

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2027

Neighboring Textual and Intellectual Traditions: Dialogues, Polemics, and Translations

The interdisciplinary research consortium “Dynamics of Religion” examines the religious, cultural, and political-social dynamics between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the past and present (for a description of the project, see: <https://dynamiken-des-religioesen.uni-frankfurt.de/ausfuehrliche-projektbeschreibung/>). Its focus lies on investigating the causes of religiously motivated conflicts, the politicization and instrumentalization of religious difference, as well as analysing the resources and potentials that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam offer for a constructive engagement with diversity and difference. From **1 to 3 February 2027**, the consortium will hold its first international annual conference. Its theme is **“Neighboring Textual and Intellectual Traditions: Dialogues – Polemics – Translations.”** The conference is organized by **Research Area 1, “Religious-Cultural Entanglements: Translation – Transfer – Mediality,”** which investigates relational constellations between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from Late Antiquity to the present. The starting point is the assumption that the three religious traditions did not develop in isolation from one another. Rather, their texts, knowledge traditions, theological debates, and normative principles emerged through processes of exchange, translation, appropriation, transformation, demarcation, and conflict. These relations are therefore not to be understood merely as external influences, but as co-constitutive of the respective religious self-understandings.

The theoretical framework of the conference is formed by the concept of religious-cultural entanglement. This concept designates complex and reciprocal processes of entanglement in which texts, concepts, practices, and bodies of knowledge circulate between different religious, cultural, and institutional contexts and are transformed in the process. Entanglement thus encompasses exchange, adaptation, and appropriation as well as competition, conflict, and distancing. In order to investigate the phenomenon of entanglement, the conference puts the concept of neighbourhood up for discussion as an analytical category. Neighbourhood is understood here not only spatially or socially, but also textually and intellectually. It can encompass shared living spaces and languages as well as texts, traditions, and norms. At the centre stands the question of how religious traditions refer to one another in intellectual debates and confrontations. Processes of reception, translation, commentary, appropriation, transformation, and demarcation come into view, as do asymmetries of power, mediality in the sense of material and communicative conditions, and mechanisms of transfer. The conference examines how concepts, ideas, forms of argumentation, and patterns of interpretation circulate and change across linguistic, cultural, and religious boundaries.

The guiding categories of dialogue, polemic, and translation, understood both in the sense of linguistic processes and as cultural and epistemic processes of transfer, serve to capture these dynamics more precisely. These forms of religious reference, through which such neighbourhoods become visible, are not understood as separate phenomena, but as interwoven forms of religious engagement and contestation. They open spaces of exchange, mediation, and the articulation of distinct theological positions, but may also serve criticism, demarcation, and apologetics.

Together with the conference participants, the conference will examine the added value of the analytical concept of “neighbourhoods” in relation to established approaches to entanglement, such as *entangled history*, *Verflechtungsgeschichte*, *histoire croisée*, and *hybridity*, as well as its limits. The conference combines this theoretical and methodological reflection with concrete historical and contemporary case studies. These case studies are intended to test the analytical viability of the concept and, where necessary, to refine or revise it. The conference tests neighbourhood as an analytical hypothesis and critically develops the concept further through the interplay of theory-building and concrete research.

Contributions are welcome from both early-career and established scholars on the theory of religious neighbourhoods, as well as on concrete relational constellations between Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions that can be explored through the guiding categories of dialogue, polemics, and translation. **The conference will take place at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany, from 1 to 3 February 2027, and will be held in English. Please submit an abstract** of no more than 300 words, together with a brief biographical note (max. 100 words), to Selma Schwarz schwarz.s@em.uni-frankfurt.de by **31 August 2026**.

About Dynamics of Religion

Dynamics of Religion (DynaRel) is an interdisciplinary LOEWE Centre led by Goethe University Frankfurt in partnership with Philipps University Marburg and Justus Liebig University Giessen, and in cooperation with Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. Bringing together scholars from the humanities, social sciences, and educational sciences, it investigates the historical and contemporary religious, cultural, and political-social dynamics between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. DynaRel examines the causes of religiously framed conflict, the politicisation and instrumentalisation of religious difference, and the resources these traditions offer for engaging constructively with diversity. The Centre is funded by the State of Hesse through the LOEWE research funding programme (2026-2029).