

The Department of French & Italian presents  
a Gertrude Force Weathers lecture by



# Éric Méchoulan

## On Revenge

5:30 pm, Wednesday, February 25, 2009  
Oak Room, Indiana Memorial Union

**About the Lecture:** Revenge is supposed to be something very primitive, an elementary and imperfect way of conceiving justice, something civilization has slowly mastered and controlled. From the archaic use of revenge to the contemporary refinement of the law, the progress would be regular and obvious. This is another typical Western illusion of progress. This statement ignores the fact that we are dealing with very different societies, and that it is impossible to impose our rejection of revenge on the ancient uses of justice. It is even more worrisome when we discover states brutally animated by a spirit of revenge that they should have mastered. When revenge has lost its old ethical dimension and its links to traditional modes of reciprocity, it cannot simply bow to state authority, resulting in ideological damage and physical ravages.

**About the Speaker:** Eric Méchoulan is professor of French at the Université de Montréal and program director at the Collège international de philosophie (Paris). In Spring 2009, he is Visiting Professor of French for the first eight-week session at IU-Bloomington. Professor Méchoulan, who is a specialist in 17th-century French literature and philosophy, has published extensively on literary esthetics, enlightenment philosophes, and the *Ancien Régime*. His publications include *La culture de la mémoire, ou Comment se débarrasser du passé?* (Univ Montréal, 2008), *Le crépuscule des intellectuels: de la tyrannie de la clarté à u délire d'interprétation* (Nota bene, 2005), and *Pour une histoire esthétique de la littérature* (PUF, 2004.)



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