement de la diversité culturelle et religieuse, cofondé en 2012 le magazine Nouveau Projet, et blogué pour le magazine L'actualité. Il collabore régulièrement aux émissions Plus on est de fous, plus on lit! et Medium large à la Première chaîne de Radio-Canada. Il est cotitulaire de la Chaire La philosophie dans le monde actuel depuis 2011.



ADAM SCHEIER, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim



Rabbi Adam Scheier is Senior Rabbi of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. He is Past President of the Montreal Board of Rabbis, Vice-President of the Rabbinical Council of Canada, and Senior Rabbinic Fellow of Jerusalem's Hartman Institute. He is a founding member of the Board of Trustees of the International Rabbinic Fellowship, and serves on the Rabbinic Advisory Board of Yeshivat Maharat. He has been an advocate for "spiritual activism" on behalf of Jews around the world, including Germany, and has led solidarity visits to many different at-risk communities, including Paris, Montana and Venezuela. In 2015, Rabbi Scheier co-edited and published the Canadian Haggadah Canadienne, and last year he accompanied Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on his visit to Poland and Auschwitz. He has published editorial pieces in the Montreal Gazette, the Times of Israel, and CIJA's The Exchange, and is a contributor to the Canadian Jewish News. Rabbi Scheier is married to Rabba Abby Scheier, and they have been blessed with five daughters.

MUKHBIR SINGH, President of the World Sikh Organization of Canada

Mukhbir Singh is President of the World Sikh Organization of Canada. The World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) is a non-profit organization with a mandate to promote and protect the interests of Canadian Sikhs as well as to promote and advocate for the protection of human rights for all individuals, irrespective of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, and social and economic status. Mukhbir is a frequent speaker addressing issues such as the relationship between religion and modern secularism, human rights and identity. Mukhbir Singh has long been involved with multicultural organizations in the Montreal community and has since extended to the national stage as he joined the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO). Mukhbir Singh grew up in Montreal, Quebec but now lives in Ottawa, Ontario with his wife.



DANIEL WEINSTOCK, Professor, McGill University



A graduate of McGill and Oxford (DPhil in philosophy), Daniel Weinstock studied under Charles Taylor, and he also studied at Harvard University under John Rawls. He is a prize fellow of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation (2004) and a recipient of the André-Laurendeau Prize given by the Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences (French-Canadian association for the advancement of the sciences). His areas of expertise include the politics of language and identity, democracy, citizenship, and pluralism. Weinstock's research explores, among other areas, the governance of certain types of liberal democracies; the ethics of diversity, religious diversity, and cultural diversity; and the political and ethical philosophy of

public policy.

GRADUATE PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1: THE LAW DEALING WITH “SECULAR” AND “RELIGIOUS” VALUES I LE DROIT CONFRONTÉ AUX VALEURS «LAÏQUES» ET «RELIGIEUSES» I

Eliza Bateman, McGill University, Law, DCL (Ph.D.) of Law Candidate

Between Shul and State: lesbian Orthodox women negotiate religious law in a secular age

This paper analyzes tensions and attempted reconciliations that LGBTQ-identifying religious women experience in terms of religious and sexual selfhood. This analysis is situated in the rights discourse of liberal democracies (USA and Canada) where state law increasingly recognises the equality rights of LGBTQ people, while also respecting the religious freedom rights of religions (or branches of religion) that disavow or forbid homosexuality. This interplay creates a tension for devout lesbian religious women between their formal (state) equality rights and conflicting rules that exist within their religious communities. In this paper, I apply a legal pluralist lens to the experiences of Orthodox lesbian Jewish women in the USA and Canada, to identify the legal norms that are operative on these women. I then suggest that rights-respecting outcomes, congruous with these women's religious identity rather than in conflict with it, may be possible through negotiations with religious pluralist orders rather than through a strict application of state law to the individual. By focusing on the legal norms that operate within North American Orthodox Jewish communities, I apply a feminist method to present the personal narratives of lesbian Orthodox women who live within this religious legal framework. I then investigate whether negotiations within this religious legal

order between Rabbis, the religious community and Jewish lesbian women can give these women a new space as legal 'subjects' or agents, who remake or reinterpret the law that operates upon them to accommodate their sexual identity; thereby achieving some reconciliation between their sexual and religious selves.

Robert Daniel Smith, Université de Montréal, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Problematizing Religious Freedom in Same-Sex Marriage Politics

This presentation examines how religious freedom is problematized in same-sex marriage politics internationally, as both a democratic principle and human right. Drawing from multiple judicial case examples, the discussion outlines the assertions made by religious persons and communities who claim that religious freedom is violated where same-sex marriage is legal. In such cases, it is posited that religious liberty is often asserted as a right to justify the exclusivity of marriage as a heterosexual institution—based largely on theological arguments of gender roles and natural law sexual morality. The responses of judges, policy makers and legal scholars are then considered, as well as some of the challenges they face when attempting to address such claims democratically. It is further posited that relevant conflicts are evolving discourse about what constitutes legitimate religious freedom rights. However, differences in policy outcomes are also fueling international tensions and backlash politics that have eroded trust in international courts and governing regimes, and given rise to populist nationalism and anti-globalist movements around the globe. Although not without its limitations, the presentation concludes by arguing that insights from Religious Studies—as a secular and social-scientific discipline—can help to mitigate much of the normative legal conflict, and offers several suggestions for doing so without necessarily settling doctrinal disputes or judging the veracity of religious beliefs *per se*.

Yael C.B. Machtinger, York University, Socio-Legal Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Sacred vs. Secular? Investigating the 'Separate Spheres' Policy & Pluralist Remedies to 'Manage' Religious Diversity: A 'Get' Refusal Case Study

In Western democracies today, there exists a robust pressure to secularize, and at the same time an unrelenting cling to religion. We need only to look to local and global controversies around veiling practices, education, and laïcité to examine this tension (Barras, 2014; Bakht, 2012; Berger, 2014; Berger & Moon, 2016; Van Praagh, Weinstock, 2016; and others). Yet, despite this push-pull, there are consistent interactions between religious or cultural family law systems and 'official' state law systems- the plural, normative legal orders which see law and religion constantly converging, particularly on issues of religion and family violence. Interestingly, with the cling to religion in secular societies, there are consistently high divorce and domestic abuse rates within observant communities. I argue that despite 'secular', legal remedies in New York and Toronto (DRL 253, 236B; DA 1985 sec 21.1; FLA 1990 CF3) the abuse of Jewish divorce (get) refusal by husbands persists, trapping women in unwanted marriages. I further contend that legal pluralist socio-legal scholarship may be the only sub-section of the field that unearths and understands the mythic binary at the foundation of secular liberal democracy and also embraces religion as a plural and parallel legal system or jurisdiction (as well as a valid iteration of identity). In this paper, I use the model of 'get' (Jewish divorce) refusal to begin to explore these contentions, incorporating data from the first qualitative, in-depth study done in the largest and most diverse Jewish centres in North America- New York and Toronto. Incorporating narratives from diverse stakeholders, I illustrate how they navigate, respond to, and make decisions surrounding 'get' refusal in a 'diverse' context of religious regulation.

PANEL 2: SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN POP CULTURE

SÉCULARISME ET DIVERSITÉ RELIGIEUSE DANS LA CULTURE POPULAIRE

Norah Franklin, University of Toronto, English, Ph.D. Candidate

"Each in his holy hill": Leonard Cohen's "For Wilf and his House" and Secularism in Québec

In 1956, on the eve of the Quiet Revolution in Québec, Leonard Cohen published his debut collection of poetry with the title *Let Us Compare Mythologies*. The phrase comes from his lyric poem "For Wilf and his House," which explores the coming of age of a Jew in a Christian nation that is now becoming secular. In

contemporary histories of the post-war period in Québec, the 1950s are increasingly coming to light as what Nicole Neatby calls “the drumroll” period to the Quiet Revolution, years of social unrest that preceded the Liberal Party’s sweeping rearticulation of the political culture of the province. In this paper, I argue that Cohen’s invitation to dialogue registers the fact that the secular dimension of the liberal project, the goal of religious equality, already had currency at this time, anticipating the province’s adoption of secularism in the 1960s. In “For Wilf and his House,” Cohen examines the stakes of secularism for the Jewish minority in the province and its implications for Jewish self-definition. He celebrates the ideal of religious pluralism but also captures the way in which secularism reshapes understandings of religious life, redefining religion as a set of beliefs and cordoning it off from what is imagined as secular space. Furthermore, Cohen grapples with the liberal narrative of progress from a religious past to a secular present, attempting to embrace but ultimately undermining this understanding of history.

Jhordan Layne, Queen’s University, English Literature, Ph.D. Candidate

Obeah, Christianity, and the Secular in Marlon James’s The Book of Night Women and William Earle Jr.’s Obi, or The History of Three-Fingered Jack

This paper draws a transhistorical comparison between the representations of obeah in Marlon James’s novel *The Book of Night Women* (2009) and William Earle’s Jr.’s novel *Obi, or The History of Three-Fingered Jack* (1800). James’s *Night Women* reveals that, after the secularizing effects of the Enlightenment, the rigid divide between natural and supernatural orders became a precondition for the category of religion. Any religious belief that posited a different relationship between those two orders were marked as superstition. James’s narrator, Lilith, erodes the divisions between religion and superstition by targeting Christian dogma with her Afro-Caribbean religious critique. Lilith disengages Christianity from its superior position, inverting the power dynamic between religious and supposedly superstitious belief systems. James’s text reveals that the crucial difference between the categories of religion and superstition is their relationship to the secular-rationalist frame. In contrast, Earle’s *Obi*, reinforces Christianity’s superiority and challenges the legitimacy of obeah rituals by staging the victory of the baptised slave hunter over the obeah-supported escaped slave. Yet he refuses to dispute or debunk the effects of obeah, and instead cleaves to the Gothic convention of uncertainty concerning the existence of the supernatural. It’s Earle’s use of that convention that allows his novel to mobilize the religious supernatural of both obeah and Christianity to challenge secular-rationalism. My comparison of obeah representations in these texts proves that the secular frame is inextricable from the truth claims that define the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural.

Alexander Sallas, McMaster University, English, M.A. Candidate

Star Trek’s Anti-Theist Utopia: A Close Reading of “Who Mourns for Adonais?”

Between 1966 and 1969, the voyages of *Star Trek’s* Enterprise were enjoyed by a veritable legion of loyal viewers, who recognized the show as more than mere prime-time sci-fi pap – as it was, and still is, too often dismissed. Indeed, as Robert Asa writes, *Star Trek* can “disquiet, disturb, and deconstruct” (34); the themes, ideas, and technologies it explores bear relevance even today, fifty years after its production. Perhaps that accounts for its enduring legacy: “no other popular culture phenomenon has shown the depth and breadth of “creations” or “productions”... that *Star Trek* has, both officially and unofficially” (Jindra 28). Fandom runs so deep that, as Robert V. Kozinets argues, *Star Trek* is “a philosophy that almost approaches a religion” (67). This is certainly a palpable paradox, for through its religious repudiation *Star Trek* extols a decidedly anti-theist view. Anti-theism differs from traditional atheism in that while an atheist may very well wish for the existence of a celestial deity, an anti-theist regards the deity’s non-existence a relief. Perpetual invigilation by an omnipotent entity is, after all, hardly a soothing prospect. Christopher Hitchens defines the term most succinctly: “all religions are versions of the same untruth, [and] the influence of churches, and the effect of religious belief, is positively harmful” (55). The second episode of *Star Trek’s* second season, “Who Mourns for Adonais?”, is the most overt example of the series’ anti-theism, and through a close reading of it this presentation will explore the implications of this religious repudiation, particularly in the context of conservative 1960’s America, when it was originally broadcast.

PANEL 3: THE LEGAL POWER OF THE STATE
LE POUVOIR LÉGAL DE L'ÉTAT

David Zeligman, Emory University, Law, SJD Candidate

An Analysis of Competing Conceptions of Religion in Israeli Supreme Court Jurisprudence

Religious freedom is commonly enshrined as a fundamental right in modern liberal democracies. However, the manner in which religion is defined and protected can differ between and even within societies. This paper identifies a tension between the liberal conception of religion and many traditional religious viewpoints that manifests itself in multiple ways. The paper uses Israeli Supreme Court jurisprudence concerning religion as an exemplar of that tension, as it possesses a British common law tradition, but also cites facets of Jewish law in its decisions. As a result, two competing understandings of religion are seen both doctrinally and functionally. The paper first sets out the tenets of these two conceptions of religion: (1) a liberal view that focuses on belief, autonomy and individuality which is demonstrated using examples from Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence, and (2) an Orthodox Jewish view drawn out through traditional sources and texts, which defines religion as communal and not based on belief or choice. It then turns to Israeli jurisprudence, arguing that certain legal doctrines like that of “religious feelings” find their primary justification in the Orthodox Jewish model. Finally, it analyzes Israeli Supreme Court judgments concerning religious issues and demonstrates that there is discord found within many decisions based on these conflicting conceptions of religion that can play a large role in determining the results of these cases. The paper concludes by asking whether Israel’s model, despite a current unresolved friction, would be informative for other liberal democracies in dealing with religious issues.

