

## **THE SEARCH FOR AUTHORITY IN WESTERN RELIGIONS**

As an old saying goes: when you want to sew, you need a knot at the end of your thread. In religions, people have almost always invoked some sort of authority to validate their position. In this course we will survey incidents in western religions where groups have sought to authenticate their beliefs and behavior by appealing to various forms of authority. Using examples in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian history we will examine ways in which the sources of ideas (texts) have been verified as true and patterns of leadership (clergy) have been endorsed as trustworthy. Without judging validity or authenticity, we will observe many different forms of creativeness and complexity that people have exhibited in their search for assurance in religious categories. The course will consist of lectures and discussions with no required reading. References for additional study will be available upon request.

**Leader:** Henry Warner Bowden is Professor Emeritus of Religion, Rutgers University.

**Mondays:** 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 9 weeks, from March 5 through April 30

**Location:** PSRC