The University

The University of Erfurt was founded in 1379 as one of the earliest universities of Germany. Reopening its doors in 1994 with the two key research focus areas “Education” and “Religion”, it offers high quality education, placing especial emphasis on interdisciplinary studies. For the Study of Religion, Erfurt is today one of the top research universities, attracting internationally distinguished scholars and numerous research programs, including funding by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the European Research Council (ERC).

Erfurt and Thuringia

The city of Erfurt, situated in the heart of Europe in Thuringia, Germany, is of central importance to the history of the Protestant Reformation, hosting Martin Luther in the Augustinerkloster, Erfurt, and at Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, where he translated the New Testament into the vernacular. Furthermore, the city in which Meister Eckhart lived and taught was a center of Christian mysticism in the 14th century, and is today one of the best-preserved sites of medieval Central European Judaism (UNESCO world heritage status applied for). Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe contributed to its rich cultural heritage in music and literature at the center of Weimar classicism. At the same time, it is a paradigm for a post-socialist, de-Christianized region with a long tradition of critique of religion and secular humanism.

Travel Information

Lying in the heart of Germany, Erfurt is easily reached by air and rail. Direct hourly high-speed trains connect Erfurt to Frankfurt International Airport (FRA), the main German travel hub. Regular trains also go to and from Leipzig and Berlin airports. Erfurt has a well-organized, round-the-clock public transport system directly linking train station and university campus. All hotels are within easy walking distance to tram stations. The IAHR World Congress 2015 Organizing Committee will provide a Congress Airline offering discount flights to and from Frankfurt Airport. Just follow the link on our website starting September 2014 to book your flight.

Climate Cooperation

The IAHR 2015 World Congress Committee will partner with climate protection projects to aim at a net zero carbon footprint. Being aware of our responsibility to the environment and the amount of CO₂-emissions produced in the process of organizing and operating a world congress, the 2015 Congress team will implement a green fee supporting climate protection and sustainability projects to alleviate the environmental impact of the Congress on our climate. Projects to be sponsored will be chosen with care and subject to strict environmental guidelines.

To keep our Congress green, please use public transportation wherever possible.
Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are constantly in processes of change. The XXI IAHR World Congress 2015 will focus on Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present. The Congress will address the processes of change, the dynamics of religion(s) past and present on several interconnected levels and sublevels of analysis and theory, such as:

- Religious communities in society: Adaptation and transformation
- Practices and discourses: Innovation and tradition
- The individual: Religiosity, spiritualities and individualization
- Methodology: Representations and interpretations

A first call for panels and papers will indicate examples of possible clusters for panels and individual papers around the different possible themes and subthemes to be approached in various ways and from the perspectives of various research traditions. The first call as well as other major steps towards the XXI IAHR World Congress 2015 in Erfurt will be announced at the Congress website, and on the DVRW and IAHR websites.

The International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR)

The IAHR is a worldwide body of national and regional member and affiliate associations and societies dedicated to the academic study of religion. The IAHR is a member of the Conseil international de la philosophie et des sciences humaines/The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (CIPSH) under the auspices of UNESCO.

The IAHR was founded in 1950 at the 7th International Congress of the History of Religions in Amsterdam. Since then, the IAHR has grown to 42 national and 6 regional member associations and societies as well as 4 affiliated societies, reflecting the international and global character and scope of the association.

The IAHR is composed of a General Assembly, an International Committee, and an Executive Committee. The General Assembly meets at each quinquennial Congress and is composed of all paid up members of constituent member associations and societies of the association present at that congress. The International Committee, which consists of two voting delegates from each national or regional member association or society, meets during every Congress to elect the Executive Committee, and to make recommendations on matters of importance to the IAHR. The International Committee also meets once between the congresses. The Executive Committee consists of 12 members, representing major areas of the world, and features as reasonable a gender balance as possible.

The IAHR holds World Congresses every five years. The next, XXI. Quinquennial Congress will be held in 2015 in Erfurt, Germany. The IAHR also sponsors regional and special conferences during the quinquennial periods, and carries on a tradition of holding its congresses and conferences in as many parts of the world as possible. This serves to support the work of IAHR member and affiliate associations and societies, and to encourage international collaboration and intercultural exchange between scholars.

The IAHR publishes the journal Numen in association with Brill Publishers, the IAHR E-Bulletin with supplements, and a website, www.iahr.dk.

The IAHR seeks to promote the activities of all scholars, member and affiliate associations and societies who contribute to the historical, social, and comparative study of religion.

As such, the IAHR is the preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical and cross-cultural study of religion, past and present.

The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns. All enquiries or communications concerning the IAHR should be addressed to the Secretary General Professor Tim Jensen.

The German Association for the Study of Religions (DVRW)

The DVRW is a national member of the International Association for the History of Religions. The DVRW aims to promote the academic study of religions at German universities and towards a wider public via conferences, publications, awards and workshops. Founded in 1960, it has today more than 350 members, putting emphasis especially on the support of younger scholars. Its biannual conferences open up new fields of research to scholars from historical and contemporary European as well as non-European fields of study. Being the national body of Religionswissenschaft (the Study of Religions) in Germany, the DVRW has been chosen to host the XXI Quinquennial IAHR World Congress in Erfurt, Germany, together with the local organizing committee.