Muhammad Velji, McGill University, Philosophy, Ph.D. Candidate

Against ‘the Moral System’ as a Standard for Public Reason and Religious Accommodation

Public reason’s embrace of what Bernard Williams calls “the moral system” as a central standard for religious accommodation is problematically exclusionary in a pluralistic society. Religion has been framed in certain ways in order to make religious accommodation plausible. While these framings have done well to protect individualistic, Protestant and Protestant-like, religious conscience as well as “central”, “obligatory” and “categorical” religious practices, this has either deligitimized other classes of religious practice or rendered them unintelligible. I will focus, using Susan Wolf, on a class of actions I call Practices of Virtue and Self Realization (PVSRs) that I argue fall in a conceptual space between the objectivity of duty and pure subjectivity. I argue PVSRs are an important part of our lives that moral systems either wrongly try to subsume under the category of morality as imperfect duties or just ignore completely. An advantage of my focus on PVSRs is that they cut across secular/religious practices so that no reference has to be made to the controversial “specialness” of religion in defending accommodations. PVSRs apply as much to professional chefs and violin players as to Catholics. As a test case, I show that Islamic veiling, like other practices that fall between objective and subjective practices, never fares well as an accommodation in front of the European Court of Human Rights. Women who veil never get accommodations if veiling is seen as not obligatory because only moral obligations are seen as needing accommodation, never practices of virtue. Yet if a Muslim woman represents the veil as obligatory, she is caught in the double bind of seeming oppressed and therefore not accommodated either. I conclude by considering two positions, among the few, who have worried about the Protestantization of religious accommodation: 1) Jocelyn Maclure who has changed his own work to deemphasize moral conscience but instead subsumes PVSRs under the concept of “moral integrity.” I will disagree with this position, but I point toward 2) Cecile Laborde’s “Disaggregation” approach. This approach, when supplemented with my concerns about the use of moral systems, is a more promising position to ground religious accommodations.

Sadia Uddin, York University, Humanities, Ph.D. Candidate

Legislated Murder: Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan

In rethinking the problem of religious diversity in a secular age, it is imperative to consider how public policy serves as the catalyst for religious extremism in Pakistan. Pakistan’s Blasphemy Laws have made the persecution of religious minorities socially acceptable through the death penalty and vigilante justice. The Blasphemy Laws remain intact as they allude to an accurate representation of Islamic practice and belief.

However, these laws were enacted as a policy of appeasement for narrow political gains. The problematic laws have resulted in the murder of those challenging their validity in Islam. An example of this is the assassination of former Governor of Pakistan's Punjab province, Salmaan Taseer. Taseer called for a repeal of the laws and defended Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman, sentenced to death for allegedly blaspheming against Islam. Taseer was subsequently shot dead by his own bodyguard. This case highlights the complexities of the Blasphemy Laws in widening the gap between secularism and religious conservatism in Pakistan. Pakistan's Constitution will be used to draw out inconsistencies within the legal framework of an "Islamic" state that diverges from Islamic law. The sensitivity of religion prevents state actors from repealing the Blasphemy Laws in fear of backlash. Thus, the legal system is being used as a mechanism to execute religious minorities. This paper lends itself well to the panels focusing on 'secular and religious fundamentalism,' 'law and public policy' and 'violence and extremism' as it considers the impact religion has on the legal structures, which incorporate policy with social religious ideology to legitimize the persecution of religious minorities.

PANEL 4 : FUNDAMENTALISM & EXTREMISM
FONDAMENTALISME ET EXTRÉMISME

Gabriel Adam Desjardins, Concordia University, Theological Studies, B.A. Candidate

An Examination of Fundamentalism as a Concept and Derogatory Label

My paper will examine the origins and current use of the label "fundamentalist," which originated from the 1910 publication conceived by Lyman Stewart known as *The Fundamentals*. This production resulted from the conflict between conservative and liberal approaches to Scripture and produced the 20th century movement known as fundamentalism. Fundamentalism as a term has since expanded, including religions other than Christianity and becoming synonymous with "extremism" or "radicalism." My purpose for this examination concerns fundamentalism's variegated use among scholars. There seems to be little consensus on what the term means and who fits within the category. For scholars such as Malise Ruthven and James Barr, fundamentalism centralizes on the issue of Biblical inerrancy, or the threat to a sacred text. However, Harold Perkin and Robert Glenn Howard argue that fundamentalism refers to an individual's conviction of having a special relationship to God, which clearly broadens the scope. Howard also locates fundamentalism much earlier than *The Fundamentals*, finding its origins in Martin Luther, thus removing the term from its historical development and context. According to the work of Martin E. Marty, fundamentalists are traditionalists or conservatives reacting to real or perceived threats, making the existence of a threat to tradition the spark of fundamentalism. Through Marty's work and the historical development of fundamentalism as a concept, I will argue that the derogatory use of this term (its mainstream use) does little to calm relations between extremists and the rest of society. The media and society at large worsens this issue by misusing the term, labeling even moderately religious persons as fundamentalists, thereby perpetuating the sense of threat among traditionalists.

Ngozi Sunday Nwoko, University of Victoria, Law & Society, Ph.D. Candidate

Rethinking Religious and Social Diversity in Nigeria: the Politics Behind Boko Haram Menace

Section 10 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) (The Constitution") provides that "the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State religion" and section 38(1) of the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of religion. Since it began its Nigerian operations in 2002, Boko Haram operates as a religious extremist and terrorist group. My paper intervenes in the widely accepted claims that it is the colonial slicing of Africa and the failure of the Nigerian state to provide basic necessities to its citizenry that are largely responsible for the Boko Haram menace in Nigeria. I contradict those claims by asserting that the birth, maturity, and radicalization of Boko Haram as a terrorist group in Nigeria was a political idea by the political top brass in Nigeria, merely clothed in the garb of religion. The Boko Haram sect was formed as an agency to be used in terrorizing perceived political opponents, grab regional and national political positions; and then destabilize, discredit, and unseat the then Goodluck Jonathan-led government. Before the founding objectives were realized, the Boko Haram terrorist group had grown beyond the control of their founders and benefactors and had become a transnational organization with larger membership that terrorizes even their kith and kin. Boko Haram was

basically formed not as a result of religious intolerance and extremism but political bigotry, ethnic bitterness and animosity. How can Boko Haram be effectively tamed or eradicated? In the meantime, I submit that the ongoing attempt at suppressing the terrorist network is a recipe for radicalization and sophistication. Can the act of secularizing religion through the Nigerian laws help in this wise?

Daniel Chevalier, Université de Sherbrooke, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

La droite chrétienne américaine et la politique : Le cas de la Moral Majority et du Christian Coalition

Encore aujourd'hui, aux États-Unis, la religion protestante joue un rôle primordial autant sur le plan social, politique, et institutionnel. (Lacorne, 2012 ; Froidevaux-Metterie, 2009 ; Balmer, 2004) De cette religion protestante américaine se dégage une franche plus à droite qui se dit plus conservatrice dans ses revendications. Elle a une place importante dans le processus de socialisation des individus surtout dans la région du sud des États-Unis. (Bellah, 1969, 1973, 1980; Denman, 2004 ; Putnam et Cambell, 2012) De cette droite religieuse, des groupes évangéliques issus de la région *Bible belt* instrumentalisent la religion dans des discours ou dans leurs actions. (Fath, 2004) Parmi les conservateurs se trouvait un sous-groupe d'individus dont les motivations étaient de natures religieuses : les chrétiens évangéliques. (Fath, 2004) C'est la priorisation des enjeux sociaux par les activistes de la nouvelle droite qui a encouragé la mobilisation des évangéliques. (Ben Marka, 1998) Les années 1980 avec Reagan comme président des États-Unis, nous avons pu voir comment le religieux et le politique se sont amalgamés sur les questions morales. (Ben Barka, 2006) Et avec les événements du 11 septembre 2001, il est possible d'y observer le type même de relation. En ce sens, George W. Bush, nous propose un gouvernement ultrareligieux tant concernant sur les enjeux intérieurs qu'extérieurs. Notre contribution au colloque fait partie d'un projet doctoral articulé autour de la droite chrétienne américaine. En fait, notre sujet de communication traitera du mouvement conservateur au sein de cette droite chrétienne américain, et d'y voir son implication depuis les années 1980 dans l'espace public, et politique américain. Nous avons choisi le mouvement de la droite chrétienne comme objet d'étude puisque ce protestantisme conservateur se démarque en tant qu'acteur politique important aux États-Unis depuis l'élection de Reagan (Lindsay, 2006). Cette droite chrétienne américaine consiste donc en un bon départ d'analyse pour la compréhension des rapports contemporains entre le religieux et le politique aux États-Unis. (Ben Barka, 2006) Cette conférence se divisera en trois thématiques. Tout d'abord, l'étudiant propose de faire une mise en contexte, et une synthèse de la nouvelle droite religieuse américaine. Ensuite, il y aura une thématique concernant l'historique des origines du mouvement évangélique américain. Enfin, nous analyserons le cas de la Moral Majority et du Christian Coalition depuis les années 1980.

PANEL 5: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SECULARISM IN QUEBEC I
DIVERSITÉ RELIGIEUSE ET SÉCULARISME AU QUÉBEC I

Efe Peker, McGill University, Sociology, Postdoctoral Fellow

Comparing Québec's Politics of Laïcité with France

The Charter of Values (Bill 60) of 2013-14 has often been characterised in the Anglophone media and scholarship as Parti Québécois' (PQ) attempt to institute the "French model" of state-religion relations in the Province. According to this representation, the PQ sought to follow France's footsteps to establish *laïcité*, deemed an assertive form of secularism that more strictly regulates the expressions of religiosity in the sociopolitical sphere. It is true that the concept of *laïcité* has been gaining ground in Québec especially since the 1990s, and it was featured in the Charter document itself, as well as the PQ's rhetoric throughout the controversy. However, a closer look on how the concept developed in these two polities and how it reflected on the policymaking visions suggests that the Québécois and French articulations of *laïcité* show stark differences. It is the goal of this paper to offer a comparison of Québec's historical lineages and contemporary debates on *laïcité* with those of France to contribute to the academic and public conversations. The argument is that whereas Québec's *laïcité* has often manifested itself with a distinct partiality towards Catholicism as a patrimonial asset, France has been overall more neutral and coherent in its conception and practice. One of the reasons behind such difference may be found in Québec's contentious relationship with the Canadian nation-building framework, which has fuelled national identity

concerns over the years to facilitate the implicit embracement of Catholicism as an element of “cultural defence”, albeit in the secularised form of patrimonialisation.

Josée Bolduc, Carleton University, Political Theory, Ph.D. Candidate

The Universal Assumption and the Tacit Context of Majority Cultures in Secular Discourses

In this paper, I will examine the controversy over the crucifix in the blue room of the National Assembly within the context of the *Chartre des Valeurs Québécoises* through Michael Polanyi’s conception of the tacit. In doing so, I will demonstrate the ongoing conflict between Quebec’s explicit and tacit context. Secular discourses take various shapes depending on the cultural, historical and linguistic context within which they arise. In Québec, for instance, the tacit—or unreflective—elements of its context have framed debates on religion and secularity into an “us” versus “them” perspective. Québec is representative of the conditions majority cultures create: unlike minorities, the values of a majority culture are confirmed and reaffirmed by a context that mirrors those values back onto itself. Consequently, the encounter with minorities does not lead a majority culture to re-evaluate its assumptions and values. On the contrary, it further digs its heels, persuaded that its values are universal. It is my contention that the tacit parts of a society’s defining context—in this case, Quebecers’ emotional and spiritual attachment to Catholicism—comes into conflict with the explicit elements of that context—in this case, Québec society’s self-determination as a secular people and contributing to its victory over the Church’s influence during the Quiet revolution. This claim raises questions about the role of the tacit in the political. For example, can the tacit conception of a majority culture play a role in political decision-making? Is the tacit a promising tool for establishing cross-culture dialogue?

Anne Iavarone-Turcotte, McGill University, Law, LL.D. Candidate

La question de l’« arbitraire » dans le droit des accommodements religieux au Québec

Depuis le débat sur les accommodements raisonnables au Québec, un certain discours sur la gestion de la diversité religieuse s’est imposé : celui voulant qu’il existe en cette matière un problème d’« arbitraire ». Selon cette vision, il n’existerait pas ou pas suffisamment de règles propres à encadrer la pratique des accommodements religieux au Québec. En conséquence, les tribunaux et autres décideurs appelés à statuer sur ces questions n’auraient d’autres choix que de se rabattre sur leurs convictions personnelles en matière de justice et/ou sur les circonstances particulières de la demande. Dans le premier cas, l’arbitraire décrié est celui du décideur, péchant par excès de discrétion. Dans le second, celui du contexte : c’est la dictature du « cas-par-cas ». Comme solution à ce problème perçu, le législateur a proposé d’instaurer des « balises » pour encadrer le processus de décision. C’était l’un des objectifs du défunt projet de la loi 60 (la « Charte des valeurs québécoises »), repris ensuite dans le projet de loi 62, son équivalent porté par le Parti libéral du Québec. En partant de l’exemple de ces deux projets de loi, je me propose de revisiter ce discours sur le prétendu problème d’« arbitraire » et le besoin correspondant de « balises », en montrant qu’il est traversé d’une série de mythes. Ces mythes portent à la fois sur l’état du droit, sur son application concrète, ainsi que sur sa capacité d’étendre son action ou de l’améliorer. Afin de découvrir et de déconstruire ces mythes, j’adopte une approche interdisciplinaire, mettant à profit la théorie du droit et la philosophie.

