DIGITAL RELIGION:

RELIGION, MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Office Hours: by appointment

Short description of the **seminar**:

Despite the scientific and secular connotations of media technologies, a full comprehension of their histories, cultural meanings, contemporary practices, and even possible futures, requires an exploration of their intricate relationships with the domain of religion. The seminar engages "the trinity" of religion-media-technology from as early as the Jewish Golem myth, Islam's scientific golden age, and the rise of technological utopianism in mediaeval Christianity, through the 19th century technological occult and spiritualism, and up to futuristic discourses of technology *as* a religion. A major part of the seminar will focus on the present, exploring the mutual shaping of world religions and new media (cyberspace, smartphones, and video games) by identifying shifts in religious identities, communities, authority, and authenticity of ritual practice, alongside the appropriation and reconfiguration of technologies for religious purposes. Adopting religiosity as an interpretive lens or a sensitivity in digital cultural studies, will offer students a surprising perspective and unique grasp of some aspects of their contemporary secular digital lives.

Assessment:

Participation (including attendance, class discussions, and oral presentations): 20%

Seminar (6000-7000 words) or Referat paper (3000-3500 words) : 80%

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unexcused absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the seminar.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.