

The Economics of Religion

Syllabus

Provisional Syllabus: Spring 2017 Professor: Mark Koyama

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This class will introduce PhD students to research in the economics of religion. I define the topic of the economics religion broadly. It encompasses topics in the economics of culture and overlaps with issues in economic history and institutional economics. As such this class will complement other classes and fields you take at GMU.

The class will consist of a mixture of lectures, discussion and student presentations. The purpose of this class is to prepare you for research. You will work on paper ideas and papers which will ideally form the basis of either your dissertation or lead to published papers. The requirements are that you attend every class (unless you have a good reason to be absent) and write a paper at the end of the semester. As an intermediate step I will invite you to propose three paper ideas to me and to discuss these ideas after class or in my office hours. There will be student presentations at the end of the semester.

I advice you do the readings before class. The class itself will focus on my lecture slides. Based on feedback from previous classes, I intended to focus on the methods and techniques used in the papers we read as well as on their content. Starred readings are highly recommended. Non-starred readings are highly recommended but not essential.

1 Readings

1.1 Introduction and Overview: January 25th

- Laurence R. Iannaccone, Introduction to the Economics of Religion, *Journal of Economic Literature* 36, Nr. 3 September 1998*
- Rachel M. McCleary and Robert J. Barro, Religion and Economy, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, Nr. 2 Spring 2006
- Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1776
- David Hume, "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" Essay X in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* (1742-1754)
- Jonathan Gruber and Daniel M. Hungerman, The Church versus the Mall: What Happens When Religion Faces Increased Secular Competition?, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, Nr. 2 05 2008

- Ran Abramitzky, Liran Einav and Oren Rigbi, Is Hanukkah Responsive to Christmas?, *Economic Journal* 120, Nr. 545 06 2010
- Ronald Ehrenberg Corry Azzi, Household Allocation of Time and Church Attendance, *Journal of Political Economy* 83, Nr. 1 1975
- Syria Iyer, The New Economics of Religion, *Journal of Economic Literature* Forthcoming 2016
- Gani Aldashev and Jean-Philippe Platteau, *Religion, Culture, and Development*, volume 2 North-Holland and Elsevier, 1 2014

For the first week of class I suggest you familiarize yourself with the literature by reading at least overview of the topic. Iannaccone provides a classic literature review but it is somewhat out of date whereas Iyer and Adlashev and Platteau survey more recent contributions. I also advice consulting some of the classic papers of Gary Becker for further inspiration and insight into the issues involved in modeling non-market decision making. Corry Azzi (1975) was the first modeling paper in the economics of religion.

1.2 Economics of Culture: February 1st

- L. Guiso, P. Sapienza and L. Zingales, Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, Nr. 2 2006*
- Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza and Luigi Zingales, *Civic Capital as the Missing Link*, in: Jess Benhabib, Alberto Bisin and Matthew O. Jackson, editors, *Handbook of Social Economics* Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2011*
- Sara Lowes et al., The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom, Working Paper 21798 National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2015*
- Alberto Alesina, Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn, On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128, Nr. 2 2013*
- Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon, The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa, *American Economic Review* 101, Nr. 7 December 2011*
- Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano, Culture and Institutions, *Journal of Economic Literature* 53, Nr. 4 2015
- Sara Lowes et al., The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom March 2014
- Alberto Bisin and Thierry Verdier, The Economics of Cultural Transmission and the Dynamics of Preferences, *Journal of Economic Theory* 97, Nr. 2 April 2001
- George A. Akerlof and Rachel E. Kranton, Economics And Identity, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, Nr. 3 August 2000

- Avner Greif, Paul Milgrom and Barry R Weingast, Coordination, Commitment, and Enforcement: The Case of the Merchant Guild, *Journal of Political Economy* 102, Nr. 4 August 1994

How should economists think about culture? Can cultural values be modeled? Can they be measured? How do cultural values effect economic outcomes? How does economic change affect cultural values? This has been one of the hottest and most exciting topics within economics in recent years. We will study some of the most innovative and interesting papers in the field.

