



## RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND THE DIFFERENCE OF THEOLOGY

Professor: Aaron Riches

### I. DESCRIPTION

It is the conventional wisdom of liberal democracy that the nature of religious faith and claims to metaphysical truth have an inherent propensity towards intolerance and violence. This conventional wisdom is putatively confirmed by history, by the Wars of Religion and the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and more recently by the unending cycle of violence in the Holy Land and the new murderous terror of ISIS. This seminar course, dedicated to a close reading of various texts, will problematize this widespread presumption, and signal to various different and less reductive analyses.

### II. CONTENTS

#### Session 1: Critique of Violence

- Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence'.
- Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture.

#### Session 2: Metaphysical Violence

- Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, pp. 97-192.

#### Session 3: Divine Violence

- Žižek, Slavoj, *Violence*, pp. 178-205.

#### Session 4: Religious Violence

- Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, pp. 123-180.

#### Session 5: The Peace of Theology

- Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 259-442.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussion  
Commentary of texts

### IV. EVALUATION

Participation in the discussion  
Final examination

## V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1986.
- Cavanaugh, William T. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Milbank, John, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Schall, S.J., James V. (ed), *The Regensburg Lecture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2007).
- Žižek, Slavoj. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008.

**Aaron Riches** – professor of theology at the International Academy of Philosophy-Institute of Philosophy Edith Stein and the Institute of Theology “Lumen Gentium” (Granada). Aaron Riches completed his PhD at the University of Nottingham (UK) under the direction of Professor John Milbank; his area of research is at the intersection of Christology and metaphysics. He has published articles in the journals “Modern Theology”, “International Journal of Systematic Theology”, “Communio”, among others.