

Enabling Constraints

A Symposium on the Demands of Frameworks and Data in the Study of Religion

April 27-28, 2017

With Keynote Addresses from:

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The study of religion operates in a tension between the demands of its frameworks and the demands of its data. Scholars of religion construct their object of study within the bounds of inherited disciplinary and methodological frameworks, while the distinct contours of data — experienced in the field or the archive — shape our contributions to the discipline. The successful integration of framework and data reveals essential elements and critical questions about our object of study. But it also hides curiosities in our data, and potential alternative inquiries.

In 2017, the Graduate Students' Association at the University of Toronto's Department for the Study of Religion is dedicating its annual Symposium to the centrality of this tension to the practice of the study of religion. As enabling constraints, frameworks (historical, sociological, philosophical, anthropological, legal, affectual, environmental, etc.) are the grounds for both creativity and examination. The Symposium invites participants to examine the advantages of these bounded frames and archives, to experiment with categorical deviance, and to explore the constructive possibilities of interdisciplinary practice and vocabulary. *Enabling Constraints* will be an opportunity for graduate students to present such examination, experiments, and explorations specific to their work. This conference will encourage reflection and reflexivity about what it is to study religion, and how we do it. Accepted proposals will demonstrate conscious engagement with these meta-discussions.

The topics *Enabling Constraints* strives to discuss include, but are not limited to:

- Ethnographic data resisting determination of a framework
- Archives that challenge standard modes of categorization
- Applied theory gone awry
- Constitutive vocabulary or methodology that works across disciplines
- Reflection on the boundaries of practice
- Frameworks implicated in the construction of data
- Data implicated in the construction of frameworks
- Theoretical or methodological interventions
- Interrogation of central topics of concern
- Excavation of marginal topics of concern

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words by Monday January 30 to 2017symposium@gmail.com