

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE

The International University Seminar for Balkan Studies and Specializations, South-West University Neofit Rilski, Blagoevgrad, is pleased to invite you to the **35th International Round Table**, on the theme: **“Religion and Religiosity – The Balkans and the Black Sea Region” (November 20–22, 2025, South-West University Neofit Rilski, Blagoevgrad)**

Few phenomena have endured in human history with such breadth and depth as religion and religiosity. They permeate the private and the public spheres, political discourse and cultural expression, artistic practices and everyday crafts. For centuries, religious belief and emotion have shaped people’s lives—creating collective and individual identities, motivating conflict yet also restraining aggression, inspiring ethical frameworks, and influencing personal development. Faith in a higher power and affiliation with a religious community have long been central to how individuals and societies understand themselves—both in the past and today.

Religiosity—marked by personal devotion to the divine, or what Grace Davie terms “believing without belonging”—is a defining feature of contemporary secular societies. Changing perceptions and attitudes toward religion—across individuals, communities, and institutions, especially during crises and social or environmental upheavals—continue to spark scholarly interest and prompt new interdisciplinary approaches. These efforts aim to bridge knowledge gaps and explore fresh perspectives on familiar themes.

The study of religion across the humanities, social sciences, natural and applied sciences has a rich and longstanding tradition. In today’s rapidly transforming political, economic, and cultural landscape—shaped in part by war and instability—scholars are turning once again to the paradigms of the 1990s, revisiting the hidden dimensions of human experience: dreams, emotions, and feelings, what Ludwig Binswanger called “the most subjective of subjectivity.”

Against the backdrop of this diverse and newfangled reality, the **35th International Round Table** will explore contemporary issues related to **religion and religiosity in the Balkans and the Black Sea region**. We welcome proposals from a broad range of disciplines, including anthropology, ethnology, history, literary studies, theology, sociology, philosophy and the arts.

Suggested thematic areas include:

- Theoretical paradigms in the study of religion and religiosity;
- Religion and the state;
- Secularization and desecularization; the enchantment and disenchantment of the world;
- Policies toward religion and religious communities—historical and contemporary;
- “Hidden” religious communities in the Balkans;
- Personal religiosity and belief without institutional affiliation;
- The revitalization and invention of religious traditions; new religious movements in the postmodern era;
- Political uses of religion in post-socialist societies;

- Religious heritage and cultural tourism in the Balkans;
- Religion and education—historical perspectives and current debates;
- Missionary activity and pilgrimage; monastic patronage and charitable work;
- Religion in literature—symbolism, metaphysics, theology;
- Religious narratives in oral and written tradition; literary and folkloric images of saints, prophets, and spiritual leaders;
- Intertextuality and biblical references in Balkan literatures;
- Hagiography and its literary transformations over the centuries.

Submission deadline for proposals: September 1, 2025
Please send your submission to: bforum@swu.bg

Working languages: Bulgarian and English.
For papers presented in Bulgarian, we kindly recommend providing a PowerPoint presentation in English.

Your proposal should include the following:

- Full name;
- Academic title and institutional affiliation;
- Research interests;
- Email address;
- Title of your presentation and an abstract (up to 300 words).