

# Methods And Theories In The Study Of Religion

REL 500



**Mon / Wed  
3:30-4:50pm**

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Religion and the religious are central concerns for many scholars working in the humanities and social sciences (and, increasingly, in economics and cognitive science). Many of the people, communities, and issues studied by scholars in these fields are inflected by religious discourse, practice, and conflict. But what do we mean when we talk about “religion”? What does it mean to describe a conflict or an issue as “religious”? In this course we will look at where the category of religion comes from and explore the history of how religion has been studied by scholars. We will also explore the current tensions within the field of religious studies about what sorts of work can and should be done on the religion and what constitute the boundaries of such studies. Anyone working in some way with religion (or even anyone with an interest in studying religious traditions) is welcome and will find new insights into how to bring religious studies into their larger intellectual projects.