

Exploring the Post-Secular

April 3-4, 2009

Yale University

There has been a great deal of talk in recent years suggesting that we have entered a “post-secular” age. Much of this is a response to the resurgence of politicized religion on the world scene. But what, if anything, does the term “post-secular” even mean? Have we really entered into a post-secular age? And if so, what implications, if any, does this have for the social sciences? Do these developments imply a new approach to the study of religion? A wholesale reconstruction of social science? A shift towards social philosophy? Is there such a thing as “post-secular social science”?

This conference brings together a number of analysts of religion and its entanglements with the world in an attempt to assess these questions. We will address the possible meanings of religion and of the various terms with roots in the term “secular”: secularism, secularity, secularization. Without some grappling with the question of what religion is, it is very difficult to say what secularity or secularization might entail. We will explore the extent to which the “return of religion” is a product of an actual upsurge of religiosity around the world as opposed to greater scholarly attention to religion. We will also examine the ways in which the global religious situation may compel us to reconsider how we think about both religion and social science.

Friday, April 3 – *Henry R. Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue, rooms 202 & 203*

- 8:50 A.M. Introductory remarks
Philip Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey
- 9:00 A.M. **Richard Madsen**, University of California at San Diego
"What is Religion? Categorical Re-configurations in a Global Horizon"
discussant: Deborah Davis, Yale University
- 10:00 A.M. **Aditya Nigam**, Center for the Study of Developing Societies
"What Comes After the Secular?"
discussant: Arvind Rajagopal, New York University
- 11:15 A.M. **Courtney Bender**, Columbia University
"Things in their Entanglements"
discussant: Paul Lichterman, University of Southern California
- 1:00 P.M. **Philip Gorski**, Yale University
"Recovered Goods: The Moral Underpinnings of Durkheimian Sociology"
discussant: Steven Lukes, New York University
- 2:00 P.M. **Hent de Vries**, Johns Hopkins University
"Obama's Deep Pragmatism"
- 3:15 P.M. **Bryan S. Turner**, Wellesley College
"On Doing Religion: Critical Reflections on Rorty, Derrida and Vattimo with Special Reference to 'Asian Religions'"
discussant: Fred Dallmayr, University of Notre Dame
- 4:15 P.M. **James K.A. Smith**, Calvin College
"Secular Liturgies and the Prospects for a 'Post-Secular' Age"
discussant: Pericles Lewis, Yale University
- 5:30 P.M. **John Schmalzbauer**, Missouri State University
"Religion and Knowledge in the Post-Secular Academy"
discussant: Peter Steinfels, Fordham University
- 6:30 P.M. End of panels for the day

Saturday, April 4 – *Henry R. Luce Hall Auditorium, 34 Hillhouse Avenue*

- 8:30 A.M. **Penny Edgell**, University of Minnesota
"Religion as Cultural Repertoire, or, the Post-Secular as Scholarly Turning Point"
discussant: Tomoko Masuzawa, University of Michigan
- 9:30 A.M. **Michele Dillon**, University of New Hampshire
"Probing the Post-Secular Turn: Bridging Grandiose Claims and Lived Realities"
discussant: David Little, Harvard University
- 10:45 A.M. **John Torpey**, The Graduate Center, City University of New York
"A (Post-)Secular Age? Religion and the Two Exceptionalisms"
discussant: David Morgan, Duke University
- 11:45 A.M. **Eduardo Mendieta**, SUNY at Stony Brook
"Spiritual Politics and Post-secular Authenticity: Foucault and Habermas on Post-Metaphysical Religion"
discussant: Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, Yale University
- 1:30 P.M. Roundtable
Craig Calhoun, SSRC & New York University
José Casanova, Georgetown University
David Kyuman Kim, SSRC & Connecticut College
- 3:00 P.M. End of conference

Conveners: *Philip Gorski, John Torpey, David Kyuman Kim.*

Conference sponsors: *The MacMillan Center Initiative on Religion, Politics, and Society; The Center for Comparative Research at Yale University; Social Science Research Council; co-sponsored by The Graduate Center, City University of New York.*

The conference is free and open to the public. No registration is required. For further information, please contact the conference coordinator, Ateş Altınordu, at ates.altinordu@yale.edu.