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Press release

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Professor Naomi Goldenberg, from the Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, is visiting Britain this coming week (21 – 28 April 2012) to give public and university addresses in Stirling, Aberdeen and London.

Professor Goldenberg will argue that religions function effectively as ‘vestigial states’ (or remnants of states) – institutions and practices that originated in the past and in reference to former sovereignties, but still operate within contemporary nation states. This creates tensions between present and past authorities, between sacred and secular power, and between patriarchal and more progressively feminist structures.

Her work has considerable relevance to contentious debates about religion in public life in Britain and in North America. She will be available for media interviews throughout her visit (see contact below).

Professor Goldenberg offers a feminist critique of patriarchal religion. Her related interests include psychoanalytic theory, body politics, gender and popular culture. The author of *Changing of the gods: Feminism and the end of traditional religions* (1979), she is, amongst many other interests, on the editorial board of the journal *Goddess Theology: An International Journal for the study of the Divine Feminine*.

Her visit is being sponsored by the University of Stirling’s Critical Religion Research Group, which is pioneering intellectual engagement with questions of religion at the interface between the academy and public debate.

On Thursday 26 April she will give a major public lecture at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London, entitled ‘What’s God Got to Do With It? Feminism, Religion and the State’. This event is being co-sponsored by the cutting edge religion and society thinktank Ekklesia (<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/>).

On Monday 23 April Professor Goldenberg speaks on ‘Contemporary Statecraft, Gender and the Category of Religion’ at the University of Stirling.

On Tuesday 24 April she is speaking at a day workshop entitled *Modernity and the Category of Religion*, organised by Dr Trevor Stack of Aberdeen University’s Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and Rule of Law. Other speakers include Dr Stack, Dr Tamas Gyorfi, the University of Stirling’s Dr Timothy Fitzgerald, Dr Suzanne Owen and Dr Brian Bock. Stirling’s Dr Alison Jasper is a discussant.

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#### Notes to Editors:

1. All enquiries should be directed in the first instance to Dr Michael Marten on 01786 467532 (in and out of office hours) and [michael.marten@stir.ac.uk](mailto:michael.marten@stir.ac.uk).
2. Full visit details: <http://www.criticalreligion.stir.ac.uk/events/april-2012-naomi-goldenberg-visit/>.
3. Professor Naomi Goldenberg’s CV is available here: <http://naomigoldenberg.com/cv.html>.
4. Advance contributions from Professor Goldenberg on the Critical Religion blog: <http://www.criticalreligion.stir.ac.uk/author/naomigoldenberg/>.
5. The Critical Religion Research Group (founded 2010/11) pioneers intellectual engagement with questions of religion through events in the university and public spheres and a regular multi-author blog linking academic research and contemporary issues. More information on Critical Religion is available at: <http://www.criticalreligion.stir.ac.uk/what-is-critical-religion/>.