



Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa (ASRSA) Annual Congress

Religion Matters: Mapping Contemporary Trajectories in Religion Studies

7 – 8 October 2026

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
HYBRID CONFERENCE (IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL)
CALL FOR PAPERS



Faculty of Theology
and Religion
Fakulteit Teologie en Religie
Lekala la Thutatumelo le Bodumedi

Make today matter
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The 48th ASRSA Annual Congress Planning Committee is pleased to announce a Call For Papers for our upcoming conference.

Africa has long been a fertile field for the study of religion. It served as an experiment for Enlightenment critiques of religion, and for colonialism's regime of truth, a regime built on a fabricated hierarchy of human civilisation that positions white superiority as the end of history. This binary framing of religion and culture has long shaped how we think about religion and religious practices. Comparative religion, and more recently the decolonial turn of religious studies, has sought to unsettle this entanglement between the study of religion and the civilising mission.

The postcolonial study of religion has opened a wide range of trajectories for the study of religion matters in Africa: materiality, heritage, food cultures, embodiment, music and soundscapes, healing, aesthetics, and everyday practices that not only negate Western classification(s) of religion but also subvert its secular rationality. **We invite religion scholars in southern Africa to share their research, uncoupled from any single conference theme, to help map what presently defines the field.**

We are interested in submissions that:

- show how the fragility of Enlightenment epistemology is being confronted in your work
- propose emergent methodologies for religious studies in the region
- explore how the classification of religions in Africa informs popular culture
- explore how religion intersects with social and institutional fields such as education, art, and science, including the material dimensions of these encounters
- reflect on why "Religion Matters" and how the study of "religion matters" –intellectually and materially

This is an open conference: we welcome papers on recent, current, or emerging research – designed to stimulate new conversation, reinvigorate established inquiries, or help map the different ways that religion matters are emerging in contemporary Southern Africa. Against the backdrop of the history of continuity and rupture in the study of religion in Africa, ASRSA calls for papers related to the past, present, and future study of religions in and of Africa.



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Association for the Study of Religion
in Southern Africa
(Established 1978)



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Conference Format

We invite submissions in the following formats:

- Paper presentations (20-minute presentations, 10-minute discussion)
- Poster Presentation (15-minute presentation)
- Panel/ Roundtable Sessions (3-4 papers, 60 minutes, including discussion time)
- Masterclasses/ Workshop (90-minute sessions)

Submission Guidelines

Abstracts must be submitted using the following format:

- Name and Surname
- Institution
- Conference Format (Paper, Poster, Panel, Workshop)
- Presentation Approach: In-Person or Virtual
- Include an abstract of not more than 300 words and five keywords.
- Submit abstracts to asrsagroup@gmail.com

Submission Timelines:

1. Deadline for Abstract Submission: **1 September 2026**
2. Outcome of Abstracts Communicated to Authors: **15 September 2026**
3. Final Version of Abstracts Submission for Programme Booklet: **30 September 2026**

Conference Costs

Conference Registration Fees

In person

- Academics: R950 (both days) or R500 (per day)
- Students: R500 (both days) or R300 (per day)

Virtual attendance (Conference access)

- Academics: R475
- Students: R250

ASRSA Membership

All ASRSA members are required to pay their annual membership fees in addition to the conference registration fee.

- Academics: R350
- Students & Retired Members: R200

We look forward to your contributions as we engage in meaningful dialogue and advance new perspectives on the study of religion through the lens of this year's conference theme.



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