



ASREC 2026 Graduate Student Workshop

“Introduction to the Economics of Religion”



**Chapman University
Orange, CA
March 19-21, 2026**



Faculty

- Daniel Hungerman, Notre Dame
- Avital Livny, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Jared Rubin, Chapman University
- Jonathan Schulz, George Mason University

Students

- Michele Mary Bernadine, University of British Columbia
- Robert Betancourt, Cornell University
- Can Bodrumlu, University of Washington
- Liza Brover, Yale University
- Alvaro Calderon, Stanford University
- Kirill Chmel, Columbia University
- Matthew Conrad, University of Connecticut
- Precious Fasakin, UC San Diego
- Florentine Friedrich, London School of Economics
- Michael Huang, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Jasper Jansen, MIT
- Victor Kreitmann, University College London
- Prerna Kundu, University of British Columbia
- Jenny Le, Georgetown University
- Karine Moukadem, Université Catholique de Louvain
- Yaroslav Prokhorskoy, ESSEC Business School
- Sofiana Sinani, CERGE-EI, Prague
- Meghna Sinha Ray, University of British Columbia
- Luke Tisch, Baylor University
- Monia Tomasella, Stanford University
- Eduard van der Merwe, Rice University



THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

8:00 AM	Shuttle leaves Embassy Suites – Drop-off at IRES, Chapman University
8:15-8:45 AM	Coffee/Tea and Pastries
8:45-9:00 AM	Welcome and introductions Jared Rubin
9:00-10:30 AM	The Economics of Financing Congregations & Faith-Based Charities Daniel Hungerman
10:30-10:45 AM	Coffee Break
10:45-12:00 PM	Cultural Evolution, Human Behavior, and Economic Outcomes Jonathan Schulz
12:00-2:00 PM	Lunch (Local restaurants)
2:00-3:15 PM	The Politics of Religion & Culture Avital Livny
3:15-3:30 PM	Coffee Break
3:30-4:45 PM	The Political Economy of Religion Jared Rubin
4:45-5:15 PM	Wrap-up / Debrief
5:30-6:30 PM	Drinks and Conversation at a local bar
6:30 PM	Dinner – TBD



FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026

Rules of the game: In 4-paper sessions, each presenter has 15 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes for discussion. In 3-paper sessions, each presenter has 20 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes for discussion. The last presenter will chair the session and manage time.

Presenters are listed first and in bold.

8:00 AM: Registration - Argyros Forum 209, Chapman University

8:00 – 9:00 AM: Coffee/Tea Station - Outside of Argyros Forum 209

9:00 – 10:30 AM: Parallel Sessions 1

1A: Faith & Fertility: Empirical Studies & Causal Identification

Room: AF 209A

Malthusian Migration

- **Romain Wacziarg, University of California, Los Angeles**
- **Guillaume Blanc, Simon Fraser University**

The Diffusion of Fertility Norms: Who Adopts from Whom and Why

- **Samuel Bazzi, University of California, San Diego**
- **Hillel Rapoport, Paris School of Economics**
- **Martin Fernandez, Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research**

Minority–Majority Religious Group Differences in Fertility: The Impact of the Level of Minority Status in South Asia

- **Saman Naz, East Tennessee State University**
- **John H. Shaver, Baylor University**
- **Mary K. Shenk, Pennsylvania State University**



1B: Missionaries

Room: AF 209B

Human Capital Side of Soft Power: Evidence from American Missionaries

- **Youn Baek**, *New York University*

Seeds of Market-Based Capitalism: Christian Missionaries and China's Modernization

- **Riccardo Di Cato**, *University of California, San Diego*
- Jiachen Li, *Renmin University of China*

The Diffusion of Authoritarian Parenting in Africa

- **Giulia La Mattina**, *University of South Florida*
- Alberto Ciancio, *University of Glasgow*
- Elisabetta De Cao, *University of Bologna*
- Luca Maria Pesando, *New York University Abu Dhabi*

