

Call for Papers

Working with *A Secular Age* – Interdisciplinary Reflections on Charles Taylor’s Conception of the Secular

International Conference,
Berne, Switzerland, 5-8 March 2014

Keynote speakers: Jonathan VanAntwerpen (SSRC, NY),
N.N.

Since its publication in 2007, Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* has been generating a lively discussion. Understandably so: In his seminal work, the Canadian philosopher aims at nothing less than a re-telling of the (hi)story of the secular. While some enthusiastically welcomed *A Secular Age* as a breakthrough in the ongoing reconfiguration of secularity, others pointed to certain weaknesses and limitations of Taylor’s work. Moving one step beyond general appraisal and the already existing and important critique of *A Secular Age*, this conference aims at exploring the applicability (and its limits) of Taylor’s conception of the secular.

Participants’ common goal will be to critically reflect on the general potential of Taylor’s conception for individual disciplines. In their presentations, scholars working within the fields of Theology, Philosophy, Sociology, History, Religious Studies, Area Studies (incl. Islamic Studies), Political Science and Law, Literature and Art or Gender Studies will tackle the following questions concerning their respective discipline: Which aspects and assumptions of Taylor’s work can be adopted easily; when does a need for translation and transformation arise; and where are the barriers of disciplinary understandings, approaches and traditions too large to be overcome? Next to these theoretical considerations, participants will have the opportunity to present their completed or current research projects, which in one way or another integrate, modify or built upon a specific theoretical aspect or a phenomenological finding brought forward in *A Secular Age*.

We welcome contributions from advanced MA students, PhD students and Postdocs from all of the disciplines mentioned above as well as related disciplines. Please note that in order to ensure a red thread and common ground for discussion, both for theoretical contributions as well as for case studies the reference to *A Secular Age* is a must. The presentations should not exceed 15-20 minutes in order to allow time for discussion afterwards.

Please submit an abstract of 300-400 words and a short bio note in PDF format to: florian.zemmin@iash.unibe.ch. As the panels will be organized around individual disciplines, please state in which of the above-mentioned fields you would like to present your paper.

Deadline for proposals: November 15, 2013.

For proposals accepted for presentation, we will try to fully cover the costs for travel (2nd class) and accommodation in Berne.

Please note: In preparation of this conference, the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) is organizing a workshop on *A Secular Age* in October/December 2013, addressing both MA and PhD students, for which there are still some places left. For further information, please visit: http://www.iash.unibe.ch/content/events/programme/index_eng.html