This class uses the idea of "original sin" as a lens through which to explore modern American religious thought. A Puritan children's alphabet book began with "A is for Adam; In Adam's Fall Sinned All." Why would anyone continue reading to "B"? And how did we get from that unforgiving notion to modern evangelicalism, where everyone can be redeemed through salvation alone? Is it really possible to get back into the Garden of Eden? We will follow the history of original sin from Saint Augustine and Jonathan Edwards to John Wesley, Dale Carnegie, and Joel Osteen. And we will apply these ideas to contemporary case studies like the prosperity gospel and the ongoing problem of mass incarceration. How do notions of sin, punishment, repentance, and forgiveness still reverberate through American life? No religious background is assumed or necessary, only a willingness to think critically and to make connections between past and present.