Monotheism, the belief in a singular deity, did not arise out of nothing. Rather, the emergence of monotheism was a multi-stage process spanning several millennia and involving numerous religious traditions, primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

This process was marked by internal and external conflict, as individuals and communities struggled to distinguish themselves from their non-monotheistic predecessors and neighbors, while often attempting to convince others to do the same.

In this class, we begin with the ancient Near Eastern religious environment in which the idea of monotheism first appeared, then turn our attention to how the movement toward monotheism shapes the texts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Quran.

We also look to archaeological sites and case studies in material culture to fill out our understanding of the lived experiences at play in the emergence of monotheism.