PANEL 6: CONSTRUCTING AND DELIMITING THE SECULAR SPACE

L’ESPACE SÉCULIER : CONSTRUCTION ET CONTOURS

Eric Stephen, Harvard University, Study of Religion, Ph.D. Candidate

“Secularism is the Religion of Humanity”: Uncovering the Rise and Fall of the U.S.-American Secularist Movement and its Effect on Contemporary Understandings of Western ‘Secularism’

In contemporary U.S.-American political and religious discourse, conservative actors—from presidential candidate Mitt Romney, to Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart and televangelist D. James Kennedy—have routinely invoked the term ‘secularism’ in an attempt to name what they see to be an insidious force slowly corroding the moral fabric of Western society. Such invocations, while rhetorically powerful, rarely elaborate on what is meant by the concept, and often treat ‘secularism’ as an elite, cosmopolitan, and anti-religious political project. As this paper will argue, however, these contemporary claims as to *what* secularism entails and *who* supports it are historically specific and politically motivated claims that are

primarily informed not by political realities, but by popular anxieties surrounding religious diversity and religious authority. Taking a historically-grounded approach, this paper will demonstrate that ‘secularism’ developed in the U.S. and elsewhere between 1851—when the term was first coined—and the close of the nineteenth century as a small but internally coherent intellectual movement, one that was primarily supported in the U.S. by segments of the American working-class and recent immigrants who saw intersections between secularism and other socio-political movements, including socialism, Populism, and radical free-thought. By placing the activism and writings of these self-identified secularists in conversation with modern critics of secularism, one may better understand not only how discourses of secularism have shifted over time, but also why the secularist movement declined by the World War era and how that helped produce the specific, pejorative articulations of secularism that prevail today.

Jason Sparkes, Wilfrid Laurier University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Decolonizing Secularization

This paper applies a decolonial world-system analysis to secularization theory. It contends that dominant academic discourses on this topic are Eurocentric and explores alternative ones. As argued by Nelson Maldonado Torres, who teaches comparative literature, and Latino and Caribbean Studies at Rutgers University, secularization reveals its colonial premises when observed from the periphery of the world-system. Even most antisystemic thinkers have difficulty articulating critiques without using the secular grammar of modernity. Therefore, it is crucial to apply the notion of border thinking developed by Walter D. Mignolo, who teaches literature, cultural anthropology and romance studies at Duke University. This entails adopting a position of relative exteriority by drawing on peripheral sources. In this paper, the focus is on Latin American and Muslim sources. The author concludes that secularization is a colonial process legitimized by the hegemonic discourse of secularism which legitimizes the Western-centric world-order today just as it provided the ideological justification for nineteenth century expansion of European colonial powers eastward across Asia and southward across Africa. From a decolonial perspective, secularization appears as the successor to Christianity in its inquisitorial form, which provided the ideological justification for European colonialism in the early modern period. Moreover, the author connects the processes of secularization and modernization to the increasing violence being unleashed upon bodies, cultures, epistemologies, languages and ecosystems in the contemporary global world-system. In response to the modern/colonial destruction that chokes diversity and threatens life on earth, he proposes the urgent promotion of life and diversity.

Joanna Paxton Federico, University of Louisville, History (Women and Gender Studies), M.A. Candidate

Our Lady of the Milk: “Non-Sectarianism” in La Leche League’s Breastfeeding Advocacy

La Leche League International (LLL) is the world’s oldest and largest breastfeeding advocacy organization. Although they were all Catholic, LLL’s seven founders consciously promoted their group as “non-sectarian” in an effort to reach nursing mothers of any faith. In this paper, I intend to problematize LLL’s claims both *to* and *for* secularity. Whether LLL is actually non-sectarian today is debatable, and the claim that the organization was non-sectarian at its origin is highly dubious. The founders’ Catholicism was a potent influence in the early years of LLL, from the group’s name—drawn from a shrine to *Nuestra Senora de La Leche y Buen Parto*—to its organizational structure. Despite curtailing religious references in their writings, the original Catholic influences remain evident, though not overt, in the group’s current published philosophy. Further, whether secularism truly facilitates LLL’s mission of breastfeeding advocacy among varied religious and non-religious populations is questionable. LLL is a *peer* support network, and the organization has repeatedly faced difficulties in reaching women who fall outside their core demographics. Allowing women to establish subsidiary groups on the basis of shared faith (or other significant identity categories) might actually increase the sense of peer solidarity within groups and ultimately enable LLL to reach more women. This paper will engage with scholarship from multiple disciplines (including studies by Julie DeJager Ward, Christina Bobel, and Jessica L. Martucci) and draw evidence from both archival sources and contemporary publications by and about LLL and other breastfeeding advocates to probe the veracity and utility of LLL’s claims of “non-sectarianism.”

Gerald Ens, McMaster University, Religious University, Ph.D. Candidate

Fidelity and Receptivity in Romand Coles's Engagement with Christian Theology

In this paper I critically present and respond to Postsecular radical democrat Romand Coles's engagement with Christian theology. I first present Coles's critique of the tendency in Christian theology to erect a totalizing narrative of salvation via participation in God's being, which, Coles argues, results in a colonial posture of monological giving that is unable to receive difference. I then look at Coles's positive interpretation of certain theologians – especially Jean Vanier, Rowan Williams, and John Yoder – whose presentations of a vulnerable and receptive Jesus, he believes, holds the promise of engendering and sustaining a politics of receptive engagement with diverse others precisely because it is rooted in a specific place, namely, fidelity to Christ. In the second section I argue that Coles misreads the theologians he engages with to the extent that he suggests that they proclaim an uncompromising loyalty to Jesus *because* it sustains a particular socio-political practice. Rather, I argue that these theologians embrace Jesus as Lord as the starting point of their politics because they are convicted of this fact. I then further argue that embracing tradition(s) *because of* what they engender is self-defeating and hollows out much of the vitality of tradition(s). I thus suggest that the theologians that Coles engages with return to him the pressing question of how to embrace the richness of a tradition while one is more fundamentally committed to seeking out and considering new and different perspectives – which is the question of the viability of fidelity in a Postsecular age.

PANEL 7: RELIGION & EDUCATION
RELIGION ET ÉDUCATION

Andy Rajnak, Concordia University, History and Philosophy of Religion, M.A. Candidate

Does the Academic Study of Religion in the Secular University Presuppose Atheism?

Some religious institutions of learning require students to sign a statement of faith. Students registering for Religious Studies courses in a secular university, on the other hand, do not have an equivalent formality. Often the difference between these two kinds of institutions of learning is framed in terms of their methodological approaches or their foundational presuppositions with regards to religion. For instance, it might be argued that a Christian Evangelical institution affirms a certain set of faith-based axioms, while the secular university affirms a different set of axioms. Does the secular university maintain its own set of “faith-based” foundational presuppositions? It is sometimes argued that the secular university must affirm a kind of “methodological atheism” or “methodological naturalism.” This epistemological commitment to naturalism, it is further argued, draws a line between what constitutes valid and invalid forms of explanation. Hence, explanations involving the “supernatural” are ruled out a priori, as a matter of methodological necessity. Following the work of Gregory Dawes, this paper will critique the notion of “methodological naturalism.” It will be argued that methodologically, supernatural explanations cannot be ruled out as a matter of principle, and that they thus have to be taken seriously as explanations. One reason for this is that the term “supernatural” is itself an undefined term that shifts in meaning over time. Thus it cannot be affirmed that the secular approach must necessarily rule out a priori an undefined category of explanations.

Catherine Beevers, York University, Education, M.A.

Finding a Seat for Religion at the High Table: An Examination of where Religious Identities fit in the Practice and Policy of Higher Education

An examination of religiosity and spiritualism in higher education across North America elicits some interesting revelations. Despite the relevance of these areas to the political and social landscape following 9/11 and the inauguration of President Donald Trump; to the surge in internationalization on university and college campuses across the continent; and to the emerging quest for personal meaning in a highly autonomous era, religiosity and spiritualism are not widely acknowledged or necessarily accounted for in academic literature or institutional practices. While schools may prioritize diversity, the reality is that, “in their efforts to be tolerant and respectful of differences, colleges and universities can mistakenly promote an atmosphere of benign neglect, indifference, or even hostility toward religion and spirituality” (Dalton and Crosby 2). This paper will address what religiosity and spiritualism are, how they overlay with our historical,

political, and social contexts, and what impact they are having on student and faculty identity-development, curriculum, and administration. Two main themes that arise throughout the piece concern the need for greater integration of religiosity and spiritualism in general, and the need to develop stronger interfaith communication on campuses. The paper concludes with a call for institutions to revisit their policies, curriculums, and training of faculty and staff in an attempt to (1) engage personal and moral development, (2) turn away from 'secular indoctrination' by assuming an ethic of pluralism, and (3) expand upon religious and spiritual programs and councils.

Tannaz Zargarian, York University, Education, Ph.D. Candidate

Iranian Women in Higher Education: Challenge and Change

After the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the new Islamic regime made every effort to enforce a gendered Islamic identity on Iranian women encompassing all facets of life, including higher education. The Cultural Revolution in the 1980's further consolidated government's success in establishing a higher educational system based on the Jafari Shi'a jurisprudence. My paper explores gender inequality in the Islamic higher educational system. I further explore some Iranian women's experiences after the Cultural Revolution and under the new gendered education regime. I have critically examined some Iranian women's efforts in breaking the gendered oriented restrictive rules imposed upon them by the patriarchal elements in the higher education. I have incorporated a critical textual analysis of primary and secondary academic sources. I have integrated a critical feminist approach and have collected data from the work of female scholars, poets, and filmmakers and have brought forth the unheard experiences of some Iranian women. Key terms: autonomy, Cultural Revolution, Iranian women, women's higher education, women's identity.

PANEL 8: QUESTIONING SECULARISM FROM A NON-WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

LE SÉCULARISME MIS EN QUESTION SELON UNE PERSPECTIVE NON-OCCIDENTALE

Malith Kur, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Secularization vs Westernization

This paper explores the relationship between secularization and westernization. It argues that although the process of secularization has its origins in Western societies, it has evolved and any proposals that consider it a purely western concept are sometimes misleading. Therefore, secularization is not necessarily westernization. The two are completely different because if a non-Western society adopts secular values, it does not become westernized. In this context, it is essential to differentiate between the two because each one of them has a complex history of its own. Scholars, for example, have purportedly defined secularization as a process through which religion becomes less important in the "public sphere" that manifests itself possibly in both Western and non-Western societies. For instance, Africa may have its own indigenous secular traditions that are either denied or overlooked by the current debates on secularity. In this case, we cannot equate the weakening of religious influences at the center of public life with westernization. We know that westernization is the spread of Western cultures to non-Western communities around the world, a development which has occurred in many respects. Some of which include Western exploration of the globe, trade, colonialism, education, and religious missions, all of which have paved the way for the phenomenon of globalization. In the global village, different cultures intermingle and exert influences on each other. As we speak, Eastern and other cultures have assumed important places in the West, but we do not necessarily consider this process as the Easternization of the West.

Jingjing Li, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Is Secularization Westernization? Rethinking the meaning of secularization from philosophy to iconography

This paper invites readers to rethink the predominate narrative that equates secularization with Westernization. Such narrative envisages secularization as a social change that first occurred in the West and was then exported to the East. However, the moment this narrative transpired, it has been challenged scholars in early modern China. If a secular society is that which prioritizes this-worldly concerns over other-worldly needs and values rationality more than religious piety, historians such as Hu Shih and

Kenneth Chen, after studying the development of Chinese Buddhism, contend that China has long been secular even before the arrival of the West. Drawing on their findings, this paper continues to problematize the aforementioned master narrative. Exploring the doctrinal philosophy and iconography of the prevalent idea of 'Maitreya Buddha's descending to the human realm to create the Pure Land' in the 7th century China, I will investigate how the Chinese back then gradually perceived the Pure Land as an ideal society to be realized in the future rather than a heavenly realm. This investigation allows me to argue that secularization cannot be reduced to mere Westernization. Rather, it unravels new perspectives on the dynamic between this-worldly existence and other-worldly one.

Sameha Alghamdi, York University, Social and Political Thought, Ph.D. Candidate

Problematic Distortion: How Orientalism Problematizes Religious Diversity

This paper examines how Edward Said's concept of Orientalism can be applied to understand how religiosity has been problematized. Orientalism will be examined as a process by which certain idea about people from the Middle East is created; these ideas are typically full of generalizations, stereotypes and outright falsehoods. This process extends to the mischaracterization of the religiosity of people from the Middle East. This has created an image in the public's eye of Muslims and Middle Easterners as being problematic. Expression of cultural or religious preferences are not seen as a part of a multi-cultural mosaic, but rather as a manifestation of fundamentally un-Canadian values and incompatibility with modern society. These attitudes are shaped in part by the distortions and misrepresentations created by the process of Orientalism. This process impact on shaping public perceptions of the Middle East has accelerated since 2001 with distorted media representations of tumultuous events in the Middle East including: the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the Arab Spring; the Syrian Civil War; the so-called "Islamic State" and the ongoing refugee crisis. This examination will draw on various thinkers related to: representations and knowledge creation (Foucault); psychological ramifications of othering (Fanon); media depictions of Muslims and Arabs (Shaheen), and other authors who have examined Orientalism, representation and knowledge creation. By drawing on these authors, this paper will examine how public perception of Muslims and Middle Easterners has been shaped by the process of orientalism to create a series of distortions which reinforce negative public attitudes towards religiosity.

