

Department of Religion Graduate Student Conference  
Columbia University, New York

# childhoods

AND

# religion

PHOTO CREDIT Samuel Stella

**DATE** April 3rd, 2020 (Registration begins at 9:00AM)

**VENUE** The Diana Center, Room 504

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Jodi Eichler-Levine, Lehigh University**

**FIND OUT MORE AT** <https://columbiareligion.weebly.com/>



BARNARD



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MIDDLE EASTERN, SOUTH ASIAN, AND AFRICAN STUDIES

# Childhoods and Religion

April 3, 2020

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jodi Eichler-Levine, Lehigh University

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Scholars in the humanities and social sciences have recognized childhood as a site for critical inquiry. Childhood, like gender and race, is viewed as a socially constructed category that falls between or at two poles. First, as a matter of biological reality—where childhood is the initial evolutionary stage—and second, as an idea that serves to subordinate those designated as child-like to the “mature” world of adults. Childhood continues to be a social reality with an apparently universal, or at least extensive, role in everything human.

This year we ask one broad question: **how do ideas, experiences, narratives, memories, media representations and imaginations of childhood constitute religious worlds, and how do religious worlds render the former meaningful?** Be it Buddha's early exposure to a morbid world, baby-Krishna's playful tales, Sunday schools, bed-time stories on what growing up entails, birthing rituals or paternalistic conceptions of the 'secular' state--we want to showcase graduate work that explores the broad themes of childhood and religion vis-à-vis one another. The 2020 Graduate Student Conference of the Department of Religion at Columbia University invites papers that address childhood's imbrication with specific religions, and/or the religious, hoping that doing so will rely on and illuminate the study of other important social realities.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential topics. We encourage you to be creative in your choice of topics, methods, and theoretical approaches. Submissions addressing the main theme of the conference are welcome from all fields.

- Gods and their childhoods
- Rationality and Innocence
- Psychoanalysis, religion, and childhood
- Paternalism, the state, and the secular
- History, historiography, and childhood
- Religion and children's art, media, entertainment
- Religion and ethnography of children
- Child care, rearing rituals, and the private/public spheres
- Birthing and puberty rituals

- Religion and the idea of play
- Religion and children's others - adulthood
- Religion and life-narration
- Childhood, the body, and the religious
- Education, religion as a moralizing discourse, and childhood
- Gendering children, race, and religion
- Myths about childhood, myths about social progress, myths in general
- Zooming out: Individual children < parenthood < family < religious communities
- Religion, childhood, and disability
- Childhood Studies and the Study of Religion

### To be considered for participation:

- 1) Complete the form at [columbiareligion.weebly.com/submissions](http://columbiareligion.weebly.com/submissions) by January 19.
- 2) Submit an abstract of no more than 300 words.
- 3) Include five keywords at the end of your abstract. If you wish to highlight one or more topics from the list given above you may mention them as keywords.

**Applicants will be notified of the conference committee's decisions in the first week of February.** After that,

1. Accepted presenters must confirm their participation at the earliest.
2. Accepted presenters must submit their presentation drafts by March 10th. The final presentation will be for no more than 20 minutes.
3. Once participants are organized into panels, each panel will be assigned a respondent (faculty member/advanced PhD student). The respondent will present his or her comments/questions for 7-8 minutes after the panel presentations, before opening the floor for discussion.

Inquiries can be directed to Rohini Shukla and Samuel Stella at [columbiareligion@gmail.com](mailto:columbiareligion@gmail.com). For up-to-date information, please visit [columbiareligion.weebly.com](http://columbiareligion.weebly.com).