



### **Capital and the Secular: An Interdisciplinary Two-Day Workshop**

Is capital secular? How can the academic study of religion help re-frame the relationship between political economy and theories of secularity? How do these concepts transform when approached from the geographical and methodological vantages normally absent in secularism studies? In this workshop, participants will be invited to test the limits and horizons of our frameworks for considering the relationship between capital and the secular. Specifically, the group seeks to advance and shift this conversation about the secular's difference, and the difference the secular makes, by building upon recent scholarship in the history and anthropology of late capitalism. The last decade has produced renewed and severe challenges to the "putative transparency" of secularism and to the exceptional neutrality of capitalism. A rich conversation elaborates the secular as a discourse that is both constituted by, and productive of, its religious foil (e.g. Asad 2003; Taylor 2007; Fessenden 2007; Jakobsen and Pellegrini, eds. 2008; Asad et. al. 2008; Cady and Fessenden, eds, 2013). Another set of conversations, which cross-cuts humanities fields, is increasingly intent on situating capitalism as a specific, contingent historical and anthropological formation which is not historically given nor politically impartial (Rudnyckj 2010; Coleman 2011; Graeber 2011; Brown 2015; Beckert and Rockman 2016; Cox 2016; Day 2017; Koenigs 2018; Harvey 2018). These literatures, despite their overlapping themes of questioning nonpartisan foundations and of debunking the ascent of a rational subject, remain largely detached from one another. They tend to construct their respective categories—the secular and capital—as independently articulated projects of modernity.

This exploratory two-day workshop would facilitate new lines of interdisciplinary inquiry into the secular and capital in their entangled constitution, their political imbrication, and their coeval social formations. The aim is to workshop position pieces already prepared by participants on key terms useful in this intervention. The outcome would be a polished coauthored piece for a special roundtable issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

Participants include:

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