Catholicism in the Early 20th Century: A Re-examination

- **Yiling Zhao**, *Peking University*
- Ningning Ma, *Jinan University*

1C: Immigration and Assimilation

Room: AF 209C

Networks, Modernization and Integration: Jewish Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century Germany

- **Israel Eruchimovitch**, *Brown University*
- Lukas Rosenberger, *Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich*
- Assaf Sarid, *Haifa University*

Industrialization and the Making of an Integrated Society: Evidence from US Marriage Networks

- **Munir Squires**, *University of British Columbia*
- Arkadev Ghosh, *Duke University*
- Sam Hwang, *University of British Columbia*

Our Crowd? Intra-Ethnic Frictions in Immigrant Assimilation

- **Sara Benetti**, *University of British Columbia*
- Elijah Locke, *Northwestern University*
- Ross Mattheis, *ISO New England*



10:30 – 11:00 AM: Coffee/Tea Station - Argyros Forum 209

11:00 – 12:30 PM: Parallel Sessions 2

2A: Faith & Fertility: Case Studies

Room: AF 209A

High Fertility but Widely Varying: Do Amish-Internal or Non-Amish Neighborhood Processes Better Predict Fertility Variation?

- **Cory Anderson, Pennsylvania State University**
- George Hayward, *U.S. Census Bureau*
- Shuai Zhou, *University of South Alabama*
- Mary Shenk, *Pennsylvania State University*
- Guangqing Chi, *Indiana University*

What Dimensions of Religiosity Affect Fertility? A Cross-Cultural Theoretical Framework

- **Jane Lankes Smith, Ohio State University**
- Mary Shenk, *Pennsylvania State University*

Multiple Pathways Link Fertility and Religion Among the Amish

- **Matthew Conrad, University of Connecticut**
- Mary Shenk, *Pennsylvania State University*
- Cory Anderson, *Pennsylvania State University*



2B: The Deep Roots of Culture

Room: AF 209B

Molded Culture: The Symbolic Content of Ceramics and Cultural Identity in Pre-Industrial Peru

- **Miriam Artiles**, *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*
- Mateo Uribe-Castro, *Universidad de los Andes*
- Gonzalo González Melo, *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*

Songlines

- **Sotiris Kampanelis**, *Cardiff University*
- Aldo Elizalde, *Queen's University, Belfast*
- Yannis M. Ioannides, *Tufts University*

Values of China: Toward a Cultural Map

- **Melanie Xue**, *London School of Economics*

Kinship and Its Psychological Consequences in China over Two Millennia

- **Mohammad Atari**, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*
- Joseph Henrich, *Harvard University*
- Jonathan Schulz, *George Mason University*
- Yuqi Chen, *University of Hong Kong*

2C: Cultural Dynamics and Change

Room: AF 209C

Leadership and the Emergence of Cooperative Norms After Conflict

- **Alain Schläpfer**, *Stanford University*
- Marcela Ibáñez, *University of Zurich*

The Complex Dynamics of Cultural Traits

- **Benjamin Tremblay-Auger**, *Chapman University*

Why the Contact Hypothesis Holds When it Holds and Fails When it Fails

- **Michael Sacks**, *Clarkson University*

Education and Cultural Heterogeneity

- **Paul Behler**, *University of Bonn*



12:30 – 2:00 PM: Lunch Break

Explore Orange!

(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ea5a9334330c4d05ab3925dcda88de70>)

2:00 – 3:30 PM: Parallel Sessions 3

3A: Religion and Policy

Room: AF 209A

Where Welfare Competes: State and Islamist Provision in Jordan

- **Saumyaa Gupta, Yale University**

Forced Modernization and Its Discontents: Policy and Culture in Laos

- **Resem Makan, Case Western Reserve University**

Norms That Travel: The Role of Grassroots Institutions on Anti-Social Behavior

- **Natalia Pia Guerrero Trinidad, University of Minnesota**

Religious Infrastructure and War Mobilization in Authoritarian Regimes: Evidence from the Orthodox Church during Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

- **Georgy Tarasenko, Cornell University**
- **Andrey Tkachenko, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan**



