
ORGANIZATION

Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

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VENUE AND REGISTRATION

Cluster of Excellence lecture theatre
Room JO 1
Johannisstr. 4
48143 Münster

To participate via Zoom, register until the day of the lecture at:
veranstaltungenEXC@uni-muenster.de

CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE “RELIGION AND POLITICS”

The Cluster of Excellence has been investigating the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures since 2007. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in this funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze in transepochal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change, with their focus being above all on the paradox that religions often develop their innovative potential precisely by drawing on their traditions. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.

PUBLIC EVENING LECTURE WITH KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH

**Ways of Belonging: Religion as Creed,
as Practice ... and as Identity**

Thursday, 13 June 2024 | 6.15 pm



PUBLIC EVENING LECTURE

Thursday, 13 June 2024, 6.15 pm

Ways of Belonging: Religion as Creed, as Practice ... and as Identity

The things we call religions are so diverse that it sometimes seems there is little point in giving them that single label. Religions are bearers of creeds, they are associated with practices of everyday life, including performances of gender, and they can bring belief and affect together in powerful ways. In his Hans Blumenberg Lecture, Kwame Anthony Appiah considers the ways in which the complex phenomena we call religions shape identities. “Once you think of creedal identities in terms of mutable practices and communities rather than sets of immutable beliefs, religion becomes more verb than noun: the identity is revealed as an activity, not a thing. And it’s the nature of activities to bring change”, Appiah argues. This understanding of religious belonging facilitates the critique of approaches which claim that the true nature of a religion lies in its fundamental, sacred scriptures or its dogmatic texts rather than in the social world of its adherents, an error that Appiah calls the “source-code fallacy”. Appiah’s aim is to rethink identity, a project in which religion plays a central role and is at the same time subject to a philosophical critique.

INTERNAL WORKSHOP

Friday, 14 June 2024, 10 am – 3 pm

Identity and Cosmopolitanism – Workshop with Kwame Anthony Appiah

Based on his books ‘The Ethics of Identity’ (2005) and ‘The Lies That Bind’ (2018), Appiah’s idea of cosmopolitanism and his approach of deconstructing identities of creed, colour, country and class will be discussed.

ABOUT KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH



Kwame Anthony Appiah was born in 1954 in London and grew up in Ghana. After studying philosophy and earning his doctorate from the University of Cambridge, he taught at Yale, Cornell, Duke, and Harvard universities, before moving to Princeton University in 2002. At Princeton, he was the Laurence S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and had appointments at the University Center for Human Values, as well as being associated with the Center for African American Studies, the Programs in African Studies and Translation Studies, and the Departments of Comparative Literature and Politics. Since 2014, he has been Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University, where he teaches both in New York and in Abu Dhabi and at other NYU global centers.

Kwame Anthony Appiah holds various honorary doctorates from universities around the world. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. In 2022 he was elected as President of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

HANS BLUMENBERG PROFESSORSHIP FOR RELIGION AND POLITICS

The “Hans Blumenberg Professorship for Religion and Politics” is named after Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996), a philosopher who worked at the University of Münster. It is intended to deepen interdisciplinary discussion at the Cluster of Excellence and to bring innovative ideas from international research to Münster. The professorship has been held in recent years by Sarah Stroumsa (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel), Linda Woodhead (Lancaster University, UK), Maribel Fierro (CSIC, Madrid, Spain), Jóhann Páll Árnason (La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia), and Mark Juergensmeyer (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA).

HANS BLUMENBERG



Hans Blumenberg – the person whom the professorship is named after

Known internationally and to scholars across a wide range of disciplines, the philosopher Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996) was a professor at the University of Münster between 1970 and 1985. He made a significant contribution to defining the meaning of the term “modernity” in historical and philosophical discussions. He questioned the then prevailing theory of secularization, which argued that theological patterns of interpretation from the Middle Ages continued to have an impact in the modern state even after the transition to the modern era. In ‘The Legitimacy of the Modern Age’, Blumenberg argued that the emergence of the modern period should be interpreted as an act of human self-assertion against the religious claims to absoluteness of late medieval thought. Blumenberg also dealt in his work on the history of concepts, intellectual history and the history of philosophy with the interpretation of myths and metaphors. His ideas still inspire heated discussions across disciplines to this day.