



ECON 295E: Seminar. Economics of Religion

CRN ****

Summer YYYY

Monday and Wednesday, 00:00 pm – 00:00 pm

Room: Nicely Hall ***

Instructor: Dr. Hossein Radmard

Office: 235 Ada Dodge Hall

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, **and by appointment**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course employs economic theory and social-scientific methods to study religious beliefs, behavior, and institutions. By combining economic concepts and real-world data, this course will address a wide range of questions concerning the content, causes, and consequences of religion. Moreover the course will study the social, political, and economic correlates of religion. (Note that the economic study of religion is a social-scientific enterprise. It does not seek to evaluate the truth of religious claims, nor does it promote one religion over another.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to explain the nature of religious behavior of an individual and religious institution in the economic perspective and critically assess the appropriateness of economic methods for their study. Students also will be able to analyze the relationship between religion and its components as an institution, with regard to the development. Last but not least, they will also become familiar with concepts used in other fields of social sciences studying religion, such as sociology, anthropology and political science. Beside all these, this course will serve as a platform for students to develop a scholarly research article. They will be familiar with methods of conducting and presenting a social-scientific research question.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GENERAL COMMENTS

- This is not a textbook-based course. At the beginning of every week, the reading of following sections will be provided to students.
- Moodle page of the course and email are the main means of communication between students and the instructor.
- Required and optional readings are from journal articles, book chapters and online resources.
- Lectures will be mixture of multimedia presentation, chalk&board, discussion and debates. In the first half of the class we go over theoretical parts and practice some empirical methods. Second half is mostly students' reflection from their assigned readings in the form of discussion.
- Students are highly encouraged to take note in the class.
- I do not enforce attendance directly, but regular attendance is essential if a student wants to do well in the course. Moreover it is a short 7-weeks semester, and missing any lecture can be costly! You may miss a pop-up in-class assignment (which has no make-up), besides the actual lecture material.
- I reserve the right to change this syllabus as time and circumstances dictate. Necessary changes will be announced in class in advance when possible.
- My responsibility as the instructor is helping you to learn the material. I should be organized, well-prepared, helpful, and courteous. Your responsibilities as a student are to be prepared for class and to take an active role in learning.

GRADING POLICY

Students' performance will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Three in-class assignments: 15% (5% each)
2. Participation in class discussions : 5%
3. Written Exam: 25%
4. One (fun) team project: 5%
5. One term paper: 50% (First draft: 10%, Final draft: 40%)

In-Class-Assignments

These are small pop-up assignments in class from current topics of the course. They can be written or oral, individual or in team.

Team Project

Students will be grouped in four teams. There will be a simple topic (mainly quantitative practice) assigned to each group. Later during the semester, one short presentation for the team, and individual reports will be gathered from students.

Term Paper

Each student is expected to complete a short research paper by the end of semester. We will have a full session on research methodology and quantitative skills which will mostly benefit those who decide to work on an empirical paper. Selected topics can be from a wide range related to the course. We will discuss some possible topics and some suggestions will be provided.

The first draft of paper should be submitted earlier for guideline and feedback from the instructor.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (): **Introduction. What Is Economics of Religion About?**

- Overview of the field.
- Adam Smith, Max Weber.
- Religion as a cause vs. an effect in economic analysis.
- Religion as an institution.

Week 2 (): **Economic Development. Religious Conception of Development.**

- Fundamentals of Development Economics.
- Moral/Spiritual Development
- Salvation and Well-being

Week 3 (): **Religion and Development: Friends or Foes?**

- Secularization and Development
- Weber's Thesis
- Religion as agent of Globalization

Week 4 (): **Religion and Economic Growth**

- Review of theoretical and empirical literature

Week 5 (): **Christianity & Islam**

- Spiritual and Material Development
- The Ethics of Charity
- Social Welfare
- Social Network

Week 6 (): **Current Events and Issues**

Week 7 (): **Project Presentations**

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

- The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course.
- Cheating is not tolerated at American University of Beirut. Anyone caught cheating will be penalized following the procedures described in the Student Code of Conduct. (<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>)