

Economics of the Family and Religion

Economics 3933-0001

Instructor: Dr. Douglas Norton,

Time and Location: MWF 10:40 am - 11:30 am, RBB 0108

Contact: via Canvas email

Office Hours: Wednesday 4pm - 6pm (or by appointment), Zoom

Course Description: Much of modern economics research addresses questions often considered the domain of other social sciences. The purpose of this course is to teach how basic economic principles yield a greater understanding about the two of the most important institutions in our social world: family and religion. First, we will refresh on economic theory and statistical inference. Then we will apply these ideas to various aspects of the family and religion.

Required Materials:

Throughout the course we will often use or refer to:

1. **Required Materials:** *Women and the Economy* Saul D. Hoffman and Susan L. Averett;
Acts of Faith Rodney Starke and Roger Finke

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Compare and contrast concepts from the labor market with the “marriage market”
2. Understand how economic considerations influence marriage, divorce, and fertility
3. Describe how economic considerations influence decisions about how to parent
4. Offer a detailed empirical assessment of how economics and the family intersect
5. Explain how economists think about the “religious marketplace”
6. Outline factors that influence historical and recent trends in religious participation
7. Understand the concept of club goods and how religions overcome the free-rider problem
8. Offer a detailed empirical assessment of how economics and religion intersect

Grade Distribution:

Quizzes	20%
Discussion Board	30%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	30%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Course Policies:

- **General**

- Students are expected to attend class, complete assigned readings/videos/podcasts and prepare themselves to make contributions in class.

- **Grades**

- **Exams:** The midterm exam will cover material from the Economic Way of Thinking and Economics of the Family modules. This exam is worth 20 percent of your final grade. There is no make-up midterm; however, if you miss the midterm for any reason, the weight of the midterm will be placed on the final exam. The final exam is cumulative and will cover material from all three modules (will skew towards economics of religion). The final exam is worth 30 percent of your final grade. Exam questions will be a mixture of multiple choice, simple calculations, and essay questions.
- **Quizzes:** There will be six in-class quizzes. These quizzes will not be announced and are intended to ensure you have read the relevant readings for class. You can drop the two lowest quiz grades. These include zeros in the case of absence. **Each quiz will count for 5 percent of your grade.**
- **Discussion Board:** Most weeks there will be a discussion prompt posted on Wednesday. You have 24 hours to respond to the prompt. You cannot see others' posts until your response is posted. Before class on Friday you must respond to someone else's post by either advancing their position or critiquing their position. Your arguments to advance or critique someone else's post should be grounded in economic theory and/or statistics.

University Mandated Material:

- **University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.
- **Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>)
- **Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what kind of accommodation. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. The syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center

874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167

(850) 644-9566 (voice)

(850) 644-8504 (TDD)

sdrc@admin.fsu.edu

<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

- **Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Part 1: Economics of the Family

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	No Class	Syllabus	WATE pp. 14 - 25 Economic Way of Thinking
2	Posted to Canvas EWT Continued	WATE pp. 25 - 28 Supply and Demand	Posted to Canvas Game Theory and More
3	MLK - No Class	WATE pp. 28 - 38 Regression	WATE pp. 28 - 38 Causal Inference
4	WATE pp. 40 - 44 Marriage Trends and Attitudes Quiz 1	WATE pp. 44 - 56 Marriage as Production	WATE pp. 57 - 60 Marriage as Investment etc.
5	WATE pp. 60 - 68 Marriage Market	WATE pp. 68 - 71 Intra Household Bargaining	WATE pp. 71 - 75 Marital Search
6	WATE pp. 76 - 79 The Benefits of Marriage Quiz 2	WATE pp. 79 - 92 Cohabitation and Divorce	WATE pp. 92 - 100 Race and Family
7	WATE pp. 100 - 103 Education and Family Quiz 3	WATE pp. 104 - 110 Fertility trends	WATE pp. 110 - 118 Fertility
8	WATE pp. 119 - 126 Explanations for fertility decline	WATE pp. 129 - 138 Teen fertility	Posted to Canvas Economics of Parenting
9	Midterm Review	Midterm	Midterm Recap

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Part 2: Economics of Religion

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
10	S&F pp. 27 - 41 Rational Choice Approach	S&F pp. 42 - 56 Rationality and Religion	S&F pp. 83 - 96 Demand for Church Attendance
11	S&F pp. 96 - 113 Credence Goods and Religion	S&F pp. 114 - 138 Religious Capital	Posted to Canvas Economics of Clubs Quiz 4
12	S&F pp. 141 - 168 Strictness and Stigma Screens	Posted to Canvas Examples	Stigma Screening Guest: Larry Iannaccone
13	S&F pp. 193 - 203 Religious Competition I	S&F pp. 203 - 216 Religious Competition II Quiz 5	S&F pp. 218 - 258 Regulated Competition
14	Religious Competition Guest: TBD	S&F pp. 259 - 276 Optimal Tension Quiz 6	S&F pp. 57 - 79 Secularization
15	Protestant Reformation Guest: Jared Rubin	Religious Liberty Guest: Mark Koyama	Review