

Lansdowne Lecture

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Andrew Gow

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Secularism: A 'work in progress' or an ideological obfuscation?

Thursday, February 25, 4:30 pm
Human and Social Development Bldg
Room A240

Presented by the Religious Studies Program
and the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

Western societies have retained deep roots and connections to Christian ways of thinking (e.g., about morality, sexuality, and work) and ways of living - while simultaneously claiming that they are now secular and have thrown off the Christian past. Non-Christians are simultaneously expected to arrange their lives in accordance with these ways of thinking and living, and given the message that they are neutral – not open to negotiation, objection or resistance. This results in the seemingly never-ending struggles over religious expression in the West. Secularism therefore is not a work in progress, but a false claim of neutrality to mask a hardening ideology.

Professor Gow focuses on popular religion and culture in late medieval and early modern Europe. Recently projects include a study of imaginary peoples, places, and things on world maps (mappaemundi) from 1200-1700. Investigating the belief in the curative and healing powers of blood; and vernacular Bible translation and exegesis before Luther in medieval medicine, Roman beliefs and ancient Greek records.

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