

Emerging Frontiers in Religion and International Studies: Ready or Not for What Comes Next?

Thursday 4 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

This panel brings together a nuanced discussion on the evolving role of religion in global politics. The contributions adopt an interdisciplinary lens and diverse methodologies to explore how religious beliefs, institutions, and frameworks influence foreign policy, conflict mediation, and peace processes. Dickson investigates how ministries of foreign affairs have rationalised greater attention to religion-related foreign policy in line with secular norms. Hachen examines how international humanitarian law (IHL) can and should be used to defend FoRB during armed conflict. Gaudino traces how Pope Francis advanced a de-securitizing agenda. Kloccek's study illustrates how the role of religion during conflict impacts its role after the fighting stops, linking two phases of conflict typically studied in isolation. Rice explores the cognitive and evolutionary science of religion, which shows that religion can act as an adaptive mechanism to foster social cohesion, regulate cooperation, and manage conflict. Collectively, these papers reflect the multidimensional and contested presence of religion in international relations, providing fresh insights for scholars and policymakers on the power, limits, and evolving nature of religion in shaping global peace and conflict trajectories. This synthesis highlights the imperative to rethink traditional assumptions about religion's role and to anticipate future challenges and opportunities in religion and international affairs

Track Classification: Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Human Rights Working Group