



Guest Lecturer

TANYA MARIE LUHRMANN is the Watkins University Professor in the Anthropology Department at Stanford University. Her books include *When God Talks Back* (Knopf, 2012), *Of Two Minds* (Knopf, 2000), *The Good Parsi* (Harvard University Press, 1996), and *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (Harvard University Press, 1989). In general, her work focuses on the way that ideas held in the mind come to seem externally real to people and the way that ideas about the mind affect mental experience. One of her recent projects compares the experience of hearing distressing voices in India and in the United States.



Respondents

JUSTIN L. BARRETT
Thrive Professor of Developmental Science and
Program Director for PhD in Psychological Science
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY



WILLIAM A. DYRNESS
Dean Emeritus and Professor of Theology and Culture
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



AMOS YONG
Director of the Center for Missiological Research (CMR)
and Professor of Theology and Mission
SCHOOL OF INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

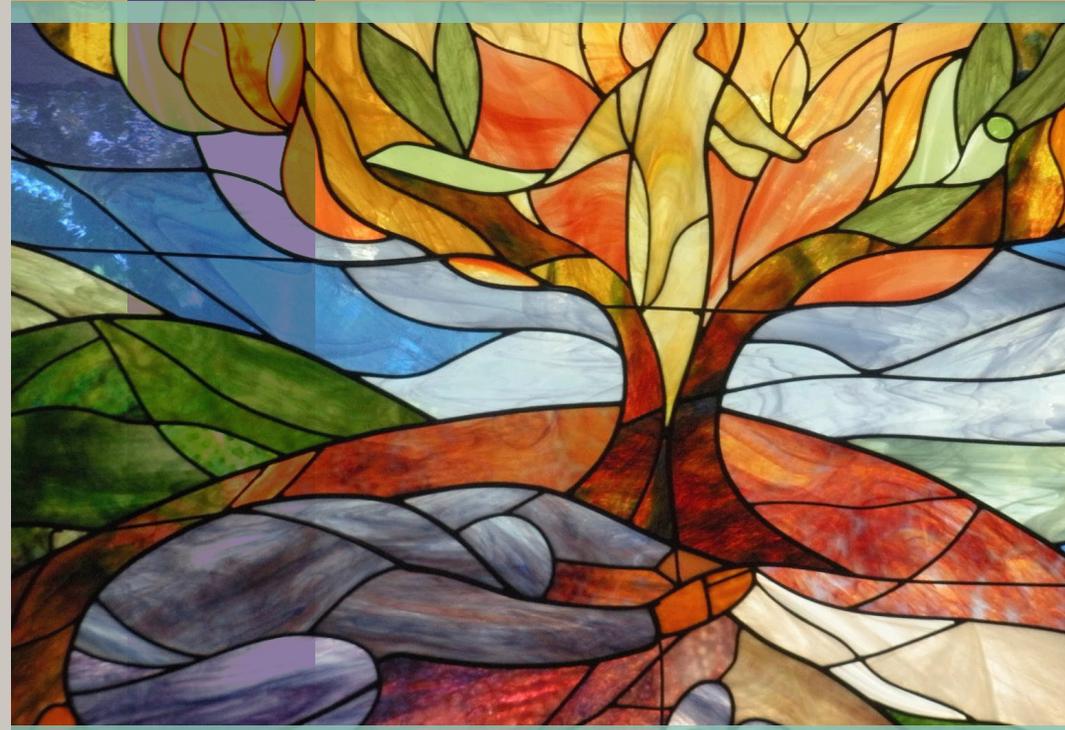
The Fuller Symposium on the Integration of Psychology and Theology was established to encourage the discovery of new relationships between the Christian faith and the discipline of psychology. For more information: 626-584-5500 or integration@fuller.edu.

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For additional information, including respondent bios, parking information, and campus maps, visit fuller.edu/symposium.

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THE FULLER SYMPOSIUM ON THE INTEGRATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY



Kindling God

How People Experience the Divine

Guest Lecturer:
Tanya Luhrmann, PhD

February 17–19, 2016
Travis Auditorium, Fuller Theological Seminary



PROGRAM

Lecturer: **Tanya Luhrmann, PhD**

Location: **Travis Auditorium**

Wednesday, February 17

- **10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**
Lecture 1 (2 CE units offered)

The Faith Frame

The great social science theorists of religion take the fact of belief for granted. Moreover, the cognitive science of religion and evolutionary psychology have demonstrated that evolved, “natural” qualities of our minds readily generate intuitions about supernatural agency. Yet Christians also report that faith is hard: it takes effort. These lectures make the case that this effortful attention involves an attention to the mind and to mental events; that different practices of attending to mental events shape mental experience; that different cultures and different theologies emphasize mind and mental process in distinctive ways; and all this has consequences for the way people experience God. This first lecture lays out the general frame and makes a claim that factual beliefs are different from religious beliefs. Attendees will be able to (1) identify the need to expand the cognitive science of religion to include the effort required to maintain a commitment to the salience of a positive supernatural presence and (2) identify the distinction between religious and factual belief.

Respondent:
Justin L. Barrett, PhD, Thrive Professor of Developmental Science

Thursday, February 18

- **10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**
Lecture 2 (2 CE units offered)

What Kind of Skill?

Both Luhrmann’s ethnographic and psychological work have consistently found that “absorption” is central to one’s having experiences of God, both in America and abroad. People who score highly on the absorption scale are more likely to say that they experience God as a person, that they have a back-and-forth dialogue with God, that they have vivid sensory encounters with God (they hear his voice with their ears), and that they have a range of other powerful and unusual

spiritual experiences. Her work also finds that absorption can be understood to be a skill, and that people get better at absorption over time. This lecture presents that data, discusses its implications, and raises the question of the role of the skilled imagination in enabling spiritual encounter. Attendees will be able to (1) describe the role of the trait of “absorption” in religious experience and (2) compare and contrast the role of absorption in three different cultures.

Respondent:
William A. Dyrness, PhD, Professor of Theology and Culture

- **12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.**
School of Psychology Alumni Luncheon – Registration required

Friday, February 19

- **10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**
Lecture 3 (2 CE units offered)

Local Theory of Mind: Why the Same God Is Experienced Differently in Different Parts of the World

This lecture presents work based on detailed interviews and short ethnography in new charismatic churches in Accra, Ghana and Chennai, India. Luhrmann finds that these congregants seem to have different patterns of intense spiritual experience and to represent God in somewhat different ways. She argues that this is not due to theological differences but to different ways of thinking about thinking and different emphases in attending to mental events. Luhrmann calls these different local theories of mind. She finds that American hyper-awareness of mind leads Americans to be more cautious in identifying supernatural presence. Attendees will be able to (1) articulate the role of different local theories of mind in shaping spiritual experience and (2) identify stability and difference in religious experience in three different cultures.

Respondent:
Amos Yong, PhD, Professor of Theology and Mission

- **12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.**
School of Psychology Student and Prospective Student Luncheon – Registration required

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