3B: Culture and Religion in History

Room: AF 209B

Quantifying Belief in God: The Long Run Decline of Sincere Faith in England 1300-1850

- **Neil Cummins**, *London School of Economics*
- Aurelius Noble, *READ-COOP*

The Postal System and the Spread of the Renaissance North of the Alps

- **Steven Pfaff**, *Chapman University*
- Sascha Becker, *University of Warwick*
- Jared Rubin, *Chapman University*

Innovation and the Medieval Church

- **Jonathan Schulz**, *George Mason University*
- Viacheslav Savitskiy, *Korea University Business School*
- Max Posch, *University of Exeter*
- Joe Henrich, *Harvard Business School*

Printing Morality: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Antebellum Political

- **Erdong Xu**, *George Washington University*

3C: Religion, Contracts, and Governance

Room: AF 209C

Contracting with Faith-motivated Agents

- **Nicoleta Acatrinei**, *University of Lausanne, Switzerland*

Religion and Contracts

- **Lucas Lopez-Manuel**, *University of Vigo*

Creedal Incompleteness: A Framework For Understanding Church Governance

- **Marcus Shera**, *Eastern University*
- Tegan Truitt, *Grove City College*

Is Project 2025 a Christian Nationalist Playbook?

- **Sean Everton**, *Naval Postgraduate School*



3:45 – 4:15 PM: Coffee Break - Outside of Argyros Forum 209

4:15 – 5:45 PM: Parallel Sessions 4

4A: Faith, Fertility & Family

Room: AF 209A

Religious Institutions and Fertility: Theory and Evidence from the Amish

- **James Choy, University of York**
- Thilo Huning, *University of York*
- Cory Anderson, *Pennsylvania State University*

Cousin Marriage, Women's Welfare and Family Formation

- **Olympia Campbell, IAST, Toulouse School of Economics**

The Family and Economic Growth

- **Lena Edlund, Columbia University**

4B: Norms

Room: AF 209B

A Theory of Injunctive Norms

- **Erik Kimbrough, Chapman University**
- Alexander Vostroknutov, *Maastricht University*

Virtual Bargaining in an Uncertain World

- **Tigran Melkonyan, University of Alabama**
- Nick Chater, *University of Warwick*
- Arthur Le Pargneux, *Harvard University*
- Tigran Melkonyan, *University of Alabama*
- Hossam Zeitoun, *University of Warwick*

Norms without Knowledge: Learning and Consensus in Moral Judgment

- **John Thrasher, Ohio State University**



4C: Gender and Culture

Room: AF 209C

Can Inheritance Reform Change Custom? Evidence on Female Land Ownership from India

- **Prerna Kundu**, *University of British Columbia*
- Sankalp Sharma, *University of Southern California*

Women and Asylums

- **Melanie Xue**, *London School of Economics*

Male Dominance and Cultural Extinction

- **Ana Tur-Prats**, *University of California, Merced*
- Eleonora Guarnieri, *University of Bristol*



6:00 – 7:00 PM – Keynote Speaker

Room: Beckman Hall 404

James Robinson



Join Nobel Prize-winning economist James Robinson for a fascinating exploration of "Bokoko." Drawing on decades of research in Africa and Latin America, Robinson investigates how traditional belief systems challenge our standard economic models. This presentation offers a preview of his highly anticipated book, *Wealth in People*, and provides a fresh, provocative look at the human side of political economy.

7:00 -9:00 PM: ASREC Welcome Reception

Room: Beckman Hall 404



SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026

8:00 AM: Registration - Argyros Forum 209, Chapman University

8:00 – 9:00 AM: Coffee/Tea Station - Argyros Forum 209

9:00 - 10:30 Parallel Sessions 5

5A: Faith & Fertility: The Big Picture

Room: AF 209A

Religion and Fertility: An Update on Findings, Theory, and Mechanisms

- **Mary Shenk, Pennsylvania State University**
- Jane Lankes Smith, *Ohio State University*

