

FCSU Network Digest – February 2012

Please read below for news and information from our network.

To include any items in next month's digest, please email m.shaw@gold.ac.uk

News

Religious Literacy Case Study at Goldsmiths

Building on the research undertaken by the Religious Literacy Leadership Programme on a national basis we are now undertaking an in-depth study concentrating on the role of religion within one Higher Education Institution. Funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) this case study will generate a rich analysis of the role of religion in HEIs that is complementary to those resources already available on this website.

The research will seek the views of students and academic and operational staff in both a series of interviews and focus groups. A survey has also been circulated and responses from this will be analysed alongside the formal policies and strategies of the college.

For further information about this case study please contact the researchers

Email: Dr Matthew Francis and Martha Shaw or visit

<http://religiousliteracyhe.org>

The Religious Studies Project, in association with the British Association for the Study of Religions launched in January. This on-line resource includes weekly podcasts featuring an interview with a leading international scholar, presenting a key idea in the contemporary socio-scientific study of religion in a concise and accessible way. The first podcast features Professor Emeritus James Cox

(University of Edinburgh) speaking about the phenomenology of religion. There are also weekly postings of resources to help postgraduate students and aspiring academics, responses to the podcasts, conference reports and book reviews. For more information please see <http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/2012/01/15/hello-world/>

The Immanent Frame (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/>) publishes interdisciplinary perspectives on secularism, religion, and the public sphere. TIF serves as a forum for ongoing exchanges among leading thinkers across the social sciences and humanities, featuring invited contributions and original essays that have not been previously published in print or online.

A current debate, 'Rethinking Secularism' started with a piece by Prof. Tariq Modood entitled *Is there a Crisis of Secularism in Western Europe*. This piece and the ensuing debate can be followed here: <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2011/08/24/is-there-a-crisis-of-secularism-in-western-europe/>

Another recent post by Luke Timothy Johnson, *Five Questions for Robert Bellah*, discusses the latter's book *Religion in Human Evolution*: <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2011/12/07/five-questions-for-robert-bellah/>

The Secretariat of the **Diaconia Research Network in Finland** has launched a new E-News bulletin, reporting on the work of the Network and the development of a new Society for the study and research of Diaconia and Christian social practice. Included in the E-News are details of the 4th Biennial Conference, **Hidden Europe: The Challenge to Diaconia and Christian Social Practice**, to be held in Prague, Czech Republic, 27th – 29th September 2012, Hosted by the Protestant Theological Faculty, Charles University. The rapid developments and disruptive changes in Europe present new challenges to Diaconia. This conference focuses on research and development in relation to the 'hidden' aspects of these developments. These are especially challenging for Diaconia which focuses attention on marginalised and excluded groups. The specific aspects of 'hiddenness' which the conference will explore include:

- The nations and regions of Europe which are on the margins of discussions about the future of the European space, especially countries of the former Soviet Union, the Balkan region and much of Eastern Europe.

- Those people who are living in European countries but who do not have legal citizenship or identity as well as migrants and refugees.
- Those people and communities who are excluded because of disability or on other grounds of identity.

The call for papers for this conference is now open. For more information on participating in the conference or in the wider network, or receiving the bulletin please contact Teemu Pauha (teemu.pauha@diak.fi)

Call for Papers: The LSE Forum on Religion Seminar Series features work in progress on religion: Submissions are welcome from all disciplines and any geographical foci. Send an email with your proposed presentation topic to religionforum@lse.ac.uk.

For information about the Forum on Religion and to keep updated on Forum activities, please visit the website at www.lse.ac.uk/religionforum

Call for papers: Muslims and Political Participation in Britain

This conference is organised by the Alwaleed Centre at the University of Edinburgh in partnership with the Alwaleed Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and the Muslims in Britain Research Network (MBRN).

To be held on 20th and 21st April 2012, the conference focuses on the involvement of Muslims in all aspects of political life in Britain with a particular emphasis on contemporary developments. On the evening of Friday 20th April there will be a public debate on the future of Muslim political participation, featuring a number of elected representatives including Anas Sarwar MP and Humza Yousaf MSP. Further information about the conference may be found at <http://www.alwaleed.ed.ac.uk/> Proposed abstracts of between 200 - 400 words should be sent to Dr Timothy Peace t.peace@ed.ac.uk before 22nd December 2011.