Olivier Laliberté, Université de Montréal, Philosophy, M.A. Candidate

Martin Heidegger en dialogue avec l'Asie

Dans le sillage de la *Lettre sur l'Humanisme* (1946), les travaux de Martin Heidegger ont cherché à indiquer un chemin de pensée qui nous éloignerait de la compréhension technicienne du monde et de sa domination désormais planétaire. Au sein de ce corpus, le dialogue « *D'un Entretien de la Parole: entre un Japonais et un qui Demande* » publié en 1959 dans « *Acheminement vers la Parole* » surprend de par sa forme et son propos. Fameux pour sa complexité et la richesse des thèmes abordés, ce texte est la principale source permettant de comprendre la relation particulière qu'a entretenue Heidegger avec l'École des Kyoto et le bouddhisme Zen. De plus, nous pensons que ce texte contient les éléments clés pour une philosophie du dialogue interculturel fondé sur le respect. Dans le cadre de notre présentation, il s'agira donc pour nous de mettre en relief les sources asiatiques de la pensée de Heidegger afin d'introduire une lecture du texte axée sur le problème de la compréhension entre individus issus de différentes traditions. À terme, grâce à un examen attentif du fond et de la forme, nous espérons pouvoir mettre en lumière une certaine phénoménologie de la communication qui anticiperait le concept de « fusion d'horizon » proposé par Hans-Gorge Gadamer dans *Vérité et Méthode* et que reprisent Charles Taylor et Hubert Dreyfus dans *Retrieving Realism*.

PANEL 9: QUEBEC'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE AND SOCIAL IMAGINARY
HÉRITAGE RELIGIEUX ET IMAGINAIRE SOCIAL DU QUÉBEC

Diane Wood, Concordia University, Theological Studies, M.A. Candidate

Praying at the Zoo: Quebec and Teilhard de Chardin's "Union that Differentiates"

Recent debates over a private Muslim group prayer at Parc Safari on July 2, uncover a disturbing lack of tolerance among some Québécois. President of the zoo, Jean-Pierre Ranger, told reporters, "What has

erupted from this incident is an indication of a malaise, and that malaise must be addressed politically, socially, and educationally...” (CTV News Interview, Sherwin, July 5, 2017) Secular discourse in Quebec is shaped by the society’s complex relationship with the Catholic Church, an identifier and preserver of French culture before the Quiet Revolution. This paper uses the controversy about a prayer at the zoo to examine Quebec’s Catholic heritage, rapid secularization, and current cultural profile. Teilhard de Chardin’s ontology with its axiom of “union that differentiates” is a possible way of addressing the problematization of religion in secular Quebec. Teilhard’s synthesis of secular and sacred, of science and religion offers systems of ‘wholes,’ in an evolving complexity of consciousness, where holons are individualized as they unite. Teilhard’s ontology is Christocentric and inclusive of all religious faiths as well as nonbelievers. It connects to a radical ressourcement of Catholic thought in the early 20th century, which ultimately led to Vatican II, and in Quebec, to the Quiet Revolution. (Gauvreau, 2005) The paper frames the response in terms of Quebec’s specific culture, yet the application of Teilhard’s sacred ontology to other secular societies could have broad implications for spiritual unity and religious tolerance in the 21st century.

Justin W. Ilboudo, Université Laval, Law, LL.D. Candidate

Les préoccupations musulmanes au Québec depuis les attentats du 29 janvier 2017 : Une étude des parutions dans Le Soleil et Le Devoir

Le 29 janvier 2017, la Grande Mosquée de Québec a été l’objet d’un attentat et six musulmans en ont payé de leurs vies. Nous formulons l’hypothèse que cet événement a libéré la parole au sein de la communauté musulmane et lui a permis d’investir davantage l’espace public pour évoquer des préoccupations propres à cette communauté et considérées comme ignorées depuis longtemps. Quelles sont les revendications de la communauté musulmane au Québec ? Une telle identification ne préjuge pas du traitement qui en sera fait mais elle a un mérite qui lui est propre : au-delà des besoins nommés qui sont, incontestablement, ceux d’une partie des citoyens, elle révélera la manière dont les porteurs de ces préoccupations se nomment eux-mêmes, les moyens et les symboles mobilisés pour le dialogue social et elle signalera les différences qui marquent un groupe considéré comme monolithique. Pour répondre à cette question, notre enquête portera sur les publications de deux grands quotidiens de Québec et s’étalera sur les 6 mois qui ont suivi l’attentat, soit de janvier à juillet 2017. La publication dans les médias, espace public par excellence illustre indéniablement le besoin de se faire entendre et de porter le message aux autres parties prenantes au vivre-ensemble.

Morad Bkhait, Université du Québec à Montréal, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Le rôle de médias québécois en ligne pendant les débats sur la sécularisation/diversité religieuse et analyse de leur implication dans la construction des catégories de «bonne»/«mauvaise» religion? Le cas de l’islam

Avec l’abandon de la Charte des valeurs québécoises et la mise en place de dispositifs législatifs au Canada, nous proposons une interrogation critique de la diversité religieuse au regard de médias en ligne. Comment problématiser la diversité religieuse sur Internet à l’Age séculier? Une analyse logico-sémantique d’articles issus du *Journal de Montréal* et *le Devoir* a été effectuée pour démontrer que, le positionnement des journalistes et la fréquence des thématiques abordées dans le discours peuvent orienter les internautes. Il s’agit d’évaluer si le discours produit par les journalistes véhicule des représentations tronquées de la diversité religieuse, du rapport Bouchard-Taylor et ses limites afin d’estimer si les réactions des internautes reflètent une dialectique de contestation ou d’approbation. Nous analysons particulièrement le statut de l’islam dans ces articles et commentaires pour extraire une description fidèle de cette religion sur le net. Travailler sur la presse en ligne est motivé par son accessibilité (Smartphone, PC), mais aussi grâce à l’anonymat assuré aux commentateurs. Le corpus est constitué d’articles récents, allant de février à juin 2017.

PANEL 10: DEBATING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS AND THE SECULAR
QUESTIONNER LES FRONTIÈRES ENTRE RELIGION ET LAÏCITÉ

Aaron Stauffer, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, Ph.D. Candidate

Organizing Sacred Value

When does singing gospel music during a sit-in at a congressman's office stop being a religious act and become a political act? To answer this question scholars often turn to the role of religion in community organizing. Scholars tend, however, to eschew the importance of religion and religious difference in the practice of organizing. To the contrary of secularists and post-secularists — both positions that seem to require a religious sphere separated from a political sphere — I argue that organizing practices are religious practices motivated by sacred value. Religion and religious difference change how we organize. There are significant implications from this argument for organizers and for theoretical alternatives to the “secularism solution” with its stark demarcation between religion and politics. Building constructively on Peirre Bordieu, Courtney Bender, Ruth Braunstein and Luke Bretherton I argue that organizing is a practice identifiable primarily by its style. Religious and political practices can read dialectically between structure and agency. Practices are characterized by style and are motivated by sacred values that sit ambiguously between politics and religion. Following Jeffrey Stout and Robert Adams, I argue that people approach sacred values with reverence and devotion. Different religious communities differ on the goods they hold sacred. Different traditions cultivate different practices that express this reverence or devotion. Religion and religious diversity are important resources for organizing, countering secularist framing of the relationship between religion and politics. In this way, the practice of organizing feeds on the untidy and ambiguous relationship between religion and politics.

Juan Pablo Aranda Vargas, University of Toronto, Political Science, Ph.D. Candidate

Antiliberal, antitotalitarian Catholic thought in twentieth-century Germany

While Carl Schmitt's powerful claim that “all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts,” attention given to one of his most profound rivals, Erik Peterson, has been comparatively scarce. Peterson emphatically denies the possibility of any Christian political theology, on the basis of the incompatibility between the monarchical principle and the Trinitarian dogma, as defended by Gregory of Nazianzus. Much less obvious is the connection between Joseph Ratzinger and Peterson. In this work I defend two claims. First, that there is a recognisable group of theologians and political thinkers—such as Eric Voegelin and Joseph Ratzinger—that share a Christian, anti-liberal, and anti-totalitarian perspective of world politics, which is indispensable to fully understand Schmitt's claims on the topic. Secondly, that Joseph Ratzinger's attacks on relativism and on a notion of liberty dislocated from responsibility, and, on the other hand, his defense of the claim that Europe and Christianity are correlated ideas, is a powerful tool to break away from simplistic reductions of today's politics into the liberal West and the illiberal rest. Moreover, Peterson-influenced political action, as anti-totalitarian politics, is sympathetic to the democratic ethos, while at the same time critical of the excesses that a “Gnostic”—borrowing Voegelin's vocabulary—silencing of the problem of truth conveys, even in its “liberal” variant.

Christian Finnigan, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Magisterial Reformation and The Emergence of Political Liberalism

Western Europe's embrace of religious tolerance, secularism, and political Liberalism in the early modern period has traditionally been understood along Weberian lines, as the “Protestant Modernization” of the West. While Weber's thesis has largely been dismissed as Whiggish history, its impact on the historiography remains pervasive. Modifying Weber's thesis, Michael Walzer posited that the “Protestant Resistance Theory” was integral to the rise of modernity. Walzer's thesis held that the development of a Protestant justification for resisting Catholic monarchs laid the foundation for Western civilization's transition towards political liberalism. Just as many are lining up to credit the Reformation with producing modernity, there are also those who wish to blame it for secularization. Historian Brad Gregory has recently produced a genealogy of modern secularism and pluralism. In his *The Unintended Reformation*, Gregory points to the Reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura* and the rise of individualism in Reformation humanist

thought as being integral to the West's embrace of the Enlightenment, pluralism, and the secularization of knowledge and truth. Both positions assume the Reformation was the cause of modernity, pluralism, modern secularism, and political liberalism. This paper questions that assumption. It is my contention that Reformation Theology and Political Liberalism are not inherently linked. Rather, that the Magisterial Reformers posited a pre-modern, non-liberal political ethic. By recontextualizing the Magisterial Reformers' political thought, particularly that of the reformer Martin Bucer, this paper will endeavor to demonstrate that the Magisterial Reformers are more properly to be understood as proponents of Christendom, rather than forerunners of Liberalism.

Deni Kasa, University of Toronto, English Literature, Ph.D.

Prophecy, Reason, and the Immanent Frame: Milton and Spinoza

One of the central aims of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* is to define the "immanent frame"—a moment in Western Europe when secular culture came to be seen as a 'natural' and 'immanent' alternative to the 'transcendent' concerns of religion. As Taylor demonstrates, the immanent frame structures the post-Enlightenment view of secularization, because it implied that religion can be subtracted from public life. In this paper I explore how John Milton and Benedict de Spinoza, two influential writers from the early Enlightenment, anticipated the 'immanent frame.' I explore this question in terms of their writing on prophecy. Milton and Spinoza argue that a Christian prophet should read scripture critically and engage in learned debate with other lay 'prophets.' This view of prophecy stems from contemporary theology, but it also anticipates secularized forms of humanism that stress reason and religious liberty. At the same time, Milton and Spinoza don't agree on everything: whereas Spinoza sees the Christian prophet as a purely secular teacher, Milton sees the intellectual vigour of Christian prophet as a *product* of religious grace. Building on these writers, I argue that the secular ideology for which Spinoza came to be known was always in dialogue with others, like Milton, who were unwilling to divorce the project of humanism from religion. As a result, I argue that the Enlightenment's 'immanent frame,' which today we think of as secular, was not an inevitable product of early modern theology.

PANEL 11: RELIGION & VIOLENCE
RELIGION ET VIOLENCE

Jonathan Brasnett, University of Ottawa, Political Science, Ph.D. Candidate

Instrumental Securitization of Islam in Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of China's Uyghur Policies in Xinjiang

The securitization of Islam after 9/11 has been widespread across the non-Muslim world, manifesting in policies restricting the religious freedoms of Islamic communities. Existing literature has largely focused on this practice in Western democracies, however there are important distinctions to make when considering its application in authoritarian regimes. In the particular case of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has manipulated the perceived threat of radical Islam, using discourse and counter-terrorism legislation to justify the repression of the freedoms of religion, expression and movement of the primarily Muslim Uyghur ethnic minority living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). This paper argues that authoritarian regimes, like that of the CCP, to a greater extent than democratic regimes, can instrumentally securitize issues related to the identities of minority groups, such as their religion, to justify repressive policies towards those minorities and consolidate control over them and their territory. The instrumentality of such measures is shown by comparing them to the CCP's policies towards the Hui Muslim minority which the government has deemed not to be a threat to the PRC's territorial integrity or the CCP regime's stability. While democratic states are limited in their capacity to restrict the freedoms of religious or other minorities, their securitization of Islam since 9/11 has set a precedent for authoritarian regimes to use security discourse to justify repressive policies towards Muslim minorities, as we have seen in the PRC.

Vitalji Fastovskij, LMU Munich, Russian History, Ph.D. Candidate

Religious concepts and the question of violence. The case of the Russian revolutionaries (1879 – 1911)

The Russian revolutionary movement of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries and its strong terroristic wing still excite the minds of scholars and writers alike. There are ongoing debates about the roots of terroristic violence and the role of words and phrases with religious connotations that were used by the terrorists and their supporters in order to justify violence. Proponents of the still influential concept of “political religion” blame either the process of secularization that turned religious concepts into means of terror, by offering a notion of innerworldly salvation, or (more often) religion itself. In my talk, I will argue that not secularized notions of salvation as such were responsible for the violence potential of the revolutionaries but rather a complex of reasons, mainly the translation of such notions into political practices in a very specific historical context of individual striving for self-determination and state paternalism. The tension between the politics of the Russian autocracy and the striving of the revolutionaries to overcome any form of foreign determination in order to be able to pursue self-imposed goals, which were declared to be parts of a teleological historical process, generated a self-sustaining spiral of violence. Leaning on Taylor’s notion of strong evaluations, I will analyze the role of religious semantics in the formation of the moral framework of the revolutionaries and show the highly ambivalent character of slogans and concepts such as “holy cause”, “martyrdom”, “kingdom of freedom”, “sacred personalities”, “sanctum of terror” and so on.

