The course intends to explore the characteristics of new religious movements, learn how they make their early beginnings and point to the relationship between new religious groups and mainstream society. We will also look at central features of new religious movements, such as the role of charismatic leadership, messianic faith, gender and sexuality and the manner new religious groups relate to the American polity, its symbols, and values. Likewise, we will pay special attention the manner Americans have related to the different new religious groups and the manner renegade members relate to their experiences in the groups.