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Holy Violence in Early Christianity

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Persecution, demonization, pain, suffering, compelled conversions, temple destruction, and even assassinations contributed to the formation of Christian culture, identity, and belief in the period known to scholars as Late Antiquity. Through a careful reading of many primary sources and secondary writings pertaining to the history of the church and theorizing religious violence, students will critically examine the connections between early Christian ideologies of violence and the determination and enforcement of orthodoxy, an emergent anti-Semitism, and the decline of “pagan” religious traditions.

In essence, this course asks whether Christianity, at its root, is intractably tied to the performance of violence?