What is the relationship between religion and individualism in India? Is there really no such thing as a self, as Buddhism teaches? How are Judeo-Christian ideas about Providence, freedom, and agency embedded in American understandings of democratic citizenship? This course studies the ways that different religious traditions conceive of human nature and of society, and the ways that these understandings are reflected in diverse forms of personal identity and public life. Readings will include historic and contemporary texts, and case studies from places including India, Nepal, and the USA. This course is a seminar reserved exclusively for first year students.