

Press release

Places still available: only training programme in Germany in “Journalism on Religion”

Cluster of Excellence and School of Journalism ifp qualify media professionals to deal with religious issues – Themes such as antisemitism and racism, conflicts over religious practices, and new ideological movements – Places still available: deadline for registration is 1 October 2024

Münster, 5 September 2024 (exc) Antisemitism or racism, conflicts over religious practices such as the burkini and circumcision, and new ideological movements. To provide media professionals with expertise on religious matters, the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster and the ifp School of Journalism are offering the “Journalism on Religion” training programme, the only one of its kind in Germany. There are still places available on the current programme, which starts in Berlin in January 2025. The deadline for registration is 1 October 2024 (information below).

The in-service programme qualifies journalists from political, cultural and specialist editorial offices to report on religious belongings and conflicts in pluralistic societies in a sound and critical way. Lectures will be given by researchers from the Cluster of Excellence, members of religious and non-religious groups, and journalists who specialize in religious matters. There will also be visits to religious sites such as synagogues, churches, mosques and temples, as well as diverse insights into Jewish, Christian and Muslim life today.

Unique in the German-speaking world, the training programme will take place from January 2025 to June 2026 in five modules in Berlin, Münster, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne and Munich. Lecturers from the Cluster of Excellence include the sociologist of religion Detlef Pollack, the historian Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, the Catholic theologian Michael Seewald, the Islamic theologian Dina El Omari, and the communication scientist Thorsten Quandt.

“A diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs can generate social conflicts”, says Cluster of Excellence speaker Michael Seewald. “Part of our research is to look at how social belongings arise, how conflicts over them are regulated, and how equality is achieved. Through this training programme, we can offer media professionals scholarly insights into such complex phenomena; indeed, science-based reporting is one of the cornerstones of democracy”.

The programme addresses the way in which the increasing diversity of beliefs is dealt with politically, legally and socially, conflicts over religious practices such as headscarves and crucifixes, church labour law, religious freedom and challenges faced by religious constitutional law. It also deals with the background to antisemitism, ideological movements and conspiracy theories in digital worlds, international conflicts over religion in the past and present, and the relationship between religion, violence and gender. (vvm/tec)

Training programme:

Module 1, 22-24 January 2025, Berlin:

Religion, politics, law: The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed

Module 2, 9-11 July 2025, Münster:

Plurality of worldviews: Religions and the tolerance of ambiguity

Module 3, 8-10 October 2025, Frankfurt am Main:

Belonging or excluded: The lives of religious minorities in Germany

Module 4, 28-30 January 2026, Cologne:

Us and them: Religious conflicts and their political consequences

Module 5, 24-26 June 2026, Munich:

Ideological movements and conspiracy theories: Religions in the digital age

Each module begins on Wednesday at 4 pm and ends on Friday at 1.30 pm.

Registration at: <https://journalistenschule-ifp.de/seminardetails/1037>

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The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster has been investigating since 2007 the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in the 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. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America. 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.