Global Secularisms
A Conference Hosted by Global Liberal Studies

The Global Liberal Studies Program at NYU is hosting its inaugural international, academic conference on November 15 and 16 in New York. The focus of the conference is Global Secularisms.

In recent years, secularism has become a subject of pressing importance for philosophers, social scientists, activists, and theologians. Secularism received renewed scholarly attention with the publication of Charles Taylor’s important book *A Secular Age* in 2007.

Secularism is a vexed topic with global implications and consequences, affecting virtually every part of the world, every nation state and every culture. Questions related to secularism (and post-secularism) have become increasingly urgent and involve enormous real-world implications. From the emergence of the “new atheism,” to battles over “Shariah law” in Europe and the Middle East, to the reemergence of religion in the politics of India and Turkey, to battles over the authority of science in the United States, to struggles both intellectual and political over the shape of the public sphere, the question of secularism proves critical.

This conference returns to these and other related issues, in the light of recent events that are having serious effects on the way we live now, on the shape of global politics and culture for the immediate future.

conference website: http://globalsecularisms.org
register at https://www.nyu.edu/as/forms/ls-conference.html
conference chair: Michael Rectenwald
michael.rectenwald@nyu.edu

mailing address:
Liberal Studies/Global Liberal Studies
726 Broadway
6th Floor
New York, NY 10003
Friday, November 15 and Saturday, November 16, 2013, Helen & Martin Kimmel Center for University Life, New York University, New York

Friday, November 15
9:00 – 9:25 AM: Light Breakfast and Coffee: Room 909

9:30 AM: Panels A and B: Rooms 903 and 905/907
A. Politics: Room 903 (Chair: Roberta Newman)
   1. Gregorio Bettiza, “The Rise of Post-Secular Foreign Policy Experts: What Do They Mean and Do When They Say that American Foreign Policy Is ‘Secular?’"

B. Theory: Room 905/907 (Chair: Mahnaz Yousefzadeh)
   1. Pamela Brown, “The Family of Man: Transcendence and Moral Imagination in a Secular Age”
   2. Stijn Latré, “Religion and internal secularization. A critical assessment of recent theories of religious evolution and the secularization of culture”
   3. Farzad Mahootian, “A Comparison of Sufi and Transhumanist Ideals of Human Perfection”
   5. John Tangney, “Neoplatonism, Neoliberalism and the Inner Life”

11:15 AM: Panels C and D: Rooms 905/907 and 903
C. The Public Sphere: Room 905/907 (Chair: Saul Anton)
   1. Jonathan R. Beloff, “The Development of the Relationship between the Public Sphere and the Church in Rwanda”
   3. Ozlem Uluc, “Religion and Post-Secularity: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere”

D. Education: Room 903 (Chair: Rochelle Almeida)
   2. Bert Gasenbeek, “Secularism, science and worldview? The case of the University of Humanistic Studies”

12:45 – 1:25 PM: Lunch: Room 909

3:15 PM: Plenary Panel F: Room 905/907
E. Plenary Panel: Science and Secularities (Chair: George Levine)
   1. Michael Rectenwald, “Is A Post-Secular Science Possible?”
   2. Robert Richards, “Need Science Be Secular?”
   3. David Sloan Wilson, “Lessons from an Evolutionary Think Tank”

Saturday, November 16
9:00 – 9:25 AM: Coffee and Light Breakfast: Room 909

9:30 AM: Panels G and H: Room 905/907 and 903
G. Narrative: Room 905/907 (Chair: Jacqueline Bishop)
   1. Sara Anderson, “Transnational Secularisms, Economic Crisis, and the Case of Ishmael Reed’s Mumbo Jumbo”
   2. Jennifer Bannan, “The Soul’s Last Gasp: Atwood’s Use of Self-Help in Her MaddAddam Series”
   3. Amy Logan, “Can Secularism Spare Women from Honor Violence?”
   5. Laura Samponaro, “Cold Comfort? Secular Consolation in the Ancient Roman Epistolary Tradition”

