

Researching and Teaching Sensitive Topics in the Study of Religions: Addressing Violence, Inequality, and Exclusion in the Pursuit of Non-Harmful Research and Teaching (June 5-7, 2026)

Both researching and teaching on religions are sensitive undertakings. This is particularly true when these activities address the entanglements of religions with violence, discrimination, and forms of exclusion or inaccessibility. These topics are politically contested and may have (re-)traumatizing effects on researchers and teachers, interlocutors, and students. Moreover, university teaching itself is not free from discrimination and structural barriers and can therefore (re-)produce such experiences. As a result, scholars of religion face challenges that extend far beyond the subject matter when teaching what they research.

This workshop provides a space to exchange ideas and experiences on research and teaching projects that engage with sensitive topics in the study of religions. This includes, but is not limited to, topics such as:

- The roles of religions in contexts of war, displacement, and forced migration.
- Religious discourses and practices in perpetration, legitimation, prevention, and coping with abuse and gender-based violence.
- Entanglements of religions with social inequalities, including class, migration status, etc.
- Exclusion, marginalization, and processes of inclusion of persons with disabilities and other minoritized identities within religious practices, spaces, and communities.
- Religious justifications of violence, trauma, and mechanisms of meaning-making and resilience in post-conflict settings.
- Ethical and methodological challenges of researching vulnerable populations in religious contexts.

The workshop aims to reflect on how such work can be carried out in ways that minimize potential harm—to researchers and teachers themselves, to interlocutors and research partners in the field, and to students—and to discuss strategies for responding when harmful effects nevertheless arise. The workshop is aimed at early-career scholars, including doctoral researchers and postdoctoral scholars, and particularly those who also teach on the sensitive topics they research. Participants are invited to present their research projects or teaching concepts, discuss them with peers, and receive feedback from invited experts.

Early career scholars interested in presenting their research projects and/or teaching concepts in this context are invited to apply to participate in the workshop. Applicants should **submit a project description of no more than 400 words**. This includes an explanation of why the workshop is important to you and your project, and what you can contribute. Additionally, **please provide a short biography of no more than 250 words**. Please note that workshop places are limited.

There is **no participation fee**. **Accommodation and meals will be provided**, but **participants are responsible for covering their own travel expenses**. The workshop will take place on **June 5-7, 2026**, at the **University of Bonn** (Germany), and the working language will be English.

Applications should be submitted to ramona.jelinek-menke@uni-bonn.de by March 09, 2026.