1.3 Religious Organizations: February 8th

- Laurence R. Iannaccone, Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives, *Journal of Political Economy* 100, Nr. 2 April 1992*
- Jean-Paul Carvalho and Mark Koyama, Development and Religious Polarization: The Emergence of Reform and Ultra-Orthodox Judaism, Economics Series Working Papers 560 University of Oxford, Department of Economics, 2011*
- Laurence R. Iannaccone, Introduction to the Economics of Religion, *Journal of Economic Literature* 36, Nr. 3 September 1998
- Daniel L. Chen, Club Goods and Group Identity: Evidence from Islamic Resurgence during the Indonesian Financial Crisis, *Journal of Political Economy* 118, Nr. 2 04 2010
- Ran Abramitzky, The Limits of Equality: Insights from the Israeli Kibbutz, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, Nr. 3 August 2008
- Jean-Paul Carvalho, Identity-Based Organizations, Working Papers 151605 University of California-Irvine, Department of Economics, December 2015
- Jason A. Aimone et al., Endogenous Group Formation via Unproductive Costs, *Review of Economic Studies* 80, Nr. 4 2013
- Eli Berman, Sect, Subsidy, and Sacrifice: An Economist's View of Ultra-Orthodox Jews, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115, Nr. 3 2000

1.4 Religion, Beliefs, and Pro-Social Values: February 15th

- Guido Tabellini, The Scope of Cooperation: Values and Incentives, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, Nr. 3 August 2008*
- Ara Norenzayan, *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013*
- Gilat Levy and Ronney Razin, Religious Beliefs, Participation and Cooperation, *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics* Forthcoming

- David Clingingsmith, Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Michael Kremer, Estimating the Impact of The Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, Nr. 3 2009
- Filipe Campante and David Yanagizawa-Drott, Does Religion Affect Economic Growth and Happiness? Evidence from Ramadan, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, Nr. 2 2015*
- Boris Gershman, Witchcraft Beliefs and the Erosion of Social Capital: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa and Beyond, Technical report 2015-03 American University, Department of Economics, 2015
- Boris Gershman, Witchcraft Beliefs and the Erosion of Social Capital: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa and Beyond, *Journal of Development Economics* 120 May 2016

Does religion inculcate pro-social values? Norenzayan summarizes recent research that suggests that a belief in so-called 'big gods' is associated with more cooperative and trusting behavior. This suggests that the belief in a moralizing god is a cultural adaption that may have evolved via group selection.

1.5 The Catholic Church & Medieval Political Economy: February 22nd

- Gary Richardson and Michael McBride, Religion, Longevity, and Cooperation: The Case of the Craft Guild., *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 71, Nr. 2 2009
- Thomas Barnebeck Andersen et al., Pre-Reformation Roots of the Protestant Ethic, *The Economic Journal* Forthcoming 2016
- Robert B. Ekelund, Robert Hebert and Robert Tollison, *The Marketplace of Christianity* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006. Alternatively focus on Robert B. Ekelund, Robert F. Hebert and Robert D. Tollison, An Economic Analysis of the Protestant Reformation, *Journal of Political Economy* 110, Nr. 3 June 2002 and Brighita Bercea, Robert B. Ekelund and Robert D. Tollison, Cathedral Building as an Entry-Deterring Device, *Kyklos* 58, Nr. 4 November 2005.*
- Robert Ekelund et al., *Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Alternatively focus on Ekelund et al. (1989).*
- Francisco J. Pino and Jordi Vidal-Robert, Habemus Papam? Polarization and Conflict in the Papal States, CAGE Online Working Paper Series 189 Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE), 2014
- Benito Arrunada, Specialization and Rent Seeking in Moral Enforcement: The Case of Confession, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, Nr. 3 2009

The Catholic Church is the longest lasting institution in the world. It has had a massive impact on European history. Many aspects of the Catholic Church have recently come under the purview of economists and economic historians.

We ask how did the Catholic Church last so long? Can the Catholic Church be modeled as a religious firm? What was the relationship between the Church and the state in the medieval period? What led to the breakdown of the Catholic religious monopoly and to the Reformation?

