



Religion and Society Research Cluster
School of Social Sciences and Psychology

**“Practicing Texts:
Materializing the Study of
Religious Texts and Textual
Practices in Contemporary
Religion”**

15 November 2018

Parramatta South Campus, PS-EB.G.35
11:00-12:30

**Speaker: Dr Katja Rakow (Utrecht
University)**

During fieldwork in Western Tibetan Buddhist Meditation centers and in Evangelical Bible Study groups, I made two observations that invited me to rethink the way we approach religious texts in the study of religion.

The first observation was that popular religious products, play an important role for religious practitioners in their everyday lives. This observation suggests that we should extend our notion of “authoritative religious texts” to include these other formats. The second observation was that religious practitioners engage texts in manifold ways other than just reading. In this lecture, I will share my observations from different fieldwork sites and my ideas about rethinking the study of religious texts and the category of “scripture” in the light of the material turn, lived religion approaches, and the role of popular textual products in contemporary religion.

Katja Rakow is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Utrecht University, The Netherlands. She received her PhD in Religious Studies from Heidelberg University, Germany, in 2010. Her research interests focus on the transcultural dynamics of religious history and the interrelation of religious discourses and practices with broader cultural patterns. Her fields of study are Tibetan Buddhism in the West and contemporary forms of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. Her recent publications based on her research in the United States and Singapore include “The Bible in the Digital Age: Negotiating the Limits of ‘Bibleness’ of Different Bible Media,” in *Christianity and the Limits of Materiality* edited by Minna Opas and Anna Haapalainen (Bloomsbury 2017) and the co-authored article with Esther Berg, “Religious Studies and Transcultural Studies: Revealing a Cosmos Not Known Before?” in the *Journal Transcultural Studies* (2016).

RSVP By:

Thursday, November 8 2018

Submit to:

Alan Nixon
a.nixon@westernsydney.edu.au