Law, Economics, and Religion: A Rational Choice Perspective

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Classes: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (6:00 - 7:30 PM) (LLM Business Law Classroom)

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Course description

Recent years have seen increasing interest in economic analyses of religion, which has led to the emergence of a new domain within Economics, namely, Economics of Religion (EoR). Within EoR literature the Law and Economics perspective is not yet well-developed. This course will engage with two specific issues related to law and religion that have attracted a lot of interest in EoR. In the first part of the course we will look at the issue of disestablishment of state religion. In the second we will engage with the legal-economic interpretations of religious scriptures and norms.
Reading List

Note: Most of the journal articles are available on JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org), etc whereas books are available on Google books or http://www.archive.org.

Lecture 1-2: Introduction to Economics of Religion (EoR)

Literature reviews/collections of papers


Ekelund, Jr., Robert B., Robert F. Hebert, Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, and Audrey B. Davidson (1996), Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm, Oxford University Press (New York)


Kumar, Vikas (2009a), Economics of Religion, Manuscript (class presentation)


Expanding domain of Economics


Methodology of Economics


Relation between religion and economy


Kumar, Vikas (2009a), *Economics of Religion*, Manuscript (class presentation)


Formative contributions to EoR

Adam Smith

Smith, Adam (1776), *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, available online


Karl Marx


Emile Durkheim

Durkheim, Emile (1897), Suicide: A Study in Sociology, The Free Press (Glencoe, translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, 1951)


Max Weber


For further references refer Kumar (2008, 2009)

Others


See also Literature reviews/collections of papers

**What is religion?**


**Justifications for rational choice analysis of religion**


Kumar, Vikas (2009a), *Economics of Religion*, Manuscript (class presentation)

**Critiques of rational choice analysis of religion**


Kumar, Vikas (2009), *Economics of Religion*, Manuscript (class presentation)


Lecture 3-6: Establishment of religion


Barro, Robert J. and Rachel M. McCleary (2005), ‘Which Countries have State Religion’, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, CX, 1091-1126

Federalist Papers, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp)


Kumar, Vikas (2009b), ‘A Rational Choice Model of Secularism’, Manuscript (class presentation)


Smith, Adam (see above)


Lecture 7-10: Legal-economic interpretation of religious texts


Brams, Steven J. (2007 [1983]), Superior Beings: If They Exist How Would We Know?, Springer Verlag (New York)


Ekelund, Jr., Robert B., Robert F. Hebert, Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, and Audrey B. Davidson (1996), Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm, Oxford University Press (New York)


Miller, William Ian (2006), Eye for an Eye, Cambridge University Press


Evaluation Criteria

Class participation: 15% (Sitting like a duck will not help!)

Short Essay: 15%

Long Essay: 70%

A few points regarding essays:

1. Choose a topic of interest.

2. The Short Essay should be submitted latest by the second Saturday of September 2009 (4 P.M.).
   a. The Short Essay should only contain literature review.
   b. 1200 words (max.) excluding references, 1 inch margin, 1.5 line spacing, Calibri 12 font, keep complete references at the end (in the text just say X (1967: 54) has noted...)

3. The Long Essay should be submitted latest by the fourth Saturday of September 2009 (4 P.M.).
   a. The Long Essay should contain your contribution to the topic.
   b. 4000 words (max.)

4. Please send your submissions to vikaskumar@nls.ac.in.
   a. The files should be named as follows: X_Essay_LER_Firstname_Secondname
   b. Please only submit PDF files.