illiberalism Studies Program

Call for Conference Papers

Theopolitics: The Return of Sacred Politics and Civilizational Theologies

Politics is becoming theological again, not in the sense of clerical power or institutional religion, but in a deeper structural sense: religion is returning as an explicit, organizing principle of political life. From Peter Thiel's lectures on the Antichrist and the *katechon* to identitarian Christianism across Europe and the Americas, from eschatological frameworks reshaping U.S. foreign policy to the sacralization of civilizational boundaries in Russia, and beyond, what we are witnessing is a new political theology in the classical Schmittian sense. This trend could also be addressed as *theopolitics*: the open, performative mobilization of theological language to structure political confrontation, confer cosmic weight on enemy distinctions, and offer narratives of collective destiny in an age of perceived civilizational crisis.

This conference invites scholars from political science, religious studies, cultural anthropology, history of ideas, and media studies to examine this theopolitical turn comparatively and empirically. We welcome papers that engage with the intellectual genealogies of postliberal theopolitics (Girard, Strauss, Schmitt, Dugin, integralism); its grassroots and popular cultural dimensions, including film, music, online communities, and performative rituals; its interaction with tech accelerationism and Silicon Valley eschatology; its articulation across different regional and confessional settings; and the challenges it poses to liberal political language, secular frameworks, and pluralist institutions.

The conference equally invites critical reflection on liberalism's own implicit theologies and the question of whether procedural liberalism can offer a compelling counter-narrative to movements that speak the language of meaning, belonging, and sacred destiny. We particularly encourage contributions that bring together elite-level ideology and grassroots lived experience, and that situate theopolitics within the broader landscape of illiberal imaginaries, post-liberal theory, and the crisis of the liberal center.

Papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue Open Access, peer-reviewed *Journal of Illiberalism Studies*.

Timeline:

Submission of one-page proposal: July 31, 2026
First draft to be submitted: November 31, 2026
Final draft: February 28, 2027
Conference: early March 2027 at The George Washington University
Peer-review process: March-June 2027
Publication of the special issue: August 2027

Please submit your proposals to illibstudies@gwu.edu by **July 31, 2026**. Successful candidates will be notified by August 31, 2026. Travel, accommodation, and visa expenses will be covered.