We are back, but we are not; we show up, although too often we do so exhausted. We are present but we frequently long for the safeties many of us enjoyed in our remote and locked-down lives. We embark on anything and everything, although we wonder how are these enterprises more of the same, more of the world running at such pace that less lives than it should really mattered; that world against immigrants, against those bodies considered racialized, unnatural or illegal, that unhospitable world to foreigners, to difference, to prayer. In this world, the conventional religious wisdoms keep shifting from tradition to celebrities, from faith to capital, from ritual to anti-folklore. At once, in this world, organizations like the American Academy of Religion say “Religion Matters.”

Because in religion one finds social identities, aspirations, human culture. Because controversies over religion shape societies. Because in studying and understanding religion, Humanities may learn to discern better how to deploy it in the name of flourishing—whatever that may be—and not to serve evils such as injustice, racism, empires, xenophobia, misogyny, colonization, or slavery.

Lived religion, orthodoxy, spirituality, environment, politics, drugs, trauma, guilt, love, fantasy, science, translation, dogma, nature, dance, healing, sexualities, heroes, authority, embodiment, performance, constitutions, mobility, conversion, aesthetics, race, poetry, language, ethnicity, ethics, health, memory. These are a few terms of research and teaching that circulate and define the work of the faculty in the Department of Religion at Emory.

With this 2-year cycle we bring our research and teaching to a space in which we share our craft, our thoughts, our senses with each other and with other peoples. Our religion matters.

The seminar will meet once a month on Fridays 2-3pm. A faculty member in the Department of Religion will lead discussion; the convener may invite one or more interlocutors, who can be Emory or non-Emory faculty, or non-academic guests, to generate a dynamic, vibrant series of debates and exchanges on matters of importance in, to, and with Religion.

To register for this CHIIRS Seminar, please email the Fox Center at foxcenter@emory.edu.

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