

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
**The Working Group on
Plants and Religion**

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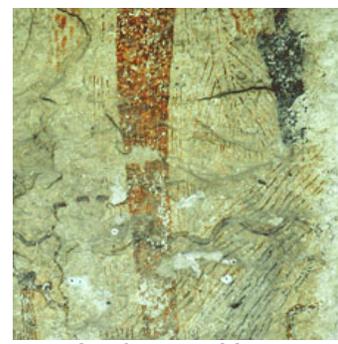
*Please RSVP as Space is Limited



The Working Group on Plants and Religion has been established to fill a gap in the current academic discourse, a systematic and holistic study of the ways in which Cultures uses plants for sacred purposes.



Our Cohort seeks to establish an academic framework in order to facilitate cooperative scholarship and research in the area of plants and religion.



Drawing from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives, The Working Group on Plants and Religion will present a holistic and progressive schema for innovative research.

Inaugural Conference

December 15-17 2011

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Plants
and Religion

Featured Sessions

▲ **Healing Plants**

This session covers shamanism and the ritual uses of plants and healing, focusing on indigenous religious systems of the Amazon. Plants discussed will include **Parika** (*Virola spp*), **Ayahuasca** (*Banisteriopsis Caapi*), **Chacrana** (*Psychotria Viridis*), **Tobacco** (*Nicotiana spp*), and others. *Traditions ranging from Amazonian healing systems to Traditional Chinese and Indian (Asian) Medicine will be considered.*

▲ **Movement & Destinations: Trajectories of Plants and Religion**

This session will look at the ritual uses of plants and movement, especially in terms of pilgrimage, tourism, and the cultural migration, appropriation, and transformation of symbols. *Ayahuasca tourism, the Huichol Peyote Hunt, and New Age uses of these plants will feature prominently in this session*

▲ **Plants, Cosmology, and Art**

This sessions begins with a discussion of *Biophilia* as a vehicle to understanding the long-term relationship of Humans and Flora. Plants will be discussed in terms of their cosmological positions as "world trees," forms of *axis mundi*, and sources of food and knowledge. *In addition, This session will look at petroglyphs and other forms of shamanic art as they have been informed by the ritual use of plants.*

▲ **Environmentalism and Ethnobotany**

This session will attempt to bridge the gap between indigenous and mainstream discourses on plants especially in terms of ethnobotany and the discourse of plants in *Environmentalism, Religion and Nature is a particularly rich and diverse topic, and the intersection of the religious use of plants with this discourse is central.*

▲ **Religious Nature of Plants: Plants in Agriculture, Medicine and Astrology**

This session will address the religious nature of plants in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. *Further, it will also include presentations on Religion and Agriculture in India and Plants as a link to explore the interactions of Systems of Knowledge (religion, medicine and astrology) in India.*

▲ **Political and Legal Intersections of Plants and Religion**

This session will look at questions of legality, policy and procedure surrounding the ritual use of plants. Cannabis, ayahuasca, peyote, coca, and many other plants face strict prohibitionist legislative agendas and rhetorical strategies, much of which is placed unquestioningly in terms of addiction and harm prevention. *This session will aim to treat the subject beyond these common patterns of discourse.*

In Generous Collaboration with the University of Florida's
Department of Religion The Office of the Dean Center for Latin American Studies Department of Anthropology
Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere

THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED; CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR TO DEFRAY EXPENSES OF THE CONFERENCE.