

Economics and Religion: Intersections, Tensions, and Alternatives

**International Summer Academy for Pluralist Economics
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Purpose

Religion and economics have been deeply intertwined throughout history, even though the connections have often been overlooked in modern thought. While the modern definition of religion introduces a strict separation of religion, politics, and economics, repeated economic disasters challenge us to reexamine the connections. Using the example of Christianity, this course will discuss how the structures of dominant economic systems influence religion, exploring what contributions religion might make to economics in turn, and whether relating religion and economics might be able to foster alternative economic and religious expressions.

Outcomes and Goals

- Knowledge of religious engagement of economics, as exemplified by Christian traditions.
- Knowledge of a number of dominant and alternative modes of religion and economics.
- Ability to recognize and analyze intersections between religion and economics.
- Ability to engage alternatives both in religion and economics in critical and constructive fashion.

Sessions and readings

Session 1, August 11

Introduction to the Course and Introductions of Participants

Laura Hoy, "The Stock Market is Trading in a Parallel Universe—That's OK... Until It's Not," *CNN*, June 7, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/stock-market-trading-parallel-universe-ok-until-its-not/>

Joerg Rieger, "Capitalism and Christian Theology," *Religion Compass* 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12350>.

Joerg Rieger, *No Rising Tide: Theology, Economics, and the Future* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), preface and chapter 1 and 2.

Session 2, August 12

Christian Responses to Capitalism

(Please pick three of the texts below and be prepared to give a brief response in class about what you found most interesting.)

American Baptist Churches USA, "American Baptist Resolution on Economic Justice for the United States," <https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Economic-Justice-for-the-United-States.pdf>.

Episcopal Church, "A Short History of the Economic Justice Program in the Episcopal Church," <http://www.enej.org/assets/pdfs/HistoryofEconomicJusticeProgram2015.pdf>.

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, "For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church," <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> paragraphs 23-41.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF), "Message from the Tenth Assembly, 2003," [http://www.lwf-assembly2003.org/lwf-assembly/htdocs/PDFs/LWF Assembly Message-EN.pdf](http://www.lwf-assembly2003.org/lwf-assembly/htdocs/PDFs/LWF%20Assembly%20Message-EN.pdf), pp. 17-19.

Poor People's Campaign, "A Moral Agenda Based on Fundamental Rights," <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/demands/>.

Pope Leo, "*Rerum Novarum*," Encyclical Letter, 1891, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/113rerum.htm>. #43-#64.

Pope Paul VI, "*Populorum Progressio*," Encyclical Letter, 1967, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/p6develo.htm>. #21-28, #58-#63.

Pope Francis, "*Evangelii Gaudium*," Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/pa-pa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. #52-#60.

Pope Francis, "*Laudato Si*," Encyclical Letter, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html. #124-#129.

Unitarian Universalist Association, "Escalating Economic Inequity," <https://www.uua.org/action/statements/escalating-economic-inequity>.

United Church of Christ, "Economic Inequality," <https://www.ucc.org/justice-economic-justice-inequality1>.

United Methodist Church (UMC), Social Principles (The Economic Community), <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/economic-community>.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), 2004, "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" (Accra Confession), <http://oikoumene.net/eng.global/eng.accra2004/eng.accraconf2004/index.html>.

Session 3, August 13

Jung Mo Sung, "Political theology Ignores the Neoliberal Market System at its Own Peril," *Political Theology Network* (November 21, 2017), <https://politicaltheology.com/political-theology-ignores-the-neoliberal-market-system-at-its-own-peril-jung-mo-sung/>

Joerg Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, chapters 3-4.

Session 4, August 14

Rosemarie Henkel-Rieger and Joerg Rieger, "Deep Solidarity: Broadening the Basis of Transformation," *HTS Theologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 73:3 (2017), <https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/4578/10727>.

Joerg Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, chapter 5 and conclusion.

Students who are taking this course for credit are required to produce a final paper of 2,500 3,000 words, dealing with a choice of topics addressed in this course. This paper should contain both critical and constructive elements. Critical engagement includes an evaluation of arguments and a set of questions; constructive engagement is an invitation to think in terms of the implications of the material for your own academic study.