1.6 The Jewish Communities in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: March 1st

- Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *The Chosen Few* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012*
- Mark Koyama, The political economy of expulsion: The regulation of Jewish moneylending in medieval England, *Constitutional Political Economy* 21, Nr. 4 December 2010
- Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, Jewish Communities and City Growth in Preindustrial Europe March 2016*
- R. Warren Anderson, Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, Jewish Persecutions and Weather Shocks 1100-1800, *Economic Journal* Forthcoming 2016
- Luigi Pascali, Banks and Development: Jewish Communities in the Italian Renaissance and Current Economic Performance, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 98, Nr. 1 2016
- Irena Grosfeld, Alexander Rodnyansky and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Persistent Anti-Market Culture: A Legacy of the Pale of Settlement after the Holocaust, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 5, Nr. 3 August 2013

A large historical literature links the presence of religious minorities to economic prosperity. The important work of Botticini and Eckstein demonstrates that Jews had higher levels of human capital than did Christians and Muslims throughout medieval Europe. We ask: What was the economic role of the Jews? Did the presence of Jewish communities lead to faster economic growth in the premodern period?

1.7 The Protestant Reformation and the Weber Hypothesis: March 8th

- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* London, U.K.: Allen and Unwin, 1930
- R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* London: Verso, 1926
- Sascha O. Becker and Ludger Woessmann, Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, Nr. 2 May 2009*

- Davide Cantoni, Adopting a New Religion: the Case of Protestantism in 16th Century Germany, *Economic Journal* 122, Nr. 560 05 2012
- Robert B. Ekelund, Robert F. Hebert and Robert D. Tollison, An Economic Analysis of the Protestant Reformation, *Journal of Political Economy* 110, Nr. 3 June 2002
- Davide Cantoni, The Economic Effects Of The Protestant Reformation: Testing The Weber Hypothesis In The German Lands, *Journal of the European Economic Association* 13, Nr. 4 08 2015
- Sascha O. Becker, Steven Pfaff and Jared Rubin, Causes and Consequences of the Protestant Reformation, 206 Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy, 2016*
- Jared Rubin, Printing and Protestants: Reforming the Economics of the Reformation, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 96, Nr. 2 2014*
- Gilat Levy and Ronney Razin, Religious Beliefs, Participation and Cooperation, *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics* Forthcoming
- Murat Iyigun, Luther and Suleyman, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, Nr. 4 November 2008
- Benito Arrunada, Protestants and Catholics: Similar Work Ethic, Different Social Ethic, *Economic Journal* 120, Nr. 547 09 2010
- Jeremiah Dittmar and Ralf R. Meisenzahl, State Capacity and Public Goods: Institutional Change, Human Capital and Growth in Early Modern Germany, CEP Discussion Paper 1148 Center for Economic Performance, March 2016*

What lead to the successful ‘entry’ of new religious firms in the religious economy of medieval Europe after 1500? Why did earlier heretical movements fail? What factors are responsible for the success and diffusion of the Protestant Reformation. What were the economic consequences of the Protestant Reformation?

No Class March 22nd

1.8 Religion, Violence and Ethnic Conflict: March 29th

- Saumitra Jha, Trade, complementaries and religious tolerance: evidence from India, *American Journal of Political Science* 107, Nr. 4 2013*. Also see Saumitra Jha, “Unfinished business”: Historic complementarities, political competition and ethnic violence in Gujarat, *Journal of Economic Behavior Organization* 104 2014.
- Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth, Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127, Nr. 3 2012*
- Remi Jedwab, Noel Johnson and Mark Koyama, Economic Shocks, Inter-Ethnic Complementarities and the Persecution of Minorities: Evidence from the Black

Death December 2016

- Theresa Finley and Mark Koyama, Plague, Politics, and Pogroms: The Black Death, Rule of Law, and the persecution of Jews in the Holy Roman Empire March 2016
- Ruben Durante et al., Middleman Minorities and Intergroup Conflict August 2015
- Sascha O. Becker and Luigi Pascali, Religion, Division of Labor and Conflict: Anti-Semitism in German Regions over 600 Years, Technical report Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE), 2016
- Asaf Zussman, The effect of political violence on religiosity, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 104, Nr. C 2014

What is the relationship between religion and violence? Does religion cause violence? Or does it make existing tensions and conflicts more extreme? We examine several episodes of religiously inspired violence from history, particularly the persecution of Muslims by Hindus in India and the persecutions of Jews in medieval Europe. In particular we explore how religious motivations interact with economic motivations in determining the probability of religiously inspired violence.

