

Religion and Material Culture

Call for Applications for outstanding postgraduate students for the academic year 2020-2021

The [Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters](#) (CSoC) invites researchers from the faculty of humanities and social sciences, who submitted their thesis within the past five years and will have received their doctorate by October 2020 at the latest, to submit their application. This year's postdoctoral fellowship will enable you to participate in a research group focusing on **materiality and material culture in the three Abrahamic religions**. Fellows will be expected to attend seminars, conferences and group meetings on BGU campus at least once a week, and to present their research to other members. The scholarship will consist of 75,000 shekels, a shared workspace in the center's offices, as well as academic and social support from peers and senior researchers.

The Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters

CSoC was founded by Prof. Haim Hames in 2012 as an inter-university research center, supported by the Israeli Science Foundation (ISF) as an I-CORE project. The Center brought together scholars from different disciplines, and most of its work revolved around the study of religious conversion and the interactions between members of the Abrahamic faiths during the middle ages and the early modern period. In 2018, CSoC became a university center in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and has since been led by Prof. Effie Shoham. Each academic year, the Center focuses on a particular theme, and ends with an international workshop or conference. In the summer of 2021 the CSoC group will host The Center for Abrahamic Religions from Oxford University in a workshop on materiality and material culture in the three Abrahamic religions.

For more details on CSoC and its activities: <https://www.facebook.com/BGU.CSOC/>

Religion and Material Culture – Theme for 2020-2021

In recent decades, scholars from different disciplines, including historians of religion, have realized that focusing on texts and rituals is insufficient, as religious identity, experience, community and worship are deeply embedded in the material world as well. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam,

materials and objects are used during prayer and commemoration, to mark hierarchies and power relations, transfer blessing, symbolize holiness, purify, edify, and more. They play a major role in religious life, especially for believers from groups who leave no written evidence. For the historian, ritual objects may indicate continuity or change in a way that complements or challenges the narratives based on written texts.

CSOC's Seminars for 2020-2021 will be devoted to examining a wide range of issues related to materiality in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, in different historical periods. Scholars who do comparative work and those that emphasize transitions, connections and polemics between religions are especially encouraged to apply. We also welcome the application of researchers who focus on the usage, history and theological status of sacred objects; on the development of ritual items and/or their manufacturers, production processes and patterns of consumption; on the role of materials and objects in pilgrimage, ceremonies, magic and indoctrination; and on artistic, theoretical and methodological aspects of materiality.

To apply, please send:

- **Personal Information Form: Application Form for Postdoctoral Students (downloadable via Chrome browser only):** https://in.bgu.ac.il/kreitman_school/Pages/post-doc.aspx
- Abstract of your research proposal (up to 2,000 words) that focuses on materiality and material culture in the Abrahamic religions
- Abstract of your dissertation (up to 2 pages)
- Updated CV, which includes a full list of your publications
- Two recommendations, one of them from your PhD supervisor

Questions and inquiries can be directed to Dr. Danielle Talmon-Heller, who will lead the 2020-21 seminar, at talmond@bgu.ac.il.

Forms and documents must be sent to the administrative manager of the Center, Ms. Raya Even-David rayaed@bgu.ac.il **no later than March 17, 2020.**

Applicants chosen will receive a response by April 7 2020 and will have to respond positively or negatively by April 19 2020.