

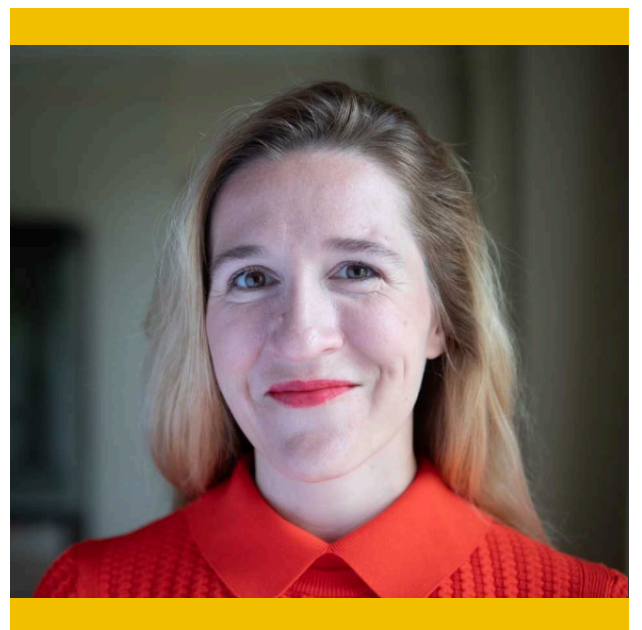
MONDAY LECTURES | SOSE 2025/26 IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.02/03 | 16:15 - 17:45

10.11.2025 | ISIS MRUGALLA-KALMBACHER CHAOS MAGIC IN PRACTICE: RESEARCHING CONTEMPORARY ESOTERICISM

When it comes to "Western Esotericism", research has traditionally focused on mapping currents, traditions, and discourses, primarily through textual analysis. The empirical study of practice, however, which magicians often understand as intimate and even secretive, has remained a notable blind spot. Focusing on written sources, scholars of esotericism often assumed texts and practices were identical, when in empirical observation they are clearly two different genres. Moreover, the research gap shows how scholars of esotericism lacked ethnographic approaches and methods on how to collect data in a field of secrecy with a history of political and religious persecution and discrimination. In my seven years of field work with Chaos Magicians, I found a feasible strategy of cooperative ethnography using radical participation and closeness as deliberate, professional, and transparent tools of research. Researching a practice and style of magic, I wanted to understand how practitioners create shared experiences of reality in group settings, such as being a magician, doing magic, and forming magical groups. For my analytical description, I developed a new research approach, the systemic-praxeological Study of Religions, and several analytical concepts of which I will discuss the most central in my talk: Reality Techniques, Infrastructure, and the History of Style.

ORGANIZED BY SEMINAR FÜR RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT.



**ALL GUESTS WELCOME.
NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY.**



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