

British Sociological Association's Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel)
Annual Report (2025/26)

Name: Socrel (Sociology of Religion Study Group)

Established: 1975

Number of members: We currently have 95 members; 54 are members of the BSA, 15 are standard members of Socrel, and 26 are unwaged/PG/Low-income

Income: As of 31st December 2024, the account balance for the Sociology of Religion study group was £25,140.14

Aims: Socrel is the primary professional group for UK-based academics and postgraduate researchers in the social scientific study of religion. Whilst primarily sociological in orientation, the group also welcomes involvement from members from a range of academic disciplines who share an interest in the empirical study of religion and the analysis of religion in contemporary society. The group aims both to provide a forum for the sharing of current work in the field, as well as shaping theoretical and methodological debates in the field through its meetings and related publications. It also seeks to support the development of emerging researchers in this field through its postgraduate study days and through the active support of postgraduate presenters at other study group events (both intellectually and through the provision of limited postgraduate bursaries).

Review of the year:

This year saw a change in several posts in the committee. At the AGM in 2025 Professor Sarah-Jane Page was voted in as Chair, Dr Tim Hutchinson and Dr Sharon Jagger took over as co-convenors, and Dr Clare Hughes became Membership Officer.

- The Chair's response day this year was a hybrid event held at the University of Nottingham on the theme of religion and health, and in conjunction with Medsoc. Prof. Sarah-Jane Page (Socrel Chair) and Dr Victoria Cluley (Medsoc co-convenor) organised the event. The hybrid format was to maximise participation. The presentations opened up new avenues in bringing together the sociological fields of medicine and religion, and the roundtable panel at the end of the day was praised for bringing together the themes of the day and emphasising new directions of travel on this topic.
- Huge thanks to Lucy Potter for her work as PGR and ECR Liaison Officer, who has now come to the end of her term. At the Study Group's AGM in July 2026 Sara McHaffie was voted in as Lucy's replacement

- The annual conference was held at the University of Nottingham from 29 June to 1 July 2026. The theme was 'Healing and Harms' which attracted a high number of presenters and attendees. Keynotes were given by Dr Rahmanara Chowdhury, Nottingham Trent University, and Professor Anna Halafoff, Deakin University. The conference also supported a very powerful showing of the Channel 4 documentary by Dr Andrew Graystone, See No Evil, which sensitively unpacked the crimes of John Smyth against teenage boys and young men. Given the current state of higher education, the conference also held a solidarity event for colleagues experiencing threat of redundancy and workplace precarity, which was well-received. Overall, the conference tackled difficult topics such as abuse, but the committee was careful to ensure support was available for the conference's duration (e.g. utilising the University of Nottingham's chaplaincy service, which supports those of faith and of no faith).
- Seedcorn funding was advertised as in previous years. This the call for projects did not attract proposals. The committee will look at ways to advertise future calls for projects.

Concluding remarks: Socrel looks forward to the forthcoming year and more opportunities to connect with old and new members, colleagues and friends. We look forward to our next conference, the planning of which is underway ahead of schedule.

Website <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/sociology-of-religion-study-group/>

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