

Call for Proposals

This Group encourages the submission of any individual paper or panel proposals that make cultural and moral diversity central to ethical analysis. Themes especially welcome this year include:

- Environmental crises, whether the result of natural or human causes
- Contemporary religious protest movements
- Economic justice

Mission

While comparative assessment of the ethics of different religious groups is an ancient and widespread pursuit, the modern field of comparative religious ethics arguably dates from the founding of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* in 1973. (For the purposes of this statement, “ethics” as a subject will refer to reflection about how best to live as human beings; an “ethic” is one more or less determinate position on the best mode(s) of life). While there have been a variety of motivations for the attempt to study “religious ethics” rather than or in addition to “Christian ethics,” one animating idea has been the growing recognition that people from numerous religions propound sophisticated and powerful moral visions, which possess intriguing similarities and differences and are not easily reducible to a common denominator. In addition, the variety and particular characteristics of such visions are historically and politically significant in the modern era of increasingly pervasive globalization. Indeed, comparative ethics may be desperately needed in our contemporary context of global interdependence, misunderstanding, and mutual mistrust. There are thus ample grounds, both social and purely intellectual, to suggest that this ethical variety needs to be engaged directly via rigorous comparison. Comparative ethics makes such diversity central to its analysis, which includes three main aspects:

- Describes and interprets particular ethics on the basis of historical, anthropological, or other data
- Compares such ethics (in the plural) and requires searching reflection on the methods and tools of inquiry
- 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; 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. 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

Proposer names are **visible** to Chairs but **anonymous** to steering committee members.

Questions?

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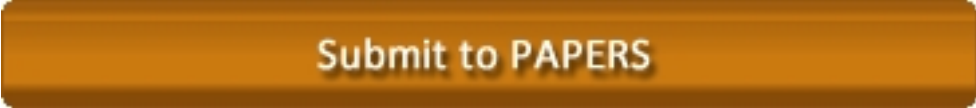
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Method of Submission

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