In this course, you will study religious life in the Japanese islands, from prehistoric times through the contemporary period. Our approach will be multidisciplinary, drawing on the methods of historical, literary, and social scientific studies. We will also incorporate as many primary sources as possible, giving you the opportunity to explore the religious traditions of Japan from the perspectives of both historical actors and contemporary practitioners.

To make the best of the fact that we will be meeting online this term, I am organizing regular guest appearances for the class. Some of my colleagues who have written books and articles we’re reading in the class will join our Zoom sessions to talk about their work and answer your questions. I am also inviting some Buddhist priests, nuns, and other religious professionals to join us virtually. And finally, if conditions permit, we may be able to hold occasional (and optional) office hours in person and on campus (outdoors and wearing masks, of course).