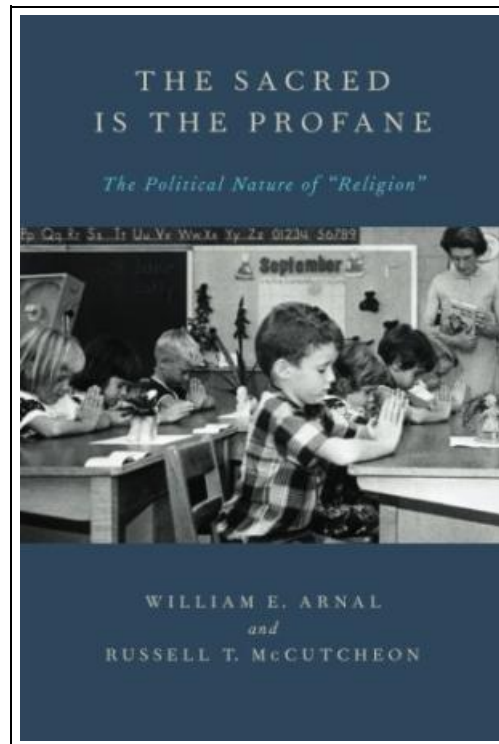


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Reviews

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(Prof. Christelle Stark III)

THE SACRED IS THE PROFANE: THE POLITICAL NATURE OF RELIGION (PAPERBACK)



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Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2012. Paperback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . This book usually ship within 10-15 business days and we will endeavor to dispatch orders quicker than this where possible. Brand New Book. The Sacred is the Profane collects nine essays written over several years by William Arnal and Russell McCutcheon, specialists in two very different areas of the field (one, a scholar of Christian origins and the other working on the history of the modern study of religion). They share a convergent perspective: not simply that both the category and concept religion is a construct, something that we cannot assume to be natural or universal, but also that the ability to think and act religiously is, quite specifically, a modern, political category in its origins and effects, the mere by-product of modern secularism. These collected essays, substantially rewritten for this volume, advance current scholarly debates on secularism-debates which, the authors argue, insufficiently theorize the sacred/secular, church/state, and private/public binaries by presupposing religion (often under the guise of such terms as religiosity, faith, or spirituality) to historically precede the nation-state. The essays return, again and again, to the question of what religion -word and concept-accomplishes, now, for those who employ it, whether at the popular, political, or scholarly level. The focus here for two writers from seemingly different fields is on the efficacy, costs, and the tactical work carried out by dividing the world between religious and political, church and state, sacred and profane. As the essays make clear, this is no simple matter. Part of the reason for the incoherence and at the same time the stubborn persistence of both the word and idea of religion is precisely its multi-faceted nature, its plurality, its amenability to multiple and often self-contradictory uses. Offering an argument...



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