This course will introduce you to historical and contemporary scholarly methods for theorizing the significance of religious things, in addition to providing you with fascinating case studies of religious artifacts from specific religious traditions.

The course is housed within the Religious Studies department, but it is an interdisciplinary course that will introduce you to (religious) material culture. The religious things we analyze include "holy matter" paintings, sculptures, clothing, calligraphy, food, and buildings. A range of American religions are represented in the artifacts that we'll study, including Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and indigenous religious traditions. The course focuses on analysis and interpretation of religious things. While many things have a history which is important to keep in mind, our course focuses on contemporary theories of materiality and how they might alter the way we understand both religion and things.