

# A short course in the Economics of Religion, using *Radical, Religious and Violent*

---

The book was written based on my experience teaching the material in college classes and presenting it in public lectures, and so it is designed to be nontechnical in nature. That said, it is not designed to be a text. The website contains chapter questions. Answers are available to instructors who send a request to [elib@ucsd.edu](mailto:elib@ucsd.edu) from their campus email address, together with a link to their campus website.

This *sample syllabus* on the Economics of Religion, based on the book, might look like this. It is based on my experience teaching this material in classes on economic growth, labor economics and the economics of the Middle East.

This syllabus is far from comprehensive. For a general introduction I recommend:

Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Introduction to the Economics of Religion," *Journal of Economic Literature*, XXXVI (1998), 1465-1496.

Barro, R. and R. McCleary, "Religion and Economy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 2006.

Iannaccone, Laurence R. and Eli Berman. "religion, economics of." *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*. Second Edition. Eds. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

A short list of current readings from the press is available upon request . It can be followed on Twitter (clubmodel). Discussion of the book is collected at [www.radicalreligiousandviolent.com](http://www.radicalreligiousandviolent.com) .

## 1. Introduction

**Topics:** Thinking about religion and violence like a scientist; refutable conjectures; using data as evidence; the tools of economics; Adam Smith on the Economics of Religion.

**Readings:**

Chapter #1: Why Are Religious Radicals so Lethal?

Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Introduction to the Economics of Religion," *Journal of Economic Literature*, XXXVI (1998), 1465-1496.

Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, [1776] 1965), 788-814.

## 2. The Economics of Families – Fertility, Education, Mortality and Religion

**Topics:** Demographic history – the world where the great religions were invented; demographic transition; why do birth rates fall? Becker I; Becker II; economic growth and fertility transition; economic and environmental implications; demand for religion.

**Readings:**

Weil, David N., *Economic Growth* (New York: Pearson, 2009) - Chapter #4: Demographics.

Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) Ch 4 - The Impact of Rapid Population Growth (pp. 77-102)

Azzi, C. and R. Ehrenberg, "Household Allocation of Time and Church Attendance," *Journal of Political Economy*, February 1975.

### 3. The Economics of Religious Communities

**Topics:** Prohibitions and sacrifices; mutual aid; prohibitions and clubs; religion and fertility; radical Islam and fertility; subsidized sacrifice; madrassas; how many radical Islamists?

**Readings:**

Chapter #3: Sects, Prohibitions and Mutual Aid

Chapter #4: Sect, Subsidy and Sacrifice

Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives," *Journal of Political Economy*, C(1992), 271-291.

Kuran, Timur, "Fundamentalisms and the Economy" in Marty and Appleby (eds.) *Fundamentalisms and the State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

### 4. Violent Religious Clubs

**Topics:** Origins of the Taliban; trade routes and defection; Hamas; The "Hamas Model;" Hezbollah; the Mahdi Army; why religious radicals are so lethal; when terrorists fail; clubs and violence without religion; objections to the club model; suicide attacks.

**Readings:**

Chapter #2: The Defection Constraint

Rashid, Ahmed, Taliban: *Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven: Yale, 2000), chapter 1: "Kandahar 1994: Origins of the Taliban;

chapter 9: "High on Heroin: Drugs and the Taliban Economy"

Mishal, Shaul and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision Violence and Coexistence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), chapter 1: "Social Roots and Institutional Development."

Chapter #5: The Hamas Model

Chapter #6: Suicide Attacks

### 5. Policy – Constructive Counterterrorism, Religion and Government

**Topics:** How terrorists succeed; constructive counterterrorism; constructive counterinsurgency; Iraq and Afghanistan; religion in government; the American precedent; competition and pluralism; not about us?

**Readings:**

Chapter #7: Constructive Counterterrorism

Fearon, James, and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, 97(1), February 2003.

Chapter #8: Religious Radicals and Violence in the Modern World

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers U. Press, 1992), Chapter #2.

Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, [1776] 1965), 312-314.

Gruber, J. "Pay or Pray? The Impact of Charitable Subsidies on Religious Attendance," *Journal of Public Economics*, December 2004, 2635-2655.

Ekelund, R., R. Hebert, and R. Tollison, *The Marketplace of Christianity*, MIT Press, 2006, Chs. 5-7.

Gill, A., "The Political Origins of Religious Liberty," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religious Research*, 2005, 1-35.

Barro, R. and R. McCleary, "Religion and Political Economy in an International Panel," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, June 2006.

## 6. The Market for Religion

**Topics:** Competition and Efficiency; regulation and pluralism; secularization in Europe; forced secularization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; Protestant growth in Latin America.

**Readings:**

Smith, A., *The Wealth of Nations*, New York, The Modern Library, 1937, 740-751.

Iannaccone, L., "The Consequences of Religious Market Structures: Adam Smith and the Economics of Religion," *Rationality and Society*, April 1991.

Chaves, M. and D.E. Cann, "Regulation, Pluralism, and Religious Market Structure," *Rationality and Society*, July 1992.

Iannaccone, L. and R. Stark, "A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the Secularization of Europe," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, March 1994.

Montgomery, J., "A Formalization and Test of the Religious Economies Model," *American Sociological Review*, October 2003.

Froese, P. and S. Pfaff, "Replete and Desolate Markets: Poland, East Germany, and the New Religious Paradigm," *Social Forces*, December 2001.

Froese, P., "Forced Secularization in Soviet Russia: Why an Atheistic Monopoly Failed," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, March 2004.

Gill, A., "Government Regulation, Social Anomie, and Protestant Growth in Latin America: A Cross-National Analysis," *Rationality and Society*, 1999, 3.