What would the study of religion, global politics and public life look like if religion were neither absorbed fully into the political nor allowed to stand apart from history? What would it entail for scholars to acknowledge the instability of the category of religion, without dissolving it entirely? This lecture will explore these questions, drawing on the arguments of Hurd’s new book, Beyond Religious Freedom, alongside recent work by Noah Salomon and Matthew Scherer. Setting these approaches in conversation with each other, it will discuss their implications for ‘normalizing’ religion in the study of world politics. The talk will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of concepts of religious freedom and religious violence as foundational categories of global political analysis, drawing on examples from Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan.