This class introduces advanced undergraduates and graduate students to key questions in the ethnographic study of contemporary religion(s), a central part of the methodological toolkit in Religious Studies and other fields, and to important innovations in ethnographic research and communication. What is fieldwork in religion and how is it done? How has religion been constructed as an ethnographic object and how do writing strategies figure into this process? Are there theoretical, ethical or representational problems particular to working with religious people and things? And, if so, how are some of the most interesting authors/texts addressing them? Over the course of the semester, we will address these questions and others through careful readings of exemplary, innovative or otherwise instructive ethnographies of religion. Critical engagement with classic and cutting-edge work will enhance students’ understanding of contemporary religion and how to study it. It will also help prepare students to undertake their own fieldwork-based research.

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General Education Requirements: SS & CI