

Call for Proposals

This Group encourages submissions of panels and individual papers on comparative religious ethics, including those that address the following themes:

- The Mediterranean region as a site for cross-cultural and comparative study
- “Visual ethics,” including various types of art and media as a means of ethical reflection
- Foods and the way in which we eat as they relate to religious ethics
- Asceticism in comparative religious ethics
- Method and theory in comparative religious ethics for area studies scholars
- Religious ethics and the social sciences

Mission

Comparative religious ethics includes three main aspects:

- Comparative ethics describes and interprets particular ethics on the basis of historical, anthropological, or other data
- It compares such ethics (in the plural), which requires searching reflection on the methods and tools of inquiry
- It engages in normative argument on the basis of such studies, and may thereby speak to contemporary concerns about overlapping identities, cultural complexity and plurality, universalism and relativism, and political problems regarding the coexistence of divergent social groups, as well as particular moral controversies

Ideally, each of these aspects enriches the others, so that, for example, comparison across traditions helps generate more insightful interpretations of particular figures and themes. This self-conscious sophistication about differing ethical vocabularies and the analytical practices necessary to grapple with them is what makes comparative ethics distinctive within broader conversations in religious and philosophical ethics. In this way, comparative ethics can be methodologically sophisticated and self-reflexive while productively engaging significant ethical issues at the same time. Such questioning and theory-creation can take various forms. Scholars may focus on particular practical topics, such as war, political order, economic relations, environmental stewardship, or sexual behavior as a way to elicit varying formulations and pursue comparison. Or they may examine more abstract issues, such as the characteristics of the various genres in which ethical reflection occurs in different eras and traditions. Other pregnant abstractions that might be studied comparatively include the general “nature” or “condition” of human beings, practices of personal formation, various moral psychological topics such as emotions, intentions, or the “will,” divergent modes of justification proffered for particular ethics, human rights, and other sorts of international instruments of critique and cooperation. The scope of comparative ethics ranges from the developed ethical systems created by representatives of “high traditions” within (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) to the sometimes less polished theories and practices for governing human life to be found in almost any religious group, however these might be articulated by interpreters. Comparative ethics as envisioned here induces conversation across typical area studies boundaries by involving scholars of different religions, and all sessions in this Group are constructed with this goal in mind, so that data from multiple traditions will be brought to bear on any comparative theme.

Anonymity of Review Process

Proposals are anonymous to Chairs and Steering Committee Members until after final acceptance or rejection.

Questions?

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Method of Submission

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