According to Quintilian, irony is meaning the opposite of what one says. Søren Kierkegaard describes irony as both “infinite absolute negativity” and a “qualification of subjectivity.” Theorizing irony, Claire Colebrook considers “the relation between human intent and contrary outcomes,” and Wayne Booth conceives “of God or Truth as supreme ironist.”

Framing irony’s ambiguity as possibility, this conference proposes reconsideration of irony and the study of religion. What are the relationships between religion and irony?

Irony and religion are both engaged in the construction of meanings, communities, and worlds. Both concepts draw together the contradictory — universal/particular, real/ideal, affirmation/negation — in surprising and productive ways. By revisiting irony and the study of religion, our aim is not to trivialize traditions nor speak strictly of humor; we aim, instead, to lean into exploration of multiplicities of meaning and simultaneously held truths.

We invite graduate students to ask innovative, even unconventional, questions that will initiate dialogue about the role of irony and ironic modes in intellectual traditions.

Just as we welcome scholarship considering all expressions and conceptions of religion, we seek to consider irony in all its forms: rhetorical, dramatic, cosmic, tragic, local, infinite, stable, unstable, etc.

We encourage submission of abstracts from all academic fields and disciplines. We also encourage diverse approaches and methods, including but not limited to the visual, musical, and performance arts.

We will consider play between religion and irony in:
- modes of critique
- texts and traditions
- means of inclusion and exclusion
- constructions of faithfulness or faithlessness
- shaping identities and subjectivities
- producing and destroying boundaries
- navigating doubt & determining sanity
- negating, subverting, and/or affirming

Other topics may include, but need not be limited to:
- Human & divine mutations and aberrations
- Ironic historiographies
- Humorous heuristics
- Employment or rejection of paradoxes

Please submit a 250-word abstract and a 2-page academic CV in PDF format to: iugradconf@gmail.com by NOVEMBER 27, 2017.

Participants will be notified of decisions via email by DECEMBER 8, 2017.
Those accepted will have 20 minutes to present. Each panel will be followed by a faculty response. Full papers will be due February 2, 2018.

Please email iugradconf@gmail.com with questions.