

## Press release

### Continuation of “Journalism on Religion” training programme

**Cluster of Excellence and School of Journalism qualify media professionals to deal with religious issues – “There is a growing need among journalists for knowledge regarding proliferation of religious conflicts” – Positive evaluation among participants leads to continuation of training programme**

**Münster/Munich, 2 February 2023 (exc)** “Journalism on Religion”, the only such training programme in the country, will start in the summer for the second time. Run by the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster and the ifp Catholic School of Journalism, the part-time programme will qualify media professionals to report on religions in plural societies in a nuanced and critical manner. The lectures are given by professors from the Cluster of Excellence, members of religious and non-religious communities, and journalists who specialize in religious matters. Participants will also visit sites of religious relevance. The deadline for applications is 31 March. The programme, which is unique in the German-speaking world, will be held in six modules in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Munich, Münster and Vienna, beginning in Münster in June and ending in autumn 2024, with the additional opportunity to travel to Israel.

“Religious affiliations are currently playing a role in many conflicts around the world”, says theologian and Cluster of Excellence speaker Prof. Dr. Michael Seewald. “However, formal affiliation to a religious community is declining in Western societies. There is a great need for knowledge about such somewhat contradictory phenomena. The second run of the training programme ‘Journalism on Religion’ gives media professionals access to the expertise of our research network. Quality journalism is one of the cornerstones of a functioning democracy, since it helps the public discern religious dynamics, discuss religious conflicts, and focus on the power of religions to shape society. This is exactly what the training programme ‘Journalism on Religion’ is about”.

Head of Research Communication at the Cluster of Excellence, Viola van Melis, adds that the training programme has proven to be an effective instrument for strengthening specialist and science journalism. “The feedback from those who participated in the first run, who work for large media companies, were positive about the programme, especially with regard to the range of topics, experts and excursions, and they pointed out that their newly acquired knowledge benefited their work in many ways. This has encouraged us to continue, especially given increasing conflicts over religious rights and practices”.

## Topics of the training programme

As described by Bernhard Remmers, Journalistic Director of the ifp, the training programme will deal with: how growing ideological diversity is addressed politically and socially; challenges of the constitutional law on religion; forms of religion in digital networks; international conflicts about religion in the past and present; dialogue and conflict between different religious and non-religious communities; and the relationship between religion and violence, as well as religion and gender. The programme also provides diverse insights into Jewish, Christian, and Muslim life in Germany today. (vvm)

**Application:** by 31 March 2023 at <https://journalistenschule-ifp.de/seminardetails/1037>

**Further information:** [www.religion-und-politik.de/fachjournalist-religion](http://www.religion-und-politik.de/fachjournalist-religion)

### Training programme:

Module 1 “Ideological plurality: Religions and the tolerance of ambiguity”, 7-9 June 2023, Franz-Hitze-Haus, Münster

Module 2 “‘The undisturbed practice of religion is guaranteed’: Religion, politics, law”, 18-20 October 2023, Catholic Academy, Berlin

Module 3 “Belonging or excluded? Jewish life in Germany”, 29 November-1 December 2023, Protestant Academy, Frankfurt am Main

Module 4 “Us and them: Conflicts in and around religions”, 10-12 January 2024, Stadthotel am Römerturm, Cologne

Module 5 “In the name of God? International conflicts and religions”, 6-8 March 2024, Kardinal-König-Haus, Vienna

Module 6 “Fundamentalists, the awakened and nerds on the net: Forms of religion in digital modernity”, 29-31 May 2024, Catholic School of Journalism ifp, Munich

Final trip to Israel (optional), autumn 2024 (The trip has to be booked separately and is not an obligatory part of the programme).

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**The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”**

The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation” 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.