The Graduate Religious Studies Association at Indiana University invites graduate student papers for a conference on Religion and Abuse. Our conference will be held March 6-7, 2020 in Bloomington, Indiana.

This conference intends to explore the relationship between religion and abuse—two terms that admit of various interpretations. What does it mean for a religious teaching, text, image, or practice to be abused? Are there specifically religious forms of abuse? How does abuse shape religious communities or religious ideas? How has religion been used to abuse marginalized communities? In what ways can the abused body take on a religious character or be exploited by religious authority? Is some notion of abuse critical to religion itself?

In addition to papers that consider abuse by and within religious communities, of minority religious groups, and assertions of the abuse in discourse on religion and law, we welcome papers that take a broad interpretation of the notion of “abuse” within a religious context. Such papers might consider issues of heresy and apostasy; comedy, parody, and satire; travel, migration, and demography; economics and politics, textuality, interpretation, and translation; theology; psychology; law; queer studies; or postcolonial studies, among others.

We are particularly interested in papers that work with religious and cultural traditions beyond Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and which engage our theme from a pre-modern perspective. We welcome papers from any and all disciplines and fields, provided they have a central focus on religion and abuse.

Please send an abstract (maximum 200 words), a title for your presentation, and a short bio which includes your name, email, institutional affiliation, and a brief description of your research interests to iugradconf@gmail.com by December 1, 2019. Participants will be notified of acceptance by December 15th. Papers will need to be submitted by February 7, 2020 and will be pre-circulated among attendees.

Our conference will feature a keynote address by Megan Goodwin, Program Director for Sacred W rites and Visiting Lecturer at Northeastern University. Dr. Goodwin will be speaking about material from her upcoming book, Abusing Religion: Literary Persecution, Sex Scandals, and American Minority Religions.

All research presented at this conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of the journal, Theology and Sexuality. The editors of the journal consider both of these terms in the broadest possible sense and welcome submissions from a diverse array of disciplinary and methodological perspectives.