Alessandra Bonci, Université Laval, Political Science, Ph.D. Candidate

The paradox of fundamentalism: Tunisia’s two extremisms

As Charles Taylor brilliantly highlighted in *A Secular Age*, the phenomenon of secularization presents a twofold enigma: firstly, is secularization a Western specificity? And secondly, can secularization be considered an extremism? (Taylor, 2007). It seems interesting to address these two questions, since we can observe that extremism today comes from the secular-right-wing, the populist trends and religious sects, indiscriminately. How can we make distinctions and find analogies? As John Keane highlights, the Western-born-concept of secularism became “an insult” to many Muslims. In fact, the twenty-first-century view of Muslim societies has led to the belief that the latter are hopelessly opposed to the Secular, building on a stereotyped division between a secular, modernized West versus a religious and backward Islamic world. “Secular Europeans - supposedly open to the world and open to openness itself - normally harboured anti-Muslim prejudices.” (Keane, 2000). Scholars shed light on the US paradox, according to which one of the so-called most secular countries, is not that secular. In fact, lobbies’ influence on US politics (especially evangelical Christians) and American rhetoric appear strongly steeped in religion. (Bernstein and Jakobsen, 2010). By observing Tunisia, we can find deep social divisions on the “secular issue” across the Muslim world as well. On the one hand, a strong religious conscience permeates society; on the other hand, strong secular values detach the Tunisian élite from the rest of the country. As the Ennahda member Abdelkrim Harouni said in a recent conference in Québec, Tunisia nowadays faces the phenomenon of double extremism, the clash between radical Islamists and radical seculars. The analysis of the two Tunisian extremisms is an attempt to read two ‘fundamentalisms in a new light’.

Naser Dumairieh, McGill University, Islamic Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Towards an Islamic Theology of Nonviolence: Jawdat Said’s Life, Works, and Thought

Jawdat Said is a Syrian scholar who has written extensively on nonviolent social transformation from an Islamic perspective, calling it “the prophetic method of social transformation.” For more than half a century, and through 15 books and hundreds of articles and lectures on nonviolence, Said has tried to establish a new Islamic approach to the problem of violence from both textual and historical perspectives. His first work on Islamic nonviolence, entitled, *Madhhab Ibn Adam al-Awwal: Mushkilat al-‘Unf fi al A‘mal al-Islāmī* (The Path of Adam’s First Son: The Crisis of Violence in Islamic Action), was published in 1966. The violence in Syria during the last five years forced him to leave his hometown in Syria’s Golan Heights after the destruction of the village and killing of his brother. All this violence enhanced his conviction that we need a

non-violent approach both to solve our immediate problems and for social transformation. Said's life, works, and thought will be addressed to give context to his uniquely Islamic approach to nonviolence, jihad, and social transformation, all within his Quranic hermeneutical framework.

PANEL 12: EASTERN POLITICS AND SECULARISM
POLITIQUE ET SÉCULARISME EN ORIENT

Marwan Attalah, Université du Québec à Montréal, Sociology, M.A. Candidate

From a Secular state to a Hindu nation? Secularism and religious hegemony in India

Since the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) victory in the 2014 Indian general election, the "national secular space" enforced by the Indian constitution in order to protect religious pluralism in India, seems to be shattering under the weight of the Hindu nationalist agenda. As researcher Anwar Alam notes, "there was an overall decline in political secularism"² in the face of the expansion of a Hindu nationalism that is beginning to permeate all spheres of society. For the historian Bhagwan Josh, Hindu nationalist movements "are working to institute a sustainable cultural hegemony". Since independence, the Muslim community in India has been facing increasing exclusion, marginalization and socio-economic discrimination. In the last decades, the destruction of *Babri Masjid*, the 2002 Gujarat riots³ and the continuing unrest in Jammu and Kashmir have become strongly connoted for India's Muslim population. It is therefore legitimate to ask the question in a context of social crisis, how long will India's secular and multicultural project last? The aim of this paper is to analyse the evolution of secularism in India, in regards to contemporary *Hindutva*⁴ politics and its implication for the Muslim community.

Kalpesh Bhatt, University of Toronto, Study of Religion, Ph.D. Candidate

A Mammoth, Multifaith Kumbh Mela: The Secular-Religious Binary and Everyday Ethics

While most 20th-century theorists had presented the relationship between religion and secularism in dichotomous terms, recent scholars have challenged these binary accounts by problematizing the normative foundations and ideological commitments underlying these two categories. Paying attention to the increasingly growing adherence to spirituality, for example, questions the secular liberal view of modernity as disenchanted and thereby antithetical to the past cultures and ethics that are still enchanted. This paper argues that spirituality-laden "virtue ethics" (MacIntyre 2007) and "ordinary ethics" (Lambek 2010) of religious people not only blur the boundaries among religion, secularism, and modernity, but they also refashion both religion and secularism into an ethos of practical pluralism that encourages active seeking of understanding across lines of differences without leaving one's identities and ideologies behind. Drawing on my ethnographic fieldwork in the 2013 Kumbh Mela—the largest religious gathering in the world with more than 100 million pilgrims from diverse Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain traditions—this paper examines how everyday ethics embedded in the spatial and spiritual vastness of the Kumbh give rise to transcendental aspects of value and meaning that shape and are shaped by what Charles Taylor (2007) calls the "immanent frame" of the secular modernity. Differing from the Western approaches grounded in deconstructivism to understanding the secular and secularism, this Eastern approach transcends the secular-religious binary by contextualizing various value systems and constructing coalesced registers of secular concerns, religious aspirations, and everyday actions. Such pluralistic secularism involves more than just passive tolerance or active acceptance of diversity; it involves constructive engagement with adversity arising from diversity.

Pietro Marzo, Université Laval, Political Science, Ph.D. Candidate

Al-Nahda's transformation in Tunisia democratisation: separating religion from political sphere

During its tenth Congress held in May 2016, the Tunisian Islamist political party *Al-Nahda* announced that it had accomplished its transformation into a party of Muslim democrats. More than 80% of the *Al-Nahda* delegates voted in favour of this formal shift, whose main objective is to separate the political and religious fields of activism. The separation between *dawa* (proselytising) and politics is now, on paper, both complete and official. The party's founder, president and chief ideologue Rached Ghannouchi underlined though that the environment in which the party operates has dramatically changed, calling for a decisive commitment to the values enshrined in the 2014 Tunisian Constitution. Indeed, the Tunisia Constitution making process has been the ground where the long-standing cleavage between secularists and Islamists conciliated its

divergence. This presentation explains how the political party Al-Nahda has transformed, trying to preserve its Islamic reference while separating religious and the political activities. It identifies five new elements through which Al-Nahda has changed its outlook and its political behaviour. This presentation argues that the party's transformation contributed the national reconciliation between Islamists and Secularist, and is enhancing the democratisation process. It also explores the party internal debate between the hardliners and the modernist. Finally, it discusses some political and social challenges ahead that Al-Nahda will face in the Tunisia democratization process. This study relies on fieldwork in Tunisia and interviews with relevant members of the party such as Rached Ghannouchi, Abdelkarin Harouni and Meherzia Labidi.

PANEL 13: LIBERALISM, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM & TOLERATION
LIBÉRALISME, PLURALISME RELIGIEUX ET TOLÉRANCE

Aaron Ricker, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

A Convenient Fiction

One helpful way to problematize religious diversity might be to ask how real it is. As the Roman empire grew, the gods of barbarians and enemies were at times invited to join the Roman pantheon in support of Rome's manifest destiny, and far-flung local cults and practices were often voluntarily recast to accommodate Roman traditions and values. The incredible apparent religious diversity thus produced always served power relations defining Roman identity, order, and values as privileged. Proper religious life as commonly defined today is a very different phenomenon, but it still involves individuals and communities working out how to see and comport themselves vis-à-vis intragroup and intergroup social structures of order and identity, a fact that imposes similarly strict natural borders upon religious diversity. Some rules, identity markers, etc., will always be seen as necessarily shared and non-negotiable in any given host society. The fact that religious identity is so often defined today as involving sacrosanct personal convictions about revealed ultimate cosmic truths and ultimate human duties imposes another layer of limits. The practical irony of such ultimates is that they must be continually recast by individuals and groups wishing to remain intelligible (let alone tolerable or respectable) to their neighbors, in complex negotiation with local modes and standards of conformism. My comparative analysis of apparent religious diversity in ancient and modern contexts suggests that religious diversity is a convenient fiction – a self-promoting cultural pose defined in contradistinction to real/ideal unenlightened others who approach religion and diversity “the wrong way.”

Steven Zhao, University of British Columbia, Interdisciplinary Studies, M.A. Candidate

A Critique of the Narrative of Religious Tolerance

Current popular narrative around religious diversity reflects a form of openness to pluralism that rests upon a silent acceptance for the value of passive tolerance to differences. Such rhetoric's motive is driven by the enshrinement of religious freedom, yet its underlying narrative to diversity may be limited and potentially detrimental. Firstly, tolerance of diversity minimally emphasizes epistemological and phenomenological depth in the engagements with other groups. It facilitates an unexamined satisfaction with a form of openness that constitutes socialized behaviours at a distance, rather than authentic contacts that develop openness overtime from direct understanding and relational engagements up close. Secondly, the value and ethics of tolerance reinforce the narrative and emphasis of differences rather than the engagement of connections and relatedness between groups. Such narrative is oriented to the framework of differences due to its disproportionate emphasis on the explicit variables of religion (the presentations of diverse doctrinal epistemologies and liturgical practices). Therefore, a reframing of the narrative on religious diversity may be needed in shifting the emphasis from explicit differences to implicit relatedness between religious traditions. Specifically, public and political narratives can be supplemented by a greater inclusion of phenomenological conditions (interpretive and personal experiences and relations to religion) of the religious process. The promotion of phenomenology-related narratives may motivate more substantial and involved engagements. An emphasis on the interpretive-based experiences allows for the humanization of the religious agents that can lead to authentic relatedness, instead of the essentialization of the religious other which reinforces the narrative of tolerance.

Gilles Beauchamp, Université de Sherbrooke, Philosophy, M.A. Candidate

La diversité dans les arguments épistémiques pour la tolérance

Une société diversifiée sur le plan des croyances fondamentales et morales se retrouvera souvent dans des situations où certains citoyens seront en désaccord avec d'autres sur leurs manières d'agir et de concevoir le bien. Comment donc assurer le vivre-ensemble de citoyens divisés sur le plan religieux et des croyances fondamentales? La tolérance est un principe qui a précisément cet objectif. Or comment justifier ce principe pour qu'il ait une force motivationnelle suffisante pour que les citoyens soient tolérants? La littérature offre une variété d'arguments. Dans cette communication, je propose une classification des arguments épistémiques pour la tolérance. Par « arguments épistémiques », j'entends des arguments qui s'appuient sur des propriétés propres aux croyances et à leur formation. Ma classification contribue à la littérature en permettant de mieux situer des justifications de la tolérance produites par des auteurs classiques comme William Walwyn, John Locke et Pierre Bayle; des auteurs plus récents comme John Rawls, Philip Quinn, James Kraft et Marc-Antoine Dilhac; et des auteurs dans la tradition islamique dont Tariq Ramadan, Maajid Nawaz et Khaled Abou El Fadl. Les quatre catégories proposées sont : [1] le faillibilisme, [2] le processus de formation des croyances religieuses, [3] le problème de la justification et [4] l'accès différencié à la connaissance divine que Dieu donne aux peuples. Je montre aussi comment ces types d'argument rendent compte de la diversité religieuse ou mobilisent celle-ci dans leurs stratégies.

Jérôme Gosselin-Tapp, University of Ottawa, Philosophy, Ph.D. Candidate

The Liberal Republican Model and the Management of Religious Pluralism

This talk focuses on the normative foundation of models of diversity management in Canada, while analyzing the question of secularism from the perspective of the late works of John Rawls. There are mainly two institutional responses to normative conflicts. On one hand, a Jacobin republican approach is articulated around a will to erase all differences. On the other hand, an individualist liberal approach gives unconditional primacy to individual rights. In relation to the “reasonable accommodation” debate, this dichotomy translates into an apposition between a strict understanding of secularism (*laïcité*) and an open conception of secularism. This talk propose to draw from the late work of Rawls in order to elaborate a middle ground. Rawls's position is a liberal perspective that authorizes certain elements of republican strict secularism. Among other things, this perspective admits both negative and positive liberty as well as individual and collective rights. This presentation thus develops a model of management of diversity that presents itself as a middle ground between the liberal individualist position and the Jacobin republican approach that draws on the liberal republican position inspired by Rawls.

**PANEL 14: ISLAMOPHOBIA
ISLAMOPHOBIE**

Sakeef M. Karim & Emanuel Guay, McGill University, Sociology, Ph.D. Candidates

Enlightenment or White Resentment? An Analysis of Race, Secularity and Islamophobia

In the present paper, we investigate the dynamic interplay between *secularity* – as an ideological regime – and the *racialization* of Muslims in liberal democracies. More specially, we explore how appeals to secularism – and the claim that Islam is incommensurable with “Western” modernity – work to dress racist thought in the discursive trappings of scientific enlightenment. This allows subterranean values (steeped in white supremacy, ethnocentric understandings of nation, etc.) to be sublimated into ostensibly *liberal* critiques of Islam and its practitioners, thereby fomenting a rising tide of *liberal intolerance* towards those of Muslim faith. We argue that these critiques are often sophistic in understating: temporal and country-level variation in the prevalence or degree of “illiberalism” among the world's Muslims; the various political entanglements that have allowed repressive theocracies to achieve hegemony in the Muslim world; the socioeconomic performance of Muslims in the Global North; the likelihood that fractured and politically decentralized Muslim communities lack the mobilizational power to affect or “threaten” liberal democracies in any meaningful way; and most importantly, the universe of other covariates that may threaten these democracies, from late capitalism to far-right militancy. To articulate these arguments, we examine critiques of Islam levied by influential secularists in both the United States and France, and deconstruct said critiques

by appealing to the sociology of race and ethnicity and the literature on social problems. In doing so, we draw a through-line connecting secularity and the problematization of Islam to a reinvigorated and revanchist “whiteness” that has suffused the Western political imaginary.

