

Call for Submissions

We are currently seeking papers for a peer-reviewed edited volume, **The Bloomsbury Handbook of Ecstatic Religion**, to be published by Bloomsbury Press in their Handbooks in Religion Series with co-editors, Alison R. Marshall, Brandon University (marshalla@brandonu.ca), Rubina Ramji, Cape Breton University (ruby_ramji@cbu.ca), and Frank Usarski, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (drusarski@gmail.com)

The proposed Handbook explores the subject of ecstasy, and religious, spiritual and/or drug induced transformation of the mind and body - online, in texts and lived/practiced today as well as in the past.

While the English word ecstasy comes from the Greek word ekstasis meaning to stand outside oneself, our understanding of the term and related experiences extend beyond this Western Christian paradigm. Chapters examine the diverse and global transformative and sometimes gendered nature of experiences/objects/practices that reflect the spiritual and social power, and self-cultivation efforts of people, deities, religions and spiritual movements. People in different places and in different historical eras have had different experiences in which they have been transformed statically or dynamically through meditation or dance, through contemplative prayer or frenzied chanting and singing. The aim of these ecstatic practices which are often cultivated and experienced viscerally and through the body (embodied practices), has been equally varied. People use embodied practices such as spiritual dancing, singing, channeling or the physical touching of a relic and other religious objects to transform themselves socially, spiritually, physically and/or emotionally. Some may wish to reach an altered state of consciousness; a practice that doesn't need to involve a god or spirit. They may do this in floatation tanks or through the use of psychotropic substances. Indeed, many skeptics have argued that those who claim to have had ecstatic experiences have had them because they have taken some kind of drug. Others use ecstatic and embodied practice for spiritual communion, enlightenment or healing. The Handbook will examine the diverse socio-political influences on spirit possession, trance and mediumship and those seeking altered states. Chapters present material from a variety of vantage points, question the factors that possibly could have led to skepticism about the validity of ecstatic practice, and the gradual marginalization, racialization and the globalization of ecstatic religion.

The volume will provide a broad geographic representation and a scholarly introduction to a variety of audiences. Although we have received wide representation from certain geographical regions, we are still in search of proposals from the topics and geographical locations listed below. We are currently looking for in-depth introductory essays chronicling embodied practices in diverse contexts, as well as dominant and emerging theories and approaches to the study of ecstatic religion, as it relates to racism, colonialism, gender and globalization. Overall, the volume is aimed at scholars and students who seek entry points in the range of critical issues and themes related to religion and ecstasy.

We are specifically looking for proposals (150 words) on the following topics, but are not limited to:

- Wicca and ecstasy (i.e. drawing down the moon)
- Ethnographic and historical studies on Wiccan ecstasy
- Ecstasy in South Asia
- South Asian possession
- Ecstasy in India
- Ecstasy in Kabbalah
- Ecstasy in Hasidic Judaism
- Ecstasy in Judaic traditions
- Oracles and Ecstasy: Greece/Tibet
- Ecstasy in American Christian traditions
- Ecstasy in Pentacostalism
- Orthodox Ecstatic Theosis (i.e. Unity with God)
- Catholic Mystical Marriages/Ecstatic Visions
- Ecstasy in North American religious traditions
- Ecstasy in Africa
- Exploration of lived ecstatic experiences
- Mystical experiences

Wider areas of interest can include proposals on: Ecstatic theories and approaches; Ecstasy and Gender; Ecstasy and Politics; Ecstatic Taboo, Ecstatic Altered States; Ecstatic religious objects; Ecstatic rituals, myths, history, and texts.

Full submissions focussing on the subject of ecstatic religion may range from 6,000–10,000 words depending on topic.

Proposals

Please send an abstract (150 words), anticipated word count, and one page CV to Alison Marshall at marshalla@brandonu.ca Feel free to direct any questions to the editors before submission.

Proposal Deadline: January 1, 2022

Full Draft Submissions of Complete Papers Due: June 1, 2022