Status norms and the global decline in fertility

- **Minchul Yum, Virginia Commonwealth University**

Are We Seeing Western-Typical Religious Decline, outside the West? A Worldwide Analysis of Societal-Average Trends and Cross-Generational Patterns in Religiosity, 1981-2020

- **Louisa Roberts, University of South Dakota**



5B: Preaching and Its Consequences

Room: AF 209B

The Pulpit and the Polls: The Electoral Impact of Religious Participation

- **Angela Cools**, *Davidson College*
- Jonathan Moreno-Medina, *University of Texas, San Antonio*
- Sam Sheng, *Davidson College*

From Pews to Polls: The Effects of Church Peer Groups on Political Behavior

- **Kurtis Gilliat**, *University of California, San Diego*
- Jacob Brown, *Boston University*

Christianity and Cancel Culture

- **Raymond Kim**, *Westmont College*

5C: Identity

Room: AF 209C

Strategic Integration: When and How Dominant-group Elites Promote Shared Religious Identity with Marginalized Groups

- **Sebastian Lucek**, *Stanford University*

Identity and the Escalation of Conflict

- **Michael McBride**, *University of California, Irvine*
- Roman Sheremeta, *Case Western Reserve University*
- Nidhi Pandey, *University of California, Irvine*

Faith, Interrupted: Identity and Behavior After Forced Atheism

- **Sofiana Sinani**, *CERGE-EI*
- Enkelejda Havari, *IESEG School of Management*
- Michela Giorcelli, *University of California, Los Angeles*

10:30 – 11:00 AM: Coffee/Tea Station - Argyros Forum 209



11:00 - 12:30 PM Parallel Sessions 6

6A: Faith and Family

Room: AF 209A

Faith and Judgment: Evidence from the Hajj

- **Yaroslav Prokhorskoy, ESSEC Business School**
- Sultan Mehmood, *The New Economic School*
- Lydia Assouad, *London School of Economics*

Preaching Against the Choir: Faith, Stigma, and Family Planning in Kenya

- **Eduard Van der Merwe, Rice University**

Religion, Marriage, and Intermarriage among American Jews

- **Bruce Phillips, USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture**

6B: Nation Building

Room: AF 209B

Cultural Resistance and the Limits of Nation-Building

- **Kirill Chmel, Columbia University**

Five Millennia of Nation-Building

- **Daniel Crisostomo Wainstock, University of Oxford**

Crisis, State Capacity, and the Rise of Autocracy: A Design-based Analysis of the Thirty Years' War

- **Matthias Weigand, Harvard University**
- Luis Bosshart, *Harvard Academy*



6C: Group Identity

Room: AF 209C

Fraternity or Fracture? National Identity and Violence amid the India–Pakistan Cricket Rivalry

- **Humoyun Abdumavlon**, *University of Pittsburgh*
- Nilesh Fernando, *King's College, London*
- Layton Hall, *Independent Researcher*

The Linguistic Foundations of Support for Islamist Militants: Evidence from Afghanistan

- **Mohammad Isaqzadeh**, *Chapman University*

Debunking Myths: Ancestral Narratives and Intergroup Cooperation in India

- **Resuf Ahmed**, *Stanford University*

Costly Visibility: Vegetarianism and the Politics of Group Identity in India

- **Radha Sarkar**, *Tecnológico de Monterrey, México*
- Deepika Padmanabhan, *Harvard University*
- Sebastian Lucek, *Stanford University*

12:30 – 2:00 PM: Lunch Break



2:00 – 3:30 PM: Parallel Sessions 7

7A: Religion and Politics

Room: AF 209A

Patronizing Monasteries for Political Survival -- Usurpers and the Rise of Buddhism in Mid-Imperial China

- **Edgard Dewitte**, *University of California, Berkeley*
- Yongkang Tai, *Stanford University*
- Y. Wang, *Harvard University*

A Mirror of the Times (Mir'at al-Zamān): Conceptualizing & Measuring Ulama-State Relations with Biographical Dictionaries

- **Hasher Nisar**, *University of Michigan*

Brahmins vs. Mandarins: Origin and Persistence of (In)dependent Intellectual Elites

- **Yang Xie**, *University of California, Riverside*

7B: Religiosity and Affiliation

Room: AF 209B

Migration, Networks, and Religious Choice

- **Timothy Hersey**, *University of Chicago*
- Alvaro Cox, *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid*
- Daniela Solá, *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid*

An Empirical Study of Religiosity in India: The Demand-Side Approach

- **Mohd Arshid**, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*

None-Normality: Is Religious Unaffiliation Normalized in Canada?

- **Maryam Dilmaghani**, *Saint Mary's University*
- Min Hu, *University of British Columbia, Okanagan*



7C: Experiments on Religion

Room: AF 209C

The Evolution of Cooperation: The Case for Noise

- **Aidin Hajikhameneh**, *San Jose State University*
- Laurence Iannaccone, *Chapman University*

Can Religion Bridge Ethnic Divides? Experimental Evidence From the DRC

- **Gabriel Granato**, *University of California, Berkeley*
- Elie Kabue, *ODEKA, Democratic Republic of Congo*

A Pentecostal Ethic? Economic Outcomes from a Randomized Religious Intervention

- **Vivek Moorthy**, *Florida State University*
- David Murphy, *Colgate University*
- Sam Bird, *Bates College*
- Susan Kilonzo, *Maseno University*

7D: Religious and Cultural Legacies

Room: (Update) Room

The Great Revolt and Its Legacy: Understanding Vaccine Hesitancy in Colonial India

- **Malik Hussain**, *West Virginia University*
- Noel D. Johnson, *George Mason University*

Printing and Women: The Gendered Impact of Printing Technology in China

- **Nina Liu**, *King's College London*

The Roots of Faith: Early Life Droughts and Religious Commitment

- **Triana Yentzen**, *University of Michigan*

Ghee Boli: Religious Auctions and Reputation Building Among Jain Merchants

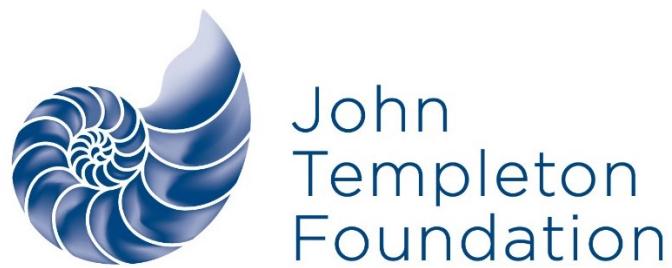
- **Samrudha Surana**, *George Mason University*
- Peter T. Leeson, *George Mason University*

3:30 – 5:30 PM: Farewell Reception

Room: Beckman Hall 404



ASREC would like to thank the following organizations for their sponsorship:



Thanks to all who contributed to these meetings, including session presenters and participants, the Institute for the Study of Religion, Economics and Society, Chapman University, and ASREC officers.

ASREC Officers:

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We hope to see you again at our next ASREC event

ASREC Europe 2026

Venice, Italy
September 25-26, 2026

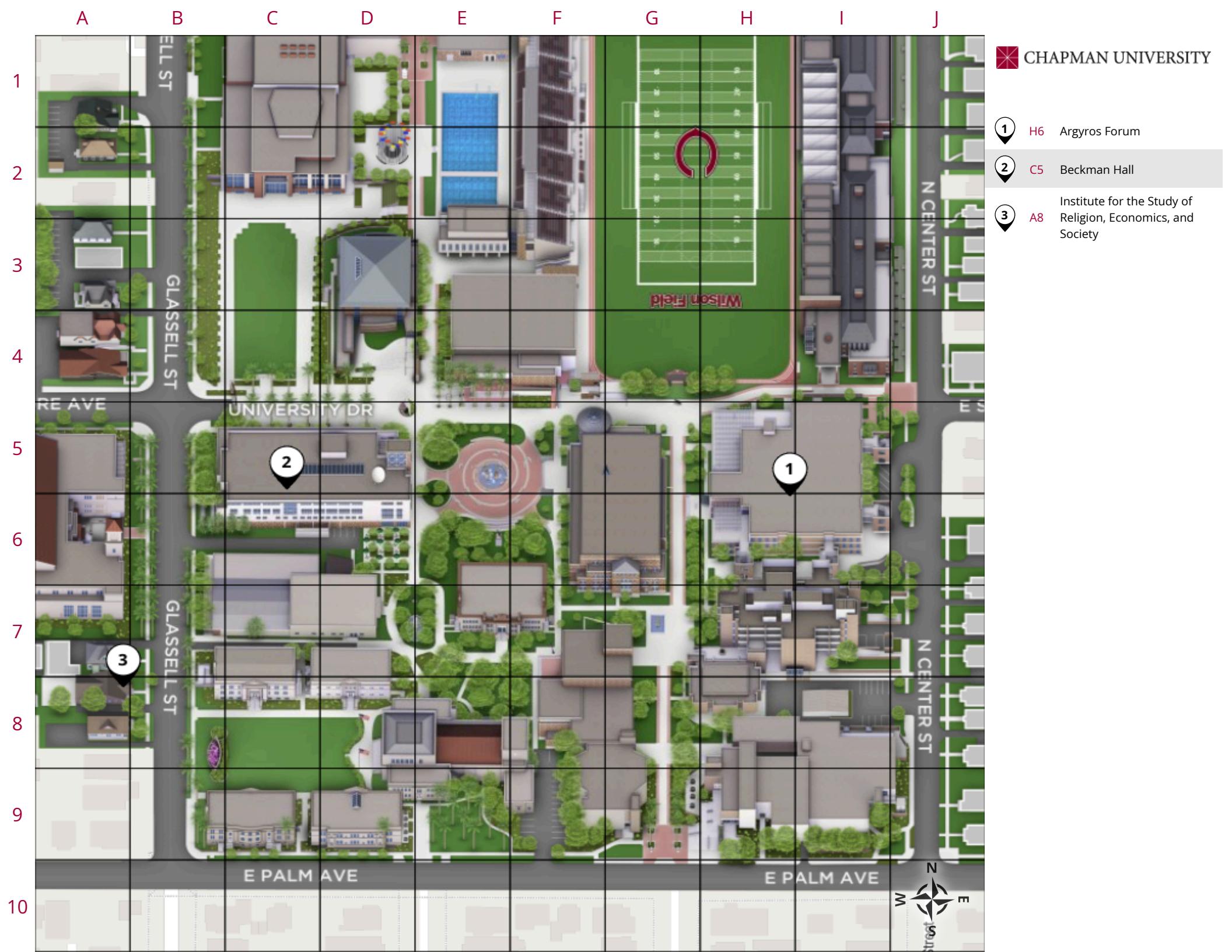
Keynote Speakers:

Mara Squicciarini (Bocconi University) and Saumitra Jha (Stanford University)

Local Organizers:

Sascha O. Becker (University of Warwick)
Valeria Rueda (University of Nottingham)

Call for papers out soon



ASREC 2026 - Shuttle Schedule

Thursday, March 19, 2026:

- **8:00 AM** – Pick up Grad Students/Faculty at Embassy Suites hotel - 400 N. State College and drop off at Chapman University – Schmidt Gate.

Friday, March 20, 2026:

- **7:45 AM** – Pick up conference participants at Embassy Suites hotel - 400 N. State College and drop off at Chapman University – Schmidt Gate.
- **8:15 AM** - Pick up conference participants at Embassy Suites hotel – 400 N. State College and drop off at Chapman University – Schmidt Gate.

Saturday, March 21, 2026:

- **7:45 AM** – Pick up conference participants at Embassy Suites hotel – 400 N. State College and drop off at Chapman University – Schmidt Gate.
- **8:15 AM** - Pick up conference participants @ Embassy Suites hotel – 400 N. State College and drop off at Chapman University – Schmidt Gate.

Look for black shuttles labeled Preferred Express;

**Shuttles will only drop off from the hotel to Chapman. There is no shuttle service available to return to the hotel after the conference.*