Invites you to the public lectures of visiting Erasmus teacher assoc. prof. dr. David Vaclavik (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

**Religious Situation in the Czech Republic after 1989. Trends, Aspects, Consequences.**
May 21, 2015, Thursday at 10.00, Room 325, JON 66

From a certain point of view it can be said that the religiousness in the Czech Republic was during last twenty years like on a swing. It grew during 1990’s, when 40 % of respondents regarded themselves as believers. But according to the last two censuses (2001, 2011) only 32 % respectively 12 % of Czech population declared themselves as believers. This number was interpreted as the confirmation of continuing secularization or at least religious deinstitutionalization of the Czech society. This sounds persuasively at the first sight.

But I would like to show interpretate this data alternatively and show not only changes in the form of religiousness but also a fundamental shift in the perception of religion itself. I will argue that at least in the case of the Czech Republic that "classical" early modern and modern concept of religion leads to the methodological but also "cultural" and "social" misunderstandings.

**Czech Atheism: Interpretations and Misunderstandings**
May 21, 2015, Thursday at 1.15 pm, Room 108, JON 66

The Czech Republic is rated amongst the most atheist countries in the world. This claim is based on selected statistical data from censuses and comparative surveys, which reveal that majority of the Czech population to be self-declared "nones". The aim of this paper is to argue that we need to read data about the high level of "atheization" in Czech society in a more nuanced manner and deal with the concept of atheism more adequately. In the first section, with reference to some theoretical impulses from the cognitive science of religion (Norenzayan, Gervais 2013), we try to show that the non-religious views of a significant part of the Czech population, usually labelled "atheism", are better understood as an expression of religious "apatheism", or evidence of "inCREDulous atheism". Apatheism here stands for "a stance of indifference towards religion that (...) arises from conditions of existential security", while inCREDulous atheism "results from people simply not receiving cultural inputs that encourage the belief that any god(s) are potent, relevant, or even real". Both positions are similar in their indifference to religion, rather than opposition to it. We also distinguish between "un-belief", "dis-belief", "uncertainty", and "indifference" (Meulemann 2004). With the help of empirical analysis, the paper focuses on the critical assessment of the applicability of these concepts in the Czech context. In the second section, using empirical data from the 2008 International Social Survey Project, we test a hypothesis on the role of religious socialization for the acceptance of the non/theist position, based on the concept of CREDS (credibility-enhancing displays) and related secularization theory (Lanman 2012). Supported by the research conducted by Stózl (2009), we expect that the current level of non/theism in the Czech population can best be explained by religious socialization mechanisms and the conditions for the acquisition and/or transmission of non/theism. The main contribution of the paper is two-fold: theoretically, it aims at a more profound reflection on commonly used analytical concepts; empirically, it seeks to understand in-depth the current state of non/religiosity in “atheist” Czech society.

Assoc. prof. dr. David Vaclavik finished his studies in philosophy and the history of religion at Masaryk University in Brno in 1998 and gained a Ph.D. in 2004. He has lectured at the Faculty of Education of Technical University in Liberec since 1998 and at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno since 2002. He was a head of Department of the Study of Religions at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in 2005 - 2011. The areas of his research are new religious movements, religious situation in Central Europe and the methodology of the scientific study of religions. He is the author of several books, textbooks and more than twenty articles, including Transformation of American Religion (2014), Religion and Contemporary Czech Society (2010), Sociology of New Religious Movements (2007), New Religious Movements and Their Perception as Conflict Religious Groups. The Case of the Czech Republic (2006); Limits and Possibilities of Using the Terms Sect, Cult and Church in the Scientific Study of Religions (2005); New Religious Movements from the Perspective of Historical and Genealogical Classifications (2003); Secularized and De-secularized Modernity. The Position of Religion in Contemporary Society (2003).