

## Call for Proposals: Ian Ramsey Centre Studies in Science and Religion

Oxford University Press and the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at Oxford University are pleased to announce a new series of original academic works with a specific focus on the increasingly important field of science and religion. The Ian Ramsey Centre Studies in Science and Religion will initially take the form of a series of between six and nine works to be commissioned over the next six years. The series will be edited by Alister McGrath, Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University, and Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre. Dr Andrew Pinsent, the Centre's Director of Research, serves as Managing Editor for the series, which is intended to encourage and extend original research in the field of science and religion, and disseminate its ideas and findings. Works will typically be in the range of 70,000 – 80,000 words, although longer works may be considered if the additional length can be justified in terms of its academic impact.

It is expected that the series will consist largely of academic monographs by established scholars, and will deal primarily with scholarly engagement with the “big questions” in the field of science and religion. Potential contributors to this series are asked to ensure that their approaches have the potential for impact on global discussion of such questions, while retaining the highest standards of academic excellence and originality. It is not envisaged that doctoral theses will be included in the series. The first volume in the series will be a critical study by Alister McGrath of the concept of rationality in science and religion, which is expected to be published in late 2018.

Anecdotal evidence presently suggests that the most interesting and highly discussed topics in the general field of science and religion at present include:

1. The interaction of the natural sciences and the philosophy of religion, particularly in relation to debates about realism, relationality (such as second-person perspectives), reference, verification and falsification.
2. The impact of evolutionary theory on our understanding of human morality, religiosity, and rationality, and for the increasingly important question of the transcending of human limits;
3. The growing scholarly interest in artificial intelligence, and its religious implications;
4. The phenomenon of a technologically-enhanced humanity, and the ethical and religious questions which this development raises;
5. The exploration of a scientifically-engaged theology, especially within the Christian tradition, which has been particularly receptive to this style of thinking;
6. Empirical psychological study of the importance of religion for human flourishing and wellbeing, particularly in developing systems of meaning, enabling human beings to cope with adversity and ambiguity;
7. The development of new and more nuanced readings of the interaction of science and religion, particularly in western Europe during the Renaissance and early modern periods.

It is expected that most of the constituent components of this series will focus on such broad areas, although works engaging other areas in which there is a demonstrable potential for academic innovation and interdisciplinary impact will be considered.

Although the primary focus of the series is research-based monographs, edited collections or conference proceedings may be considered as having a place within this series, if they are of sufficiently high academic standard and possess a high degree of internal coherence. One such volume will be the edited proceedings of the Ian Ramsey Centre's 2020 conference, which will focus on the potential of Natural Theology for the dialogue between theology and the natural sciences.

### *Readership*

The *primary* target readership envisaged for this series is professional scholars in the fields of theology, philosophy and religion with research and teaching interests in, or connecting with, the field of "science and religion". There is a well-established readership at multiple levels in this field in North America, Europe, and Australasia, with emerging readerships in Latin America and Asia. However, there are also three significant *secondary* audiences of note, as follows:

- a) Professional natural scientists with theological or philosophical interests, who want to explore the interface and interplay of the natural sciences with – for example – the philosophy of religion or Christian theology;
- b) graduate students in theology, philosophy, religion, and the natural sciences who are interested in the field of "science and religion";
- c) Seminarians who appreciate the significance of this field for preaching, cultural engagement, and apologetics.

Potential contributors are asked to ensure that they bear such readerships in mind as they develop their proposals.

### *Application Procedure*

Scholars interested in exploring the possibility of writing with the needs of this series in mind are invited to engage in an initial informal discussion with the editor, Professor Alister McGrath, who may be contacted at the following address:

[alister.mcgrath@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alister.mcgrath@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Professor McGrath is happy to offer informal advice as to whether proposed projects are likely to fall within the scope of the series, or how they might be developed to do so. Your initial communication should include your *curriculum vitae*, and a short (one page) statement of the nature of the project you wish to develop, and how it matches the aspirations of this new series. The Editor will consult with colleagues, and will invite the submission of a full proposal if the project appears to fit the intended scope of the series.

If you are invited to submit a full proposal, you should ensure that this includes the following core elements: your *curriculum vitae*; a clear identification of the "big question" to be engaged, and its potential interdisciplinary importance; a summary of the proposed structure of the

work; a discussion of the manner in which the proposed work will break new ground; an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of representative existing publications in the area; a sample section or chapter (at least 5000 words); and an indication of the likely completion date of the work. Full proposals will be considered by the editorial committee of the Ian Ramsey Centre; acceptance of final texts will be jointly agreed by both the editorial committee of the Ian Ramsey Centre and the Delegates and editors of Oxford University Press.

The Ian Ramsey Centre will welcome inquiries and submissions from all quarters. However, we especially wish to encourage applications from under-represented constituencies within the science and religion community, including women and scholars working outside Europe and North America.

### *About the Ian Ramsey Centre*

The Ian Ramsey Centre (founded in 1985) is part of the Faculty of Theology and Religion in the University of Oxford, and has its offices within the Faculty building in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter of Oxford. Its core aim is to promote high quality teaching and research in the field of science and religion in Oxford and internationally. As part of its contribution to the academic work of the University, the Centre organizes a regular seminar series, bringing scientists, philosophers and theologians together to explore interests they have in common. The seminars are open to students and informed members of the public. In addition, the Centre sponsors regional conferences to encourage new networks through which connections between theology and the sciences can be explored, with particular concerns to develop the field of science and religion in Latin America and Eastern Europe. International workshops are organised to enhance the quality of courses on science and religion that are taught worldwide. The Centre also arranges an annual conference in Oxford on a theme of importance to the field.

The Centre is named after Ian Ramsey (1915-72), Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at Oxford University and later Bishop of Durham, who recognised the importance of communicating with experts from a wide range of disciplines, inspiring them to work together on the problems raised for theology and ethics by developments in science, technology and medicine. Its main officers are its Director (Professor Alister McGrath) and Research Director (Dr Andrew Pinsent).

Ian Ramsey Centre: <http://www.ianramseycentre.info/>

Oxford University Faculty of Theology & Religion: <http://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/home>