

2020 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETINGS

November 29–December 10



PRE-CONFERENCE
WORKSHOP

online

MOTHERHOOD AND RELIGION

A COMPARATIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY,
MATICENTRIC FEMINIST APPROACH

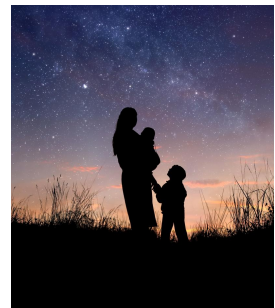
Sunday, November 29, 2020, 1-4 pm EST

Limited to 30 participants registered for the American Academy of Religion or SBL conference, without any additional fee

Organized by
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The intersection of motherhood and religion remains rarely studied even within research on gender in religious studies. Yet, under the influence of matricentric feminism, topics on motherhood and mothering (as institution and experience) or parenting are being brought to the foreground in religious studies and in theology, with references to contemporary maternal theory and recent developments in motherhood studies. This workshop will offer participants the opportunity to discuss their on-going work and to network with other researchers in religious studies or theology who focus on common research themes such as alternative forms of motherhood and mothering in religion, divine and human mothers, or (non-religious) feminist perspectives that consider both the patriarchal institution of motherhood and religion as oppressive. Designed from a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, this workshop will also give an opportunity for networking to scholars, including emerging researchers, specializing in a variety of religious contexts and using different methodologies.



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Schedule *(Subject to modifications; Eastern Standard Time = Boston time)*

1:00 – 1:10 pm - Words of welcome and introduction

1:10 – 1:40 pm - Plenary: Oliver Freiberger, University of Texas

Is Motherhood Universal? Reflections on Category Formation and Comparative Methodology

1:40 – 2:00 pm - Breakout rooms: **Defining the field**

2:00 – 2:20 pm - Reporting to all participants

15 minutes break

2:35 – 3:05 pm - Plenary: Margaret Kamitsuka, Oberlin College

Motherhood—What Would It Mean to ‘Just Say No?’

3:05 – 3:20 pm - Breakout rooms: **Selected topics of interest** *

* These topics will be selected through a survey of participants ahead of the workshop

3:20 – 3:35 pm - Reporting to all participants

3:35 – 3:45 pm - General discussion

3:45 – 3:55 pm - Concluding remarks and official closure of the workshop

The online meeting room (Zoom) will be kept open for free discussion and networking until 4:30 pm.

Keynote speakers

Oliver Freiberger is Professor of Asian Studies and Religious Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. His main fields of interests are religions of South Asia, asceticism, religious boundary-making, and the comparative method in the study of religion. His most recent book is *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies* (OUP 2019). Having no expertise in motherhood studies, in his talk he will address the risks and benefits of a comparative approach and suggest potential opportunities for comparative research on motherhood and religion.

Margaret Kamitsuka is Professor Emeritus of Religion at Oberlin College, Ohio. She is the author of *Feminist Theology and the Challenge of Difference* and the newly published *Abortion and the Christian Tradition: A Pro-choice Theological Ethic*. Her essays have appeared in *Journal of Religion*, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, and *Christianity and Literature*. Kamitsuka serves as the editor for the American Academy of Religion's book series for new dissertations. In her presentation, Kamitsuka examines three complicated religious mother-stories from biblical times to the present and poses the question "what would it mean to 'just say no' to motherhood?".

Active online participation

Registered participants will be requested to complete a short *survey in advance of the online meeting and invited to participate in creating a collaborative database on motherhood and religion. This workshop is free of any additional charge within the framework of the 2020 AAR Virtual Annual Meeting and limited to 30 participants: save your spot by registering by November 15, 2020.