

BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group

Study Day – CALL FOR PAPERS



Sacred Space in Secular Institutions

Venue: Humanities Bridgeford Street Building 1.69 (University of Manchester)

Date: Friday 18th January

The role, form and affect of sacred space(s) within 'secular' institutions is a theme that is increasingly attractive to scholars within the social sciences. This Sacred study day will consider how different types of organisation – including but not limited to educational establishments, hospitals and hospices, airports, public buildings, shopping centres, etc – 'make space' for faith, sacrality and religious practice(s) within their buildings, management structures and public offerings.

The study day will also consider: the key social, cultural and political drivers behind these spaces; precursors and ongoing developments; how such spaces are positioned within contemporary policy debates; and the practical issues practitioners should consider when designing and managing 'sacred space' within a secular institution. The day will be centred around three axes:

- A reflection upon the wide range of institutions that contain set-aside 'sacred space'.
- A close sociological reading of what 'happens' within these spaces on a day-to-day basis, and how this might be conceptualised methodologically. For instance, how are they 'shared'? How can effective use be measured?
- A thoroughgoing assessment of the role and practice(s) of extant religious groups and traditions, within the provision and ongoing usage of these spaces.

We welcome contributions of any length (20 minute papers, 10-15 minute presentations) which address these, and any of the following questions:

- What are these spaces for, and how are roles and designations contested?
- What is or can be sacred about these spaces?
- To what extent are these spaces multi-faith in either description or usage?

- Do these spaces demonstrate novelty or continuity with existing forms?
- What are the normative factors governing the development of these spaces (e.g. cohesion, diversity, customer focus, etc). Can these factors always be reconciled?

Please send abstracts to Chris Hewson by **15 December**:
chris.hewson@manchester.ac.uk