H. Sacred” Desires: “Secular” Spaces: Room 903 (Chair: Lindsay Davies)
   1. Sean Eve, “Rav Kook and Zvi Yehudah Kook: charismatic religious leadership and the consequences of spiritual accommodation on the political institutions it justifies”
   2. Roberta Newman, “When the Secular is Sacred: The Memorial Hall to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre and the Gettysburg National Military Park as Pilgrimage Sites”

11:15 AM: Panels I and J: Rooms 905/907 and 903
I. The Nation: Room 905/907 (Chair: Peter Diamond)
   1. Zanella Alibhai, “Read Her Lips: Canadian Identity, the Burqa and the Niqab”
   2. Rochelle Almeida, “Not Another Day Off! Secularism in India as Revealed by Federal Holidays”
   4. Catherine Scott, “Post-secularism in post-Soviet Russia”
   5. Jolyon Baraka Thomas, “State Shintō as Heretical Secularism”

J. The “Sacred” Object: Room 903 (Chair: Nancy Reale)
   3. Eddis Miller, “Towards a Spectral Theology: Kant as Theorist of Secularization”
   4. Andrew Ventimiglia, “Demanding the Angel’s Share: Intellectual Property and Spiritual Organization in the Urantia Foundation”

12:45 – 1:25 PM: Lunch: Room 909

1:30 PM: Plenary Panel K: Room 905/907
K. Plenary Panel: Post-secularisms in Context (Chair: Tilottama Tharoor)
   1. Rajeev Bhargava, “We Have Always Been Post-secular”
   2. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, “International Politics after Secularism”

Friday, November 15, continued

1:30 PM: Plenary Panel E: Room 905/907
E. Secularism, what is it and what is it good for? (Opening Remarks by Fred Schwarzbach, Dean of Liberal Studies; Chair: Brendan Hogan)
   1. Philip Kitcher, “Secular Humanism as a Positive Perspective”
   2. George Levine, “The Troubles of an Unrepentant Secularist”
   3. Bruce Robbins, “Atheists in Foxholes”

Saturday, November 16, continued

3:15 PM: Plenary Panel F: Room 905/907
E. Plenary Panel: Science and Secularities (Chair: George Levine)
   1. Michael Rectenwald, “Is A Post-Secular Science Possible?”
   2. Robert Richards, “Need Science Be Secular?”
   3. David Sloan Wilson, “Lessons from an Evolutionary Think Tank”

4:00 PM: Plenary Panel G: Room 905/907
G. Narrative: Room 905/907 (Chair: Jacqueline Bishop)
   1. Sara Anderson, “Transnational Secularisms, Economic Crisis, and the Case of Ishmael Reed’s Mumbo Jumbo”
   2. Jennifer Bannan, “The Soul’s Last Gasp: Atwood’s Use of Self-Help in Her MaddAddam Series”
   3. Amy Logan, “Can Secularism Spare Women from Honor Violence?”
   5. Laura Samponaro, “Cold Comfort? Secular Consolation in the Ancient Roman Epistolary Tradition”

5:15 PM: Plenary Panel H: Room 905/907
H. Sacred” Desires: “Secular” Spaces: Room 903 (Chair: Lindsay Davies)
   1. Sean Eve, “Rav Kook and Zvi Yehudah Kook: charismatic religious leadership and the consequences of spiritual accommodation on the political institutions it justifies”
   2. Roberta Newman, “When the Secular is Sacred: The Memorial Hall to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre and the Gettysburg National Military Park as Pilgrimage Sites”

12:45 – 1:25 PM: Lunch: Room 909

1:30 PM: Plenary Panel K: Room 905/907
K. Plenary Panel: Post-secularisms in Context (Chair: Tilottama Tharoor)
   1. Rajeev Bhargava, “We Have Always Been Post-secular”
   2. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, “International Politics after Secularism”