

Call for Papers on the topic of
Normativity and Coloniality
to PhD-students and postdoctoral researchers of the
Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn, Germany

The research field “Normativity and Coloniality” addresses the contextual challenges that arise from structures, processes, cognitive mechanisms, or theologies, when normative settings are applied to foreign persons, foreign spaces, or the foreign as such. “Normativity” examines norms as the content, motivation, and justification of colonial activity. Normative convictions, for example, can vary from a colonizer’s religious, ethical, philosophical, legal, or customary system, which is perceived to be superior to that of a foreign space. “Coloniality”, then, can be understood as a structural force that establishes and cements asymmetrical relations of dependency by questioning, or even denying, the value of life, language, culture, ethics, or beliefs perceived as foreign and inferior from a colonizer’s perspective.

You are cordially invited to contribute innovative theological research on any topic that lies, in whole or in part, within the scope of this area. Exemplary research questions might be, but are in no way limited to:

- Which religious motives, theological narratives or dogmatic principles promote coloniality?
- By which means, strategies, or agendas do religions or religious institutions establish norms? How does that establish hierarchies, that classify European values as “universal” or superior?
- To what extent do Christian norms, like ranking the sanctity of life as the highest value, reflect a Eurocentric philosophy or anthropology?
- (How) do churches adjust their Eurocentric understanding of hierarchy when encountering the foreign? Why does Roman Catholic Canon law have to be abided by native peoples, who have never had contact with a European legal system before? Why is that specific legal system regarded as “universal”?
- How does theology as an academic discipline contribute to implanting European understandings of norms, academia, or society into foreign contexts? Which biblical ideas, narratives, or metaphors does theology use as an argument to justify colonizing? Which conditions must be met, so that theology engages itself in colonial activity?

Criteria of the article:

- You are invited to contribute an article of approx. 60,000 characters (including spaces and footnotes), which will be published as part of a volume on the topic of “Normativity and Coloniality” by Herder or an equally reputable international publisher. Given the success of your response, your article is due by **November 1st, 2024**.

- You are or were associated with the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn, Germany, as a PhD-student or as a postdoctoral researcher during the year 2023 or hereafter.
- Your article will be co-authored by an international scholar of your choosing, whose home institution lies outside of Germany, Austria, or Switzerland. You cannot contribute an article in which you are the sole author.

How to respond:

- Please send your response of no more than 750 words to Anke Grimm (a.grimm@uni-bonn.de) by **April 15th, 2024** (only your response, no CV, cover letter or similar is required). Your submission will be anonymized before being handed over to the selection committee.
- You will be informed about the outcome of your response by early May 2024.

How we select: Based on international standards

- Your response will undergo a double-blind peer review process.
- A successful response will contribute to the field of normativity and coloniality from a genuinely theological perspective. Interdisciplinary approaches are desirable, but not mandatory.
- A successful response, as your eventual article, will convince in the following aspects: general structure and organization, coherence, flow of ideas, the sources used and their interpretation, the article's contribution, and originality. Ask yourself: Does my article make a significant contribution to the current state of research and to the field of normativity and coloniality?
- Your successful response, as your eventual article, will demonstrate a mastery of the English language. It will be your responsibility to make sure your article will meet this requirement.
- While naming your international co-author in the response is not mandatory, it will aid your submission. If you can already name your co-author by the time you submit your response, please list their name and home institution in the very first line of your document.
- Reasons for the decision made by the selection committee will not be provided.

Who selects:

- Based on the above-mentioned criteria, a board consisting of PhD-students, postdoctoral researchers, and professors of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn will determine the decision.