



# Geneva's 2019

# Secularism Law

## Interdisciplinary Considerations

Friday, 31 January 2020, from 09h00 until 15h15

Uni-S, Room B-105, Schanzeneckstrasse 1, 3012 Bern

A workshop for PhD- and undergraduate students by the doctoral program of the Theological Faculty at the University of Berne.



UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN

Institute for Systematic Theology  
Ass. Angela Ullmann  
Prof. Dr. Mathias Wirth

Photo: Martin Adams on Unsplash

## Workshop on 31 January 2020

The canton of Geneva pursues a model of separation of state and church (since 1907) and has reaffirmed it in 2012 with a constitutional revision. After years of negotiation, Geneva's populace has said yes to the new secularism law in February of 2019. Yet renewed resistance has already been announced in front of Geneva's constitutional court. Limiting the law only to its ban on wearing religious symbols for state officials is unjust, as the law also aims at preserving religious peace and the freedom of religion and belief. What is this new secularism law in the canton of Geneva about?

The workshop aims at taking a closer look at the backgrounds and impacts of the law from the perspective of different disciplines. How did the need for a secularism law arise and what are the origins of the law? How is the voted-upon text of the law constructed and what traces have the years of negotiations left in the text? What are potential and already recognizable effects of the law on majority and minority populations? Should the '*pacte laïque*' be assessed as secular, religiously-neutral, anti-religious or differently? And how can such categories be handled with care to facilitate peaceful living together between the religious and non-religious? At the heart of the workshop are an epistemic interest in the context and the search for practicable interdisciplinarity.

**Costs:** The workshop is free of charge.

**Language:** English (without translation).

**Registration:** Please register with [angela.ullmann@theol.unibe.ch](mailto:angela.ullmann@theol.unibe.ch) by 19 January and address any questions to her.

**Preparatory Readings:** will be sent out by 22 January.

## Program

**08h40 Registration**

**09h00 Welcome & Introduction**

Prof. Dr. Mathias Wirth, University of Berne  
Angela Ullmann, University of Berne

**09h15 Process Overview and Reading the Text of the Law**

Sylvain Odier, Horizon Parrhésia  
Angela Ullmann, University of Berne

**10h00 Input 1: Legal Perspective**

Prof. Dr. René Pahud de Mortanges, University of Fribourg

**10h30 Coffee Break**

**11h00 Input 2: Socio-Scientific Perspective**

Prof. Dr. Irene Becci, University of Lausanne

**11h30 Input 3: Dialogical-Ethical Perspective**

Agnete Holm, Danmission

**12h00 Lunch**

**13h00 Moderated Exchange** (incl. 20' coffee break)

Facilitation by Angela Ullmann

**14h50 Considerations on Interdisciplinarity & Synthesis**

**15h15 End of Workshop**

**u<sup>b</sup>**

b  
**UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**