

Social robots can now be found in more and more areas of society, including religion: in Buddhist temples, for reciting the Qur‘an in Mecca and Medina, the BlessU2 blessing robot, the SanTO prayer robot in the Christian context, as well as other „theomorphic“ machines and smart assistants. They inspire various reflections in practical and systematic theology: Can we pray with robots? Will robots possibly have religious experiences themselves? Are robots and other technical systems based on so-called Artificial Intelligence suitable for use as pastoral staff? How can the consideration of robots in religious contexts ultimately shed light on the relationship between humans and machines? Theology will have to deal with these questions in the coming years if it wants to actively shape not only the social discourse on robotics and Artificial Intelligence, but also the emerging integration of robotic systems into religious practice.

The **conference room** is in the Mensa on Floor 01, Room 053. **CampusSegen** is at Querenburger Höhe 286, accessible via the Stairway between the Trattoria and the Copy Shop.

For the **Conference Dinner** we will be in the Tapas Bar & Restaurant, Kortumstraße 3 in Bochum.



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Please use the #nethKI2023 when tweeting about the workshop!



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Evangelische Kirche  
in Deutschland

RUB  
RESEARCH SCHOOL

# „ROBOT, PRAY FOR ME!“

## ROBOTS AS INSTRUMENTS OF GOD? EXPLORATIONS IN ROBOTICS AND THEOLOGY

Workshop of the Network  
on Theology & AI  
March 16th–17th 2023

Program



# Thursday, March 16th

11.00 Welcome, introduction, and book-presentation

## How to discuss Robots in Religions

11.30 Robot, lets pray! – Exploring the Theological Implications of Religious Robots  
*Anna Puzio, Twente*

12.20 An Islamic perspective on (modern) technology  
*Ramy Abdin, Erlangen-Nürnberg*

13.10 Lunch opportunity

14.10 **Meeting CelesTE**

**Meet CelesTE in the Meditation Room by the CampusSegen Pastoral Care-Project of the Diocese Essen**

15.45 Coffee with snacks at the conference room

## How to tell Humans and Robots apart

16.10 Purpose and Immortality. – Existential hurdles and the pragmatic leap of religious robotics.  
*Jonas Simmerlein, Wien*

17.00 The Limits of Pastoral Robots?  
*Simon N. Balle, Aarhus*

17.50 Break

18.00 **Public talk**

**Robots and Theology**  
**A Thin Line Between Conflict and Conjunction**  
*Gabriele Trovato, Tokyo*

20.30 Conference Dinner

# Friday, March 17th

## How to design Robots for Religious Contexts

- 09.30** BINA48 and the value of information processing.  
Religious education and its importance in the face of  
digitality  
*Marcel Scholz, Mainz*
- 10.20** Even so send I you! – Reflections on design  
requirements for the use of robots in Christian contexts  
*Martin Kutz, Dresden*
- 11.10** Coffee break
- 11.30** **Keynote**  
**Instruments of God**  
**Robots in Practical-Theological Perspective**  
*Ilona Nord, Würzburg*
- 13.00** Lunch opportunity
- ## How to get to Robot-Heaven
- 14.00** The Final Frontier – Investigating the impact of  
Science-Fiction on our (technological) future  
*Theresa Thunig, Bochum*
- 14.50** What's robot heaven like? An eschatological sneak  
peek  
*Max Tretter, Erlangen-Nürnberg*
- 15.40** Break
- 15.50** Concluding discussion and outlook
- 16.30** End