1.9 Religion, Innovation and the Rise of Modern Growth: April 5th

- Metin M. Coşgel, Thomas J. Miceli and Jared Rubin, The Political Economy of Mass Printing: Legitimacy and technological change in the Ottoman Empire, *Journal of Comparative Economics* Forthcoming 2012
- Roland Bénabou, Davide Ticchi and Andrea Vindigni, Religion and Innovation, NBER Working Papers 21052 National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, March 2015b
- Roland Bénabou, Davide Ticchi and Andrea Vindigni, Forbidden Fruits: The Political Economy of Science, Religion, and Growth, NBER Working Papers 21105 National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, April 2015a
- Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, Toleration and Persecution: The Long Road to Religious Liberty, selected chapters.

What is the relationship between religion and innovation? Why do some religions oppose scientific innovation? What explains episodes of religiously inspired conservatism in history? How do the relationship between religion and the state change after 1600 so as to favor innovation and growth?

1.10 Religion and the State: April 12th

- Metin M. Coşgel and Thomas J. Miceli, State and religion, *Journal of Comparative Economics* 37, Nr. 3 2009*

- Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, *Toleration and Persecution: The Long Road to Religious Liberty*, selected chapters.
- Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, Which Countries Have State Religions?, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120, Nr. 4 2005
- Eric Chaney, Revolt on the Nile: Economic Shocks, Religion and Political Power, *Econometrica* Forthcoming 2013
- Latika Chaudhary and Jared Rubin, Religious identity and the provision of public goods: Evidence from the Indian Princely States, *Journal of Comparative Economics* Forthcoming 2016

What is the relationship between religion and the state? How has this religion changed over time? We will focus on chapter two of my forthcoming book with Noel Johnson.

1.11 The Political Economy of Islam: April 14th (Note Friday meeting Time)

- S. Michalopoulos, A. Naghavi and G. Prarolo, Islam, Inequality and Pre-Industrial Comparative Development, Working Papers wp974 Dipartimento Scienze Economiche, Università di Bologna, October 2014*
- Erik Meyersson, Islamic Rule and the Empowerment of the Poor and Pious, *Econometrica* 82, Nr. 1 01 2014*
- Christine Binzel and Jean-Paul Carvalho, Education, Social Mobility and Religious Movements: The Islamic Revival in Egypt, *Economic Journal* Forthcoming 2016*
- Jean-Paul Carvalho, Veiling, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128, Nr. 1 2013
- Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010*. Alternatively, read Kuran (2003); Kuran (2006); Kuran (2004); Kuran (2005).
- Eric Chaney, Revolt on the Nile: Economic Shocks, Religion and Political Power, *Econometrica* Forthcoming 2013*
- Timur Kuran and Jared Rubin, The Financial Power of the Powerless: Socio-Economic Status and Interest Rates under Partial Rule of Law, Working Papers 14-22 Chapman University, Economic Science Institute, 2014
- Eric Chaney, Religion and the Rise and Fall of Islamic Science March 2016

What is the relationship between Islam and the state? How did Islam arise? Why did it spread where it did? Did Islamic traditions impede the transition to modern economic growth? Why has there been an Islamic revival since the 1970s? Why are so few Islamic states stable democracies? Are there reasons to believe that Islam is less inimical to liberal democracy than other world regions?

1.12 Class Presentations: April 26th

1.13 Class Presentations: May 3rd

References

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- Abramitzky, Ran, Einav, Liran and Rigbi, Oren: Is Hanukkah Responsive to Christmas?, *Economic Journal* 120, Nr. 545 06 2010, 612–630
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- Becker, Sascha O. and Pascali, Luigi: Religion, Division of Labor and Conflict: Anti-Semitism in German Regions over 600 Years, Technical report Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE), 2016
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- Corry Azzi, Ronald Ehrenberg: Household Allocation of Time and Church Attendance, *Journal of Political Economy* 83, Nr. 1 1975, 27–56
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- Dittmar, Jeremiah and Meisenzahl, Ralf R.: State Capacity and Public Goods: Institutional Change, Human Capital and Growth in Early Modern Germany, CEP Discussion Paper 1148 Center for Economic Performance, March 2016
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