Saad Zia, University of Ottawa, International Humanitarian and Security Law, LL. M. Candidate
Ventriloquizing the Muslim Caliban: Controlling Narratives on Muslims in The Reluctant Fundamentalist & the Harper Government

Since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, media sources have instilled a fear of Muslims in Western countries by portraying them as a homogenous, irrational group that can be triggered into extreme violence. Such narratives laid the groundwork for marginalizing Muslims within Western societies. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Mohsin Hamid exposed narrative devices used by Western media and governments to manufacture public fear of the so-called threat posed by Muslims in the West. My paper compares the narrative devices used in the media’s construction of the Muslim threat with the Harper Government’s justification for legislative and policy changes that marginalized and vilified Canadian Muslims. In 2015, Mr. Harper introduced new anti-terror legislation to allegedly counter the “great evil” of jihadi violence. His government also passed the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, drafted the *Oath of Citizenship Act* to ban niqabs from citizenship oath-taking ceremonies, and amended the *Citizenship Act* to strip a Canadian Muslim terrorist of his citizenship. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister and his Members of Parliament relied on their parliamentary immunity to constantly accuse Canadian Muslim groups of supporting terrorism. Muslim members of the ‘model minority’ were heavily utilized to continue this narrative in other fora. These incessant linkages between Muslims and terrorism resemble the monologue narrative used by Hamid to control perceptions and emotional responses of his ideal narrative audience. The efficacy of Mr. Harper’s narrative control is evident in the current public vitriol against Omar Khadr. My presentation would examine Harper’s techniques in detail.

Brittainy Bonnis, Queen’s University, Cultural Studies, Ph.D. Candidate
Combating Anti-Muslim Bias Through Comedic Counter-Narratives

In December of 2010, Katie Couric in her CBSNews.com review suggested what might be needed in response to anti-Muslim bigotry prevalent in the US was a “Muslim version of *The Cosby Show*” because, she argued, “*The Cosby Show* did so much to change attitudes about African Americans in this country”. In direct response to Couric’s suggestion two versions of a “Muslim Cosby Show” would be produced in the next four years. The first, *The Qu’Osby Show* was aired as a segment of *The Daily Show* on February 17th of 2011, and the second, a four-episode web series entitled *Halal in the Family*, was released in January of 2015. While *The Daily Show* openly mocked the idea that a sitcom might combat anti-Muslim bias, producers of *Halal* (including *Daily Show* correspondent Aasif Mandvi) on the “about” page of the website state that the series is meant “to challenge stereotypes and misinformation about Muslims and communities associated with Muslims ... a tool to support existing campaigns to combat anti-Muslim bias”. My paper is a critical examination of the effectiveness of *Halal* as a counter-narrative to dominant anti-Muslim discourses prevalent in mass media. I consider how successfully parody is used to portray Muslims as assimilable/assimilating members of a presumed secular American society. In *Halal* “not that kind of Muslim” is a reoccurring phrase introduced in the theme song and repeated throughout. I will argue that “that kind” is presumably not only not the violent terrorist of, for example, American war propaganda but also the “religious” kind thus reifying religion as a “problem” to which secularism is the “solution”.

PANEL 15: NEW AND EMERGING FORMS OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY
RELIGIOSITÉ ET SPIRITUALITÉS NOUVELLES ET ÉMERGEANTES

Galen Watts, Queen’s University, Cultural Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

A Quite New Predicament: The Rise of the “Spiritual but not Religious” in a Secular Age

In the last quarter century, a steadily increasing number of North Americans, when asked their religious affiliation, have self-identified as “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR). This paper examines the socio-political implications of this cultural sea change, especially as it relates to issues of religious and cultural diversity. Drawing from qualitative research conducted on Canadian millennials who self-identify as SBNR,

it is argued that the popularity of contemporary spirituality is a byproduct of what Charles Taylor calls our age of authenticity—characterized by an expressive individualism—which has been significantly shaped by the counter culture of the 1960s. Conservative commentators have denounced this form of spirituality as superficial, suggesting that its rejection of religious institutions amounts to a soft relativism that is antithetical to a moral life. What this criticism is blind to is the distinct ethical imaginary at work; one finds propounded within the spiritual milieu an ethic of authenticity, an ethic of freedom, and an ethic of mutual respect. It is fundamentally liberal, in that it prizes individual rights—especially the individual right to freely express who one *feels* oneself to be—above all else. For this reason, tolerance is considered an ultimate virtue among Canadian SBNRs; marginalized identities—be they religious, sexed, or gendered in nature—are considered especially vulnerable and in need of protection. Yet, at the same time, the profound suspicion of *all* institutions and groups found in SBNR circles works against the cultivation of community—be it cultural or political. Thus while contemporary spirituality privileges the rights and freedoms of the individual—to the point of sacralizing the self within—its inherent disdain of conformity not only fuels a rabid rejection of any attempt to explicitly unite individuals’ around a shared cause or commitment, but can also engender a feeling of profound existential and social isolation within the SBNR itself. Ultimately, the “spiritual but not religious” discourse is investigated in order to better understand what Taylor calls the “quite new predicament” we face today.

James Kwateng-Yeboah, Queen’s University, Religious Studies, M.A. Candidate

Secularity, Identity and Societal Well-Being: A Critical Review

What counts as *non-religious*, *spiritual-but-not-religious*, or *atheism*? Who decides the designation of these terms? How useful are these categories, given its largely Western and Christian-influenced heritage? What is the impact of these terminologies on the long standing debate over secularization, and societal well-being? In recent years, the various iterations of the religiously unaffiliated has come under academic scrutiny. This paper critically reviews four very recent works (Lee 2015; Mercadante 2014; Cimino and Smith 2014; Zuckerman et al 2016) that provide insights to the key ideas underpinning the identities: *non-religious*, *spiritual but not religious*, *secularists* and *atheists*. Overall, the paper argues that the various iterations of the “secular” exists in symbiotic relationships with “religion”, particularly, in terms of identity formation and notions of societal well-being. Drawing insights from African contexts of religion, the paper problematizes dominant analytics of secularization as often modelled after Western Christocentric frameworks and histories.

Caelen Salisbury-White, Queen’s University, Religious Studies, M.A. Candidate

The ‘Modern’ Goddess Movement: Exploring the Emergence of New Forms of Spirituality

My research seeks to examine how the Goddess movement, as a consequence of modernity, is an example of a new form of spirituality. I hypothesize that the divine feminine has brought meaning to the lives of women and men because of the insurgence of feminism and the popularity of Goddess ritual in the West (e.g., neo-pagan practices), therefore bringing rise to a *revival of religion* for those interested in creating their own ‘personal’ *pick-and-choose* goddess religion. The methodology I will employ in this paper will be a historiography and will focus on the transformations of the Goddess movement in the West from 1970 to present. Key research questions include: 1) is the *re-emergence* of spirituality in new forms (and of ‘new’ spiritual practices found in the Goddess movement) a response to modernity? 2) why are western goddess worshippers are drawn to alternative spiritual paths; and 3) how is the worship of a multiplicity of goddess figures (e.g., Mother Earth) an *individuation* process which stems from gender politics? I argue that an examination of the Goddess movement as a new form of spirituality offers an opportunity to demonstrate *how* and *why* the promises of modernity were not fulfilled. One of these weak promises, that secularism would reign the modern world, did not happen and ‘religion’ came back and new diverse forms of religiosity emerged, where one of these broken promises, is exemplified by the Goddess movement.

Meghan Grant, Simon Fraser University, Humanities, M.A. Candidate

Expressive Individualism: Religion and Dietary Practices within the Modern Moral Order

Nearly a century after the publication of William James’ seminal *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Charles Taylor revisits and re-evaluates it with his own text, *Varieties of Religion Today*. Taylor describes James as

“our great philosopher of the cusp” because “he describes a crucial site of modernity” in which we struggle with our religious identity (Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today* 59). Despite our increasingly secular society with its dominant materialistic worldview we find ourselves longing for something that we have lost. James is not only able to clearly express this struggle but, argues Taylor, “might be seen as arguing really for a ‘right to believe’; the right to follow one’s own gut instinct in this domain, free of an intimidation grounded in invalid arguments” (Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today* 58). It is these feelings and the individual’s experience of them that James argues are the impetus for religiosity rather than in religious institutions, organizations, and operations. James’ definition of the religious reflects a modern moral order of mutual benefit which values expressive individualism above anything else. Religious expression is now distinctly personal and is representative of our authentic selves rather than organized and imposed externally from long-standing traditions. However, many traditions and practices persist but are divorced from their pre-existing context, and are taken on in whole or in part as expressive individualist actions that satisfy needs previously met through organised externally-imposed religiosity. Within this James and Taylor framework of expressive individualism, a modern moral order of mutual benefit, and the transposition of religious practices in modern secular society, I will examine how food choices, specifically vegetarianism, reflect this religious need, contribute to a mutually beneficial moral order, and express through direct action an individual’s expression of religiosity.

PANEL 16: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND TOLERATION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD
DIVERSITÉ RELIGIEUSE ET TOLERANCE CHEZ LES ANCIENS

Ben von Bredow, University of Notre Dame, Theological Studies, M.A. Candidate

Aristophanes’ Speech in Plato’s Symposium and the Meaning of Secularity

Aristophanes’ comic speech in Plato’s *Symposium* opens a space for human action which is independent of right relation to the gods, and which is ordered toward making the acquisition of finite human goods possible. The secularity which Aristophanes’ speech teaches is present in the very structure of the myth. Plato’s Aristophanes composes a new myth, diverging from the canon of Greek religion, to illustrate the independence of human activity in a way that makes this same divergence from the canon possible. In this way, tolerance for divergence from religious norms appears as a consequence of the secular—but this tolerance is ultimately limited by its implicit affirmation of the secular message at the heart of “free” myth-making: that human flourishing is possible apart from offering right sacrifices to the gods. This secular perspective is true to the outlook of the historical Aristophanes, as can be seen in his play *The Birds*. Making a further point, though, Plato suggests in the epilogue of the *Symposium* (via Socrates) that the comic (secular) and tragic (sacred) views can be reconciled and imply one another. Taking this suggestion, I argue that Plato presents the secularity of Aristophanes’ speech as an appropriation into the human political sphere of the attributes of the Good itself, as Agathon’s speech discusses them. Human secularity is a finite imitation of divine self-sufficiency.

Matthew Vanderkwaak, Dalhousie University, Classics, M.A. Candidate

Religious Pluralism and the God beyond the Gods: The Polytheism of Proclus and divine rule of Caesar Augustus

The Roman Empire tolerated religious pluralism, but within limits. This tolerance was possible because it had a political power with divine sanction. By his own divine authority the Emperor could incorporate other religious powers into his sacred order. However, the limits of such a political pluralism require a philosophical and theological basis; this the Neoplatonists provide. Such a basis is eminently clear in the works of Proclus, who interprets more than one thousand years of diverse religious texts, Hellenic and Barbarian. In order to discover the divine unity of such a diversity of revelations Proclus looks to the very heights of theology, the relation between the singular and Ineffable God and the multiple Gods of the revealed pantheons. Proclus finds that this relation between divine unity and plurality ultimately provides the constitution of all things. The conclusion is a cosmos both reasoned and revealed, a unified philosophical system able to incorporate a religious plurality within itself. Thus, the divine philosophy of

Proclus discovers the basis of a diverse cosmos as well as a diverse State, by looking to that which transcends both.

Tsoncho Tsonchev, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Early Christian Discourses on Law and Justice

This short presentation explains the ideas of some of the early Christian Apologists on law, equality, justice, freedom, religion and property. Its main goal is to show that the political, social and religious views of early Christianity still could be used as a model or, at least, as an important reference point for resolving the problems of the contemporary secular state. In this paper, I discuss some aspects of the political theology of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Lactantius.

Amanda Rosini, McGill University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

Ancient Persian Foreign Policy: Acceptance of Religious Diversity or Economic and Military Strategy?

Robert Young addresses the issue of statehood formation by placing into question the structure that would enable a person or community to identify a group of people as constituting a nation. The problem with statehood is that it requires the nation to possess a monarch endowed with divine authority as a means of legitimacy but when that element is lacking how does a group form a legitimately recognizable nation? How did the community living in Judah after the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.E.), who had been stripped of a monarch and an elite ruling class come to distinguish itself as a nation? Even more importantly how did it gain legitimacy as a nation under Persian rule? The paper will investigate the possibility that the authority to re-establish a Judean state in the late 5th century B.C.E. and early 4th century B.C.E. was sought out by the Babylonian returnees who returned to Judah with a legal codex that had been recognized as legitimate and authoritative by Persian imperial rule. The recognition of Judah's religious and national identity would allow the Persian empire to demand that the Judean nation be loyal to Persian rule and serve in their endeavors to protect and expand the empire's commercial and military interests in the region.

PANEL 17: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SECULARISM IN QUEBEC II
DIVERSITÉ RELIGIEUSE ET SÉCULARISME AU QUÉBEC II

Alexander Nachaj, Concordia University, Religions and Cultures, Ph.D. Candidate

Presence, Meaning and the Christian Cross: Conspicuous Ambiguity during the 2013 Quebec "Charter of Values" hearings

In 2013, the province of Quebec witnessed massive protests following the unveiling of the then Parti Québécois (PQ) minority government's "Charter of Values" which sought to neutralize the visibility of religious images and symbols in public spaces. Throughout, the image Christian cross hung at the axis mundi of the controversy, as the PQ included certain clauses in their charter specifically protecting Christian crosses. Opponents criticized the bill as unfairly targeting minorities while protecting the religion of the majority, while proponents advocated that it was merely as an extension of pre-established state neutrality in the Canadian province and that the cross was, in effect, not a religious object/symbol but a cultural one. This paper will begin by detailing the historical context which led to the flaring up of this "image war"; followed by the arguments of both the proponents and critics of the bill; and lastly, this author will offer some alternative ways of examining these opposing viewpoints and unpacking what else they can tell us about the meaning and significance of this war over images. Ultimately, this author aims to demonstrate that the image war resulting from the proposed charter, rather than stripping the power and the visibility of ostentatious religious symbols, such as the headgear of minorities, the Charter: 1) underlined the ambiguous relation between church and state, secular and religious, in the province of Quebec; 2) problematized the understanding of "sacred symbols" and Quebec's relationship with them; and, 3) led to the increased visibility and presence of the symbols the charter sought to neutralize.

Christophe Achdjian, Université Laval, Law, LL.M. Candidate

L'interdiction du port de signes religieux : vers une spirale normative?

L'interdiction du port de signes religieux pour les personnes exerçant un pouvoir de coercition fait l'objet de vives discussions au Québec. Selon certains auteurs, tel le professeur Bouchard, cette interdiction aurait pour effet de clore le débat sur la laïcité par l'établissement d'un véritable référent législatif. Nous sommes d'avis que cette proposition peut également avoir l'effet contraire, c'est-à-dire qu'elle peut devenir un facteur légitimant l'extension continue du droit. En effet, certaines réformes sont appelées à se nourrir elles-mêmes : c'est ce qu'on pourrait appeler un « phénomène cumulatif ». En conséquence, l'enjeu relatif au port de signes religieux n'est pas simplement de déterminer ce qui doit ou non être interdit. Il s'agit également de s'assurer que l'interdiction ne soit pas détournée de sa finalité. En prenant pour point de référence l'évolution du droit français en matière de religion, nous constatons que ce phénomène cumulatif y a lieu malgré la volonté d'établir un référent législatif. La laïcité française était initialement une laïcité de neutralité, qui n'imposait que des obligations envers l'État. Or, depuis la loi de mars 2004, elle est systématiquement élargie de manière implicite en vue de contourner la jurisprudence applicable. Citons par exemple l'affaire Baby-Loup. Lorsque la laïcité ne peut être élargie, c'est la notion d'ordre public qui est retravaillée pour justifier une nouvelle interdiction. Pensons à l'interdiction du port du voile intégral. À la lumière de ces précédents en droit français, nous formulerons des recommandations permettant de circonscrire l'interdiction précitée, de sorte d'éviter un phénomène cumulatif équivalent au Québec.

Jennifer Guyver, McGill University, Ph.D. Candidate

A bill by any other name: Comparing the 2014 and 2016 debates on secularism in Québec

In the struggle to establish an operative model of secularism in Quebec, the meaning and purpose of religious symbols has become a subject of an intense and divisive debate. Quebec's uneasy relationship with its Catholic heritage, coupled with increasing concerns over religious extremism and transnational terrorism have contributed to widespread mistrust of overt religious symbols and religious minorities. This paper reveals how public policy in Quebec has exacerbated and fueled the mistrust of religious minorities through an examination of the General Consultation and Public Hearings on Bill 60 (the Charter of Secularism) in 2014 and Bill 62 (an Act to Foster Adherence to State Religious Neutrality) in 2016. Through an analysis of the transcripts from these two hearings, I will highlight how politicians have framed the conversation on religious symbols in the Quebec public sphere in accordance with their own political party's distinctive agenda.

PANEL 18: LIBERALISM, DEMOCRACY & CITIZENSHIP
LIBÉRALISME, DÉMOCRATIE ET CITOYENNETÉ

Michael P. A. Murphy, University of Ottawa, Political Science, Ph.D. Candidate

Giorgio Agamben, Political Theology, and the Paradigm Example of Performed Democracy

What is a democracy? Etymology can tell us that democracy, rooted as it is in the Greek terms *demos* (a people) and *kratos* (force), is a borderline concept, prescribing very little either for “people” or their “power.” The democratic state is but one form of constituted power, requiring a *particular* constituent power of a *particular* constituency, and implying only that the rule of that entity is the force of that people. Building on the political theology of Giorgio Agamben, I argue that to understand what orders a democratic society, we must first examine the paradigm example of democracy, not as it is written or decreed, but as it is performed and practiced. For Agamben, uncovering the paradigm example is key to understanding concepts. The signature left by the paradigm upon the sign gives form to the entire regime of signification. Thus, to seek out the meaning of democracy, we must examine a particular performance of a people offering up their might. This paradigm example of democracy, the congregation's acclamation of the final liturgical doxology of the Lord's Prayer, inscribes a signature on the concept of democracy at its deepest ontological substrate.

Ilham Reda, McGill University, Education, Ph.D. Candidate

Islam and Citizenship: An Analysis of Moral Values in Religious and Citizenship Education

The discussion paper aims to review the literature related to the historical, philosophical, and contextual issues that frame how moral values in Islamic religious education complement moral citizenship values taught in civic education. Harry Brighouse's conception of citizenship and views on optimal educational policy set the theoretical framework of the paper and pose as the evaluator and analytical tools of the literature. The paper is divided into 5 sections: Citizenship, Morality and Citizenship Education, Moral Values in Religious Education, Democratic Citizenship in Islam and Religious Education and Citizenship in liberal societies. I argue that there exists a bridgeable gap and inter-subject relation between religious education and civic education curricula irrespective of the inflexibility in doctrine of Islamic teachings of morality and idealistic views of liberal democratic societies.

Ina K. Simon, Concordia University, Theological Studies, M.A. Candidate

A Political Philosophy of Peace

In this presentation, I would like to consider Thomas Hobbes' insights on toleration, (non-) violence, and diversity in a state, especially as pertains to the subject of religion. Elements of Hobbes' philosophy seem strange and unorthodox; and interpretations tend to run the spectrum from staunch authoritarian to committed liberal. Yet, some of Hobbes' ideas lay at the philosophical foundations of the modern democratic secular state (secular here understood as per Charles Taylor's third definition as availability of the non-belief option). I would argue that Hobbes' philosophy transcends (contemporary) divisions like conservative/liberal. Instead, his main interest is to promote progress, understood as the maintenance of order, i.e. peace, and to avoid decline, understood as the break-down of order, i.e. war. To achieve this, he proposes "conservative" policies; however, paradoxically, the results of such policies would be in large part to secure "liberal" ideals, most notably tolerance of the Other. Also, I want to compare the trends in Anglo-American Hobbes literature with some of the Hobbes scholarship coming from the European continent on this matter. Finally, I want to consider whether some of Hobbes' political strategies for protecting minorities within the state could apply to a contemporary context. My main case study for this is the Rwandan Genocide, which I studied extensively as a political science undergraduate – this has shaped and guided my understanding of Hobbes throughout my thesis research.

Eric Berthiaume, Université de Montréal et École pratique des Hautes Études (Paris), Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

D'hier à aujourd'hui, droits de l'Homme et religion: La liberté de culte pour assurer la diversité

Le problème de la diversité religieuse n'est pas nouveau et plusieurs problématiques vécues aujourd'hui trouvent écho lors d'épisodes historiques. La diversité religieuse est l'une d'elles. Prenant racine dans les Guerres de religion du XVI^e siècle, plusieurs solutions ont été envisagées. Souvent, cependant, le calcul politique se retrouve au cœur de la réflexion. Il en fut ainsi lorsque le Comité de Salut public déclara la liberté de culte en 1793 afin de contrer l'athéisme et la déchristianisation. En effet, depuis le début de la Révolution, les actes contre la religion sont nombreux, et ils connurent leur apogée à l'an II de la République, soit de septembre 1793 à juin 1794. Des prêtres furent brûlés, des lieux de culte, principalement catholiques, saccagés. Pour les tenants de cette position, il fallait éradiquer la religion puisque celle-ci permettait l'oppression. C'est dans ce contexte que le Comité de Salut public réaffirma la liberté de culte, puisque les membres de ce dernier considéraient que la religion servait de moral à la société, et qu'une société sans religion ne pouvait faire lien. Cet argument est-il encore d'actualité? D'inspiration rousseauiste, la pensée de Maximilien de Robespierre, membre du Comité de Salut public lors de la déchristianisation de l'an II, prônait l'instauration d'une religion civile qui « chapeauterait » les croyances individuelles, permettant ainsi le lien social. La liberté de croyance aujourd'hui assure-t-elle ce rôle? Peut-on affirmer que les droits de l'Homme actuels, ou le concept de « deep diversity » de Charles Taylor, peut former ce patriotisme constitutionnel cher à Habermas? Cela ne rappelle-t-il pas cette religion civile d'inspiration rousseauiste?

PANEL 19: BEING A MINORITY: RELIGIONS DEALING WITH DIVERSITY
ÊTRE MINORITAIRE : LES RELIGIONS FACE À LA DIVERSITÉ

Pape Serigne Sylla, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales de Paris, Anthropology, Ph.D. Candidate

Post-colonial African transnational identities: Expansion of Senegalese Islamic brotherhoods in Europe (Muridism)

Senegal is a country currently composed of 95% Muslims and 5% Catholic. "Senegalese" Islam has a peculiarity, namely its mystical character about Islamic brotherhoods. In "The diversity of Senegalese fundamentalism", Ba Mame Penda defines Senegal as "the land of Sufi inspiration brotherhoods increasing". There are four main Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal. The first is the Qadiriya which appeared in the 12th century in Baghdad and was founded by Abd al Qadir al Jilani, then developed in Senegal by Sidiyya Baaba in the middle of the 18th century. It was the first to be established thanks to the action of the descendants of the Moorish families, ancestors of the Kounta, originating from Timbuktu, in Mali. Muridism was born in a colonial context of economic, political and social crisis. Sheikh Amadou Bamba attracted many disciples and his influence continued to grow over time. It ends up intriguing the French colonial authorities who saw a potential danger to them of compromising their control on the territory. Sheikh Amadou Bamba undertook a "holy war by the souls" against the colonial administrators. He was arrested between the months of August and September 1895 and sent in exile in Gabon from 1895 to 1902 and in Mauritania from 1903 to 1907. He was then placed under house arrest in Diourbel, his native region in 1912 until his death in 1927.

Grace Tien, Princeton University, Sociology, Ph.D. Candidate

Redefining Weber's Protestant Ethic in China: from Persecuted and Poor to Patriotic, Pious, and Prosperous Citizens

In the last several years, the Chinese Communist Party has repudiated the infiltration of Western ideological, and particularly, religious influences into the country. At the same time, the number of Chinese Christians, notably Chinese Protestants (CPs), continues to exponentially increase over the last decade up to the present, with estimates close to 60 million counting both state-sanctioned and house churches. While Western scholars, media, and NGOs have tended to portray CPs as an oppressed and persecuted population, I argue that the narratives shared by CPs in interviews as well as their public behavior increasingly suggest an active redefining of their role and place in contemporary Chinese society as patriotic, pious, productive, and prosperous citizens in light of China's systemic corruption and moral decline, perceived by both citizens and leaders to be principal problems crippling China. In their narratives, CPs often draw on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic, the concept of "calling," and their own religious and moral beliefs as justificatory and explanatory narratives, legitimating their role and place to the CCP as upright citizens who further the economic prosperity and social welfare of their country. From ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews, I identify five common themes that illustrate the above: 1) the role of prayer in resolving workplace politics and pressures 2) ambivalence and unease felt by CPs over what they perceived to be ambiguous "ethical grey zones." 3) personal accounts of spiritual and/or moral failures and challenges 4) personal accounts of "success" in the workplace (i.e. creatively resolving ethical dilemmas) and 5) emphasis on building and maintaining trust, honesty, and integrity for long-term success.

Anil Mundra, University of Chicago Divinity School, Philosophy of Religions, Ph.D. Candidate

Doxastic Diversity and the Religion-Neutral Space in Classical Indian Philosophy

The classical South Asian milieu was something like what Charles Taylor is most concerned to address in *A Secular Age*—a situation in which belief in any particular theology is a mere option among others—without the other characteristic features he attributes to Western-style secularism, namely a predominantly atheistic public space emptied of religious discourse. The Jains, ever a minority in this religious tumult, devised an innovative response to the philosophical exigencies of disagreement in a highly religious and religiously diverse public space. In this paper, I want to show how their epistemology and metaphysics can be

understood as an answer to such a situation in which the various competing religious beliefs are neither avoidable nor taken for granted. I will exhibit this tendency through readings of one or at most two authors from the binary of major sects of Jainism. The eighth-century Śvetāmbara Haribhadra is well known for one of the earliest Indian doxographies, in which a number of religious schools of thought are treated without assuming the truth of any of them. A few centuries earlier, the Digambara Samantabhadra displays a concern to be persuasive according to inter-religiously neutral standards by generating philosophical solutions in contradiction with no rivals. Jain philosophy as exemplified in these two texts instantiates a premodern non-Western philosophy that is simultaneously highly religious and surprisingly secular, a solution to the problem of disagreement in a diverse religious space that presents a particularistic and constructive philosophy more capacious than those to which it responds.

Andrew Tebbutt, University of Toronto, Study of Religion, Ph.D. Candidate
Rethinking Secularity as Translation in Derrida's Monolingualism of the Other

My paper explores the role of translation in the production of “the secular” as a way of using language. I argue that portrayals of secular discourse as a neutral, self-contained linguistic medium into which religious voices are to be translated do not properly appreciate the underlying entanglement of “secular” and “religious” language at the level of persons’ basic social formation, and thus misconstrue the efficacy of translation as a model for addressing religious and cultural diversity in the political sphere. Through focused readings of Jacques Derrida’s *Monolingualism of the Other* and “The Eyes of Language,” I explore how the secular operates as a particular orientation—a “manner of speaking,” as Derrida calls it—that religious idioms can recognize within and adopt for themselves in reckoning with their own non-self-identity. I argue that what characterizes translation in general, for Derrida—namely, that it activates the tension between a language’s own idiomatic particularity and the ideal of communicability as such—is true no less of the encounter between diverse religious idioms in the context of public, “interreligious” dialogue. Just as translation aims to produce an intelligible contact between diverse languages by “playing with the non-identity with itself of all language” (Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 69), and thus without relying on a neutral “meta-language,” so too is “secular discourse” accomplished, not where differing cultural and religious idioms are translated into supposedly neutral terms (of “public reason,” for example), but rather in their shared pursuit of such neutrality—“translatability,” as Derrida would have it—in reckoning precisely with their own and others’ ineradicable linguistic specificity.

PANEL 20: RELIGION, SECULARISM & MODERNITY
RELIGION, SÉCULARISME ET MODERNITÉ

Mark F. Novak, McMaster University, Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate
A Storied Age?: Taylor, Kearney, and the Need for Better Narratives

500 years of Latin Christendom has created a world of rational, individualistic human beings. This secularizing process of Modernity is paraded as something beneficial to humanity, the result of the subtraction of our religious and superstitious ways of thinking; however, it is portrayed not as a story, but rather as just the way things are. In the 10 years since Taylor’s *A Secular Age* was published, we have witnessed ongoing strife throughout the Middle East, three failed US Presidencies, and terrorist attacks in a growing number of Western countries. In the post-secular age we seem to be entering, how can we flourish as humans? Are we able to peacefully cohabit our shared planet? The proposed paper will explore these questions by examining the disenchanting process of Modernity, and by pointing out that the ‘subtraction’ view held by the Academy is in fact a story. Yet this is good, for stories are indeed necessary, we just need to start telling more constructive ones. The main support for this paper will come from Charles Taylor and Richard Kearney, both of whom seek ways of opening humanity up to a flourishing future. Drawing on their work that demonstrates humans are storied creatures that understand themselves and their world through narratives, this paper shows that by critically recovering certain aspects central to humanity subtracted during the processes of Modernity, and by writing and telling better stories, humans can pass through a secular age into a post-secular age, thereby entering a flourishing and storied future.

Jonathan Page, Concordia University, History, M.A. Candidate
Abdu'l-Bahá Travels Westward: Envisioning a Global Modernity

From August, 1911, to December, 1912, Abdu'l-Bahá (c. 1844 – 1921), a Persian of Shia Muslim background, travelled throughout Europe and North America, with stops in London, Paris, Montreal, and New York, to spread word of his father's obscure religion, the Baha'i Faith. During his travels, Abdu'l-Bahá commanded the fascination of many self-styled Orientalists, newspaper columnists, government officials, converts, and others who were attracted by his unique fusion of elements which are typically described by modernist rhetoric as being in a state of irresolvable conflict: spiritualism and materialism; science and religion; tradition and progress. This paper addresses Abdu'l-Bahá's understudied, subversive critique of the modern, hegemonic discourse of globe-spanning binaries, his arguments for a unification between material and spiritual civilization, and the spread of this message through modern technologies of steam and print. His message of civilizational synthesis was received overwhelmingly positively by Orientalists and the media. Therefore, this paper seeks to serve as a corrective to the prevailing discourse which has cast Orientalists as mere data-gatherers in the service of imperial violence and relegated non-Europeans to the roles of 'resistor' or 'collaborator.' Drawing on Charles Taylor and Talal Asad, this paper argues that religious traditions can accommodate modernity; or, that modernity can accommodate religious traditions. While secularism may not be able to accommodate, it need not have an ideological monopoly over what is modern. Lastly, with the technology-driven globalization of the present in mind, this paper emphasizes the importance of new technologies in spreading different ideas and ways of life.

Keira Mecheri, Université Paris-Sorbonne et Université de Montréal, Psychopathology and Religious Studies, Ph.D. Candidate

La répression religieuse : le cas d'une Théopathologie entre droit et spiritualité

La question de Dieu se reformule aujourd'hui dans des termes fort différents de ceux qui prévalaient dans le temps d'avant la pluralité religieuse de nos sociétés occidentales multiculturelle. La croyance se doit, pensons-nous, d'être systématiquement explorée à la fois dans la pratique clinique et dans les recherches socio-anthropologiques, notamment dans les cas où les sujets adoptent une pensée extrême qui mêle la religion au politique. Dans ces cas, il nous apparaît impératif de mettre au travail une perspective capable d'appréhender le champ religieux dans ses liaisons avec le socioculturel, le politique et le psychologique. Avec le recul massif de la totalité sacrée représentée par la religion, le cheminement des personnes en quête de certitude et de protection s'est incontestablement reconfiguré en profondeur. C'est au confluent d'études ethnographiques menées en Israël, en France et au Québec et d'une pratique clinique auprès d'une population de patients croyants en Dieu que le concept de théopathologie s'est imposé à nous pour qualifier l'impact pathogène de la répression qui étouffe, dans un contexte d'anti-religion ou d'aliénation, la volonté de puissance ou le désir de spiritualité. Cette entité nosologique veut palier à l'aberration de certains diagnostics psychiatriques qui gommant carrément la présence du religieux dans l'appréhension et le traitement de certaines psychopathologies. Dans ce contexte, prenons l'exemple d'un homme traité pour schizophrénie qui était persuadé que la guerre en Irak était de sa faute.

Colin Corder, Carleton University, Political Science, Ph.D.

The Secular Age as The Gnostic Age: Eric Voegelin on Secular Gnosis and Conflict

There is limited admission in Taylor's work that the Secular Age has been pre-eminently an age characterized by immanentist Gnostic movements, e.g., ideologies (i.e. political religions) characterized by progressivist, axiological, or eschatological symbolism, and experientially motivated by profound senses of alienation, demonism, revolt and disenchantment with the world in Max Weber's sense. In Taylor's terms, these experiences may be called a reflection of one's loss of contact with the hypergoods which might provide any sense of personal fullness or direction, and come about with the loss of transcendent frameworks which are the outstanding feature of the Secular Age. However, contra Taylor, the scientist-philosopher Eric Voegelin held that the intellectual and spiritual breakdown of traditional authority in Europe provided space for the advancement of immanentist gnosticism, i.e. of profound revolts against human nature, the transcendent, and the cosmos, combined with progressivist or eschatological projects for

remaking the human condition. He further observed that toleration for rival symbolizations and experiences would be limited or non-existent in the ideological environments fostered by the spirit of *gnosis*. In this talk, I wish to lay-out Voegelin's theoretical critique of the Secular Age qua Gnostic Age, and advance the thesis that a considerable amount of the intolerance of otherness which afflicts our times is comprehensible as a gnostic intolerance for anything which may disturb the project to overcome alienation and disenchantment through political action, e.g., through nationalism, progressivism, fascism, or other ideological movements. I will hold, consequently, that our modern attraction to *gnosis* represents a quite substantial spiritual and political obstacle to mutual recognition and respect of the dignity of others.

PANEL 21: THE LAW DEALING WITH “SECULAR” AND “RELIGIOUS” VALUES II
LE DROIT CONFRONTÉ AUX VALEURS « LAÏQUES » ET « RELIGIEUSES » II

Dania Suleman, Université du Québec à Montréal, Law, LL.B., J.D., LL.M., Lawyer at Roy Bélanger

The possible reconciliations between freedom of religion and gender equality

My paper focus on my Master's thesis, which addresses the potential constitutional tension between gender equality and freedom of religion within the Canadian context, with an outlook on the European dynamics relating to freedom of religion. This interdisciplinary thesis combines theoretical frameworks founded equally in the fields of law, feminist theory, and the sociology of religion, in order to consider the constitutional tension between identity perspectives, feminism, and law. With this in mind, my thesis provides a framework to address this issue which concerns me and from which I wish to propose an avenue toward reconciling different critiques. From here, I take into account the manner by which the judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada and the civil courts address requests for reasonable accommodations, as well as public policies that handle freedom of religion. I subsequently address the significant differences between radical feminism and postcolonial feminism as they relate to the place of women within a religion. The constitutional tension between religious freedom and gender equality tends to be present at this level. In my thesis, I suggest that postcolonial feminism is a valuable theoretical framework to use when reconciling demands for religious accommodation while respecting gender equality. As such, I believe my master's thesis, which aims to reconcile tensions against religious minorities, is a subject that would fit well with your topics, “Gender/Racial intersections with Secularism; Religious freedom/human rights; Politics of Recognition vs Politics of Refusal”, and with the general theme of your conference.

Olou Bankole Joseph, Université du Québec à Montréal, Law, Ph.D. Candidate

Liberté de religion et droits humains

La problématique pour cerner le contour du sujet relatif à « la liberté de religion » (LR) et les « droits humains » (DH) est de savoir si la LR peut, en tant que telle être considérée comme un DH. La liberté de religion est non seulement réputée être un droit humain fondamental, elle a la particularité d'être consacrée par la loi et les textes internationaux et régionaux des droits de l'homme. Ce qui fait d'elle un ensemble de normes juridiques qui méritent non seulement d'être garanties, mais aussi d'être protégées, dans le strict respect de l'ordre public, de la morale et du respect de la liberté d'autrui. Notre réflexion s'est axée sur deux dimensions qui font ressortir le fait que la LR est non seulement un droit humain fondamental (I), consacré par les instruments internationaux (A), régionaux (B) et nationaux (C), mais c'est une norme qui admet des restrictions (II) fixées par les textes eux-mêmes (A), mises à mal par la pratique des États (B) et diversement appréciées par les tribunaux et cours nationaux et internationaux (C). Pour ouvrir le débat et permettre les échanges, nous avons proposé deux exemples tirés de la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (Aff. Aweida et a. c. Royaume uni 2013) et la cour suprême du Canada (Aff. Mouvement laïque québécois c. Saguenay (Ville) 2015)

Elham Beygi, McMaster University, Philosophy, Ph.D. Candidate

Secular Judicial Review

Deconstructing the colonial understating of secularism in religious communities under seemingly legitimate states avoid the problems of considering secularism as westernization and leads to better contextualize it with moral reasoning of each community. Oversimplification of secularism as the separation of religious

discourse from political arena not only overlooks the genealogy of religions and formation of secularism, but also neglects the ways in which diverse religious communities can adapt public discourse on secularism. In this paper, I want to approach decolonization of secularism in religious communities from a legal viewpoint and argue that a secular interpretation of law is as important as the promulgation of secular laws. Such an approach fosters our need for judicial review- the process by which judges review legislation for consistency with a nation's constitutional principles or bill of right. This results in a healthy political system in which decolonial and contextual secularism functions well together. First because the values of religious communities evolve over time and as cornerstones of our legal system, judges have the potential to adapt to these evolvments¹. Second, this approach promotes a sense of inclusion for religious minority groups, especially invisible ones: third, it empowers the robust concept of secularity: and fourth, it proves the functionality of decolonial secular discourse in the public arena which encourages a nation's collective identity.

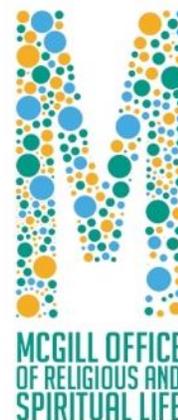
Paige Thombs, University of Victoria, History, M.A. Candidate

Religious Freedom v. Secular Canada: A Case of Conflicting Values?

The Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms protects religion, sex, and sexual orientation and allots equal weight to all. However, the rise of secular values in Canada has been witness to certain Charter Rights moving their way to the forefront of what "should" be accommodated (specifically gender and sexual orientation), while seemingly placing freedom of religion and religious expression in a less important category. While it can be argued that religion has stood in the way of gender and LGTB equality due to its discriminatory rhetoric towards said groups, should this mean that Canada now tips the scales in favour of other areas of protection and leave religious freedom behind? If the Charter gives equal weight to all rights in Canada, then why do we find ourselves in a place where faith-led organizations such Trinity Western University (TWU) are going to court to have their religious freedom protected? How has growing secularism in Canada shifted attitudes towards religious practice, and particularly towards religion in the public sphere? Has an increase in secular values led to a prioritizing of gender and LGTB rights over the rights of religious freedom? How do we make room for both in a nation that increasingly defines itself as secular? Furthermore, as TWU makes its way to the Supreme Court, what is the role of the state in deciding which rights to uphold? Should the state uphold the genuinely held religious beliefs of one group that do not support the full spectrum of Charter Rights of others? I will argue that an increase in "secular values" is helping to dictate both the legal outcome of, and social response to, religious freedoms in Canada.

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