News from RELIGIONS for PEACE :

ECRL delegation on a year-end solidarity visit to Kyrgyzstan Bishop Gunnar Stålsett led an ECRL delegation including Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, Sister Marian

Murcia, Professor Senaid Bülent, Mr. Vakhtang Kipshidze, and General Secretary Stein Villumstad to Kyrgyzstan 19 – 22 December. The visit was a follow up of a January 2011 delegation visit and conference, which encouraged ECRL to accompany Kyrgyz religious leaders in their efforts to contribute to reconciliation and nation building in the aftermath of violent conflicts in their country. The ECRL delegation engaged in conversations with representatives of government, religious leaders, civil society groups and international organisations in Bishkek and Osh. The delegation was informed about progress and challenges in the political and economic developments in the country since the social and political upheavals in June 2010. They heard reports of civil society efforts to address humanitarian and human rights challenges, and received updates on the initiative to explore a possible mechanism for interreligious cooperation, an interreligious council.

Full text: <http://www.rfp-europe.eu/index.cfm?id=365868>

Events

WESTMINSTER FAITH DEBATES

Running from February to May 2012 at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, SW1A 2ET, Wednesdays fortnightly, 5.30-7pm.

Between 2007-2012, £12m was invested by two research councils, the AHRC and ESRC, in the largest-ever funded research programme on 'Religion and Society'. In this series leading academics will present findings arising from that research, for response by public figures. Together they will open up debate about the place of religion in public life today. The series is organised by the Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Professor Linda Woodhead and Dr Rebecca Catto, in co-operation with Theos.

Events listing:

8th Feb: Religious Identity in 'Superdiverse' Societies. Trevor Phillips, Dominic Grieve, Kim Knott, Therese O'Toole

22nd Feb: What's the Place of Faith in Schools?

Richard Dawkins, John Pritchard, Jim Conroy, Robert Jackson

7th March: What have we Learned about Radicalisation?

Mehdi Hasan, Ed Husain, Mark Sedgwick, Marat Shterin, Mat Francis

21st March: What role for Religious Organisations in an era of Shrinking

Welfare?

David Blunkett, Peter Smith, Adam Dinham, Sarah Johnsen

18th April: What Limits to Religious Freedom?

Lisa Appignanesi, Maleiha Malik, Peter Jones

2nd May: What are the main Trends in Religion and Values in Britain?

Aaqil Ahmed, Cole Moreton, Linda Woodhead, Grace Davie

Please email

p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk<<mailto:p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk>> to register

for the debates you would like to attend, and visit

http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates for further details.

Youth and Policy Conference - Thinking Seriously about...Youth Work and Policy

Thursday March 15th 2012, YMCA George Williams College, Canning, Town London. £90

Youth and Policy's fourth 'thinking seriously' conference, supported by YMCA George Williams College, will explore the implications of Coalition youth policy for the youth work field. The conference aims to bring together political, academic, managerial and practice perspectives for open dialogue about policy affecting young people and youth work.

Over recent months, many events have taken place with subsequent policy implications for youth work organisation and practice. Following the implementation of Coalition spending cuts, the Select Committee on Services for Young People, and the riots of summer 2011, a conference to reflect on these events and their policy consequences in early 2012 is timely and useful. The conference will present a challenge to practitioners, managers and academics to consider the new landscape, and how policy and practice might be better shaped in the light of evidence and experience. Paul Oginsky has agreed to attend the day and will be subject to a Q&A session about the rationale of current and imminent youth policy . Other highlights include a reflection on the Select Committee by Ian Maerns (MP), a youth work panel session to be led by Bernard Davies, and workshops on the NCS, teenage pregnancy, the PREVENT agenda, and the role of faith-based and voluntary organisations in the Big Society.

Please contact conferences@youthandpolicy.org for more information and/or

a booking form.

2011-12 BIVAR seminar series.

The next event is on 1 March 2012: Measuring, managing or misleading? Impact and community-based organisations – the art of the feasible. For further information, visit www.ivar.org.uk

Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change.

Organised by Manchester Architecture Research Centre (MARC) at the University of Manchester, and held at St Peter's House Chaplaincy and Church (Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester. M13 9GH) 21st and 22nd March 2012.

This two day event will bring together a wide range of contributions: from (amongst others) academics, policy experts, architects, designers, theologians, chaplains, and facilities managers. Registration can be completed online at: <http://tinyurl.com/7qd2g2u> Deadline: Friday 2nd March 2012. The conference is free to attend, and open to all. Refreshments and lunch will be provided on both days, with a communal evening meal served on the evening of Wednesday March 21st. However, a cancellation fee of £60 will be levied in the event of either non-attendance, or cancellation without good reason after Monday 12th March.

Redesigning Local Services: Policy and Practice

29th March 2012, Central Hall, Westminster

Keynote Speaker: Clive Betts MP, Chair, Communities and Local Government Select Committee

Public Service Events' second annual Redesigning Local Services conference aims to join the dots between government policy in the shape of the Open Public Services agenda and the work that is already being done across the public sector.

For more information and to book;

<http://www.cvent.com/d/hcq8n6/1Q?Refid=Sys4>

MultiFaiths is giving talks, in areas of particular interest to education, chaplaincy, health, equality, local government, the police, fire and rescue, local inter faith groups, for more details, contact through their website.

<http://www.multifaiths.com/contact-us>

Publications/Resources

American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us, Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell.

Explores the patterns of United States religious observance, diversity, and tolerance. Citing examples of the transforming public face of religion in America—namely recent litigation surrounding religious markers on public land and, since John F. Kennedy’s presidency, the mainstreaming of Catholic political candidates—Putnam and Campbell sense that “something has changed” over the past half century in American religious life. Naming a dual change—greater religious polarization and increased religious pluralism—Putnam and Campbell seek to explore how these seemingly oppositional transformations have come to be. (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/american-grace/>)

Religion in Human Evolution - From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age, Robert N. Bellah.

Religion in Human Evolution is a work of extraordinary ambition—a wide-ranging, nuanced probing of our biological past to discover the kinds of lives that human beings have most often imagined were worth living. It offers what is frequently seen as a forbidden theory of the origin of religion that goes deep into evolution, especially but not exclusively cultural evolution.

Bellah’s treatment of the four great civilizations of the Axial Age—in ancient Israel, Greece, China, and India—shows all existing religions, both prophetic and mystic, to be rooted in the evolutionary story he tells. *Religion in Human Evolution* answers the call for a critical history of religion grounded in the full range of human constraints and possibilities.

(www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674061439)

New FbRN resources: Two Mini Courses prepared as part of FbRN’s contribution for national Interfaith Week 20-26th November. Using online video and worksheets these introduce Community Development, and Equality and Diversity issues for faith based organisations. The resources are free to download from the website: <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/inter-faith-week-mini->

[courses](#)

Multifaiths Ebooks:

Reference Guide for Schools, Local Authorities, Hospitals or Chaplaincy services, Police, Public or Voluntary Sector, Hotel and Travel business - Awareness of World Religions including their cultural, history, philosophy and political context. Bahai's, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Paganism, Sikhism, Shinto and Zoroastrianism. As well as Chinese, Jewish, Indian, Muslim, solar or lunar Calendars etc.

<http://www.multifaiths.com/demo/pageflip.html>

- Practice of Religion or Belief
- Diet, Communication
- Cultural, Ethical & Moral Views, Race including nationality and ethnicity
- Healthcare Delivery
- Holy Days, Holidays & Events

Jan 2012 - April 2013 - A3 Size Multi Faiths solar lunar Monthly Planner 48 pages eBook. The Problems of Moon Sighting in Muslim Lunar Calendar - The Way Out? - A3

Multi Faiths Monthly Planner for quick reference Sample Guide

<http://www.multifaiths.com/pdf/ramadan2012.pdf>

Festivals and Feasts - Blessed Months, Days and Nights of the Islamic Year, Spiritual, cultural and social dimensions

<http://www.multifaiths.com/pdf/MuslimFestival.pdf>