Rudolf Otto’s *Idea of the Holy* is a phenomenological explanation of the supra-rational and supra-moral elements of the holy, which he calls the “numinous.” While affirming the rational and moral natures of religion, he characterizes the numinous as “*mysterium tremendum,*” which includes “the peculiar quality of the *uncanny* and the *awful,*” as well as of *exaltedness* and *sublimity.* This course focuses on the numinous as the essence of religious experience, identifying examples of it not only in Biblical faith but also in comparative religions and private experience.

Students will study theism, atheism, and agnosticism, along with logical positivism, which claims that all the foregoing positions are nonsense. These readings will include Anselm, Aquinas, Kant, Ayer, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard.

The course will also investigate the conflict between faith and reason and its resolution, especially in relation to scientific truth. It will argue that fundamentalism is not a viable interpretation of Christianity and that evolution and creation are compatible.

Theodicy (philosophy’s struggle to justify God in the face of evil) will be given special attention. The course also asks whether we can reconcile belief in God with the evil of innocent suffering, referring especially to Dostoyevsky.

Students will become acquainted with new perspectives on life after death, including the newest research into near-death experiences, as well as current Christian innovative interpretations of the Resurrection of the Dead.

The course upholds the necessity for the tolerance and respect of different religious and non-religious points of view, as well as welcoming dialogue among them.