



## **Thou Shalt Not Kill? Religious Violence in Seventeenth-Century London** **Kathryn Marshalek (COL 2017)** **Advisor: Margo Todd**

Political turmoil and religious tension plagued seventeenth-century London as the city underwent dramatic changes during the Civil War, Commonwealth, and Restoration Eras. Violence between Catholics and Protestants came with the chaos. Tracing the character of this violence across the changing political landscape reveals the ways in which larger national anxieties over religion materialized in small-scale interpersonal relationships. Specific cases of violence can be read as meaningful gestures that reflect popular anxieties, fears, animosities and sympathies that express fundamental features of Catholic and Protestant relations in post-Reformation cities.

This summer I had the opportunity to travel to London to uncover these specific cases of violence. I visited four archives including the National Archives, the London Metropolitan Archives, the British Library, and the Parliamentary Archives. I examined a variety of primary sources for incidences of violence, with a focus on the distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned violence, violent Catholic reactions to state persecution, and the relationship between rhetoric and action. I discovered evidence of religious violence in formal records such as Assize Court rolls, Chancery Court Records and Privy Council minutes, as well as personal manuscripts, diaries, and letters. Sensationalized accounts of violence printed in broadsides or depicted in cheap engravings also revealed religious tensions.

Engaging in primary source research at an on-site archive proved an experience rather distinct from researching using edited collections, anthologies, or online databases. Working with un-curated sources offered a spectrum of document types and points of view. The challenge of having to sort through a mass of information for small fragments of evidence related to my project really helped enhance my understanding of the period at large. In addition to sources on Justices of the Peace, martyrs, and murderers, I read seventeenth-century noise complaints and learned about early modern versions of manually drawn fire pumps.