

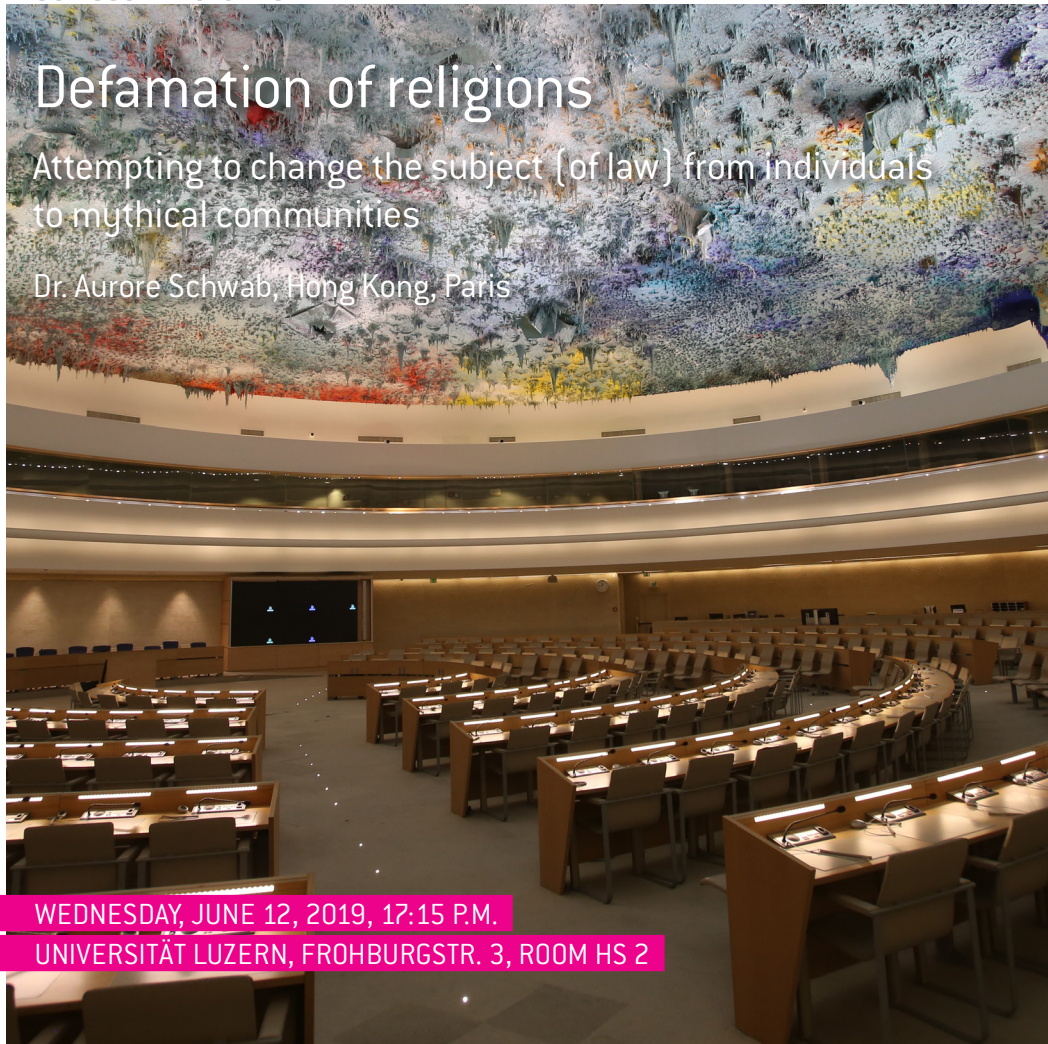
Department for the Study of Religions, University of Lucerne  
and Swiss Society for the Study of Religions  
(SGR-SSSR)

SGR-SSSR LECTURES

# Defamation of religions

Attempting to change the subject [of law] from individuals  
to mythical communities

Dr. Aurore Schwab, Hong Kong, Paris



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019, 17:15 P.M.

UNIVERSITÄT LUZERN, FROHBURGSTR. 3, ROOM HS 2

## Abstract

In 1999, the norm of defamation of religions emerged in the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights in the form of a non-binding resolution. The purpose of this political document was to reduce intolerance and discrimination against religious people and religions around the world. The norm of defamation of religions originated from the Organisation of Islamic Conference, whose initial draft focused exclusively on Islam. Initially, defamation of religion attracted widespread support. In 2004, the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism considered defamation of religion as a form of racism. In 2008, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression was mandated to follow up on the violation of this norm. It was then increasingly opposed by the so-called Western countries and finally abandoned and transformed into «incitement to religious hatred» in 2010–2011. Drawing on discourse analysis of UN sources, the keynote lecture highlights the strategies attempting to redefine international human rights law from the protection of individuals (including religious people) to mythical communities (Islam, Christianity...).

## Biographical Note

Dr Aurore Schwab is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Hong Kong University, and a Postdoctoral researcher at the Center for International Studies, SciencesPo Paris. Supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, she conducts research on the international norm of defamation of religions from a science of religions perspective. Moreover, she is the co-director of a professional training on cultural and religious diversity at the University of Geneva, where she obtained her PhD in History and Anthropology of Religions (2016). In 2018, her PhD thesis was awarded the Fritz Stolz Prize by the SGR-SSSR. She served as a committee member of the Société d'histoire des religions de Genève, the Programme doctoral romand en Histoire et Sciences des religions, and of Asdiwal-*Revue genevoise d'Anthropologie et d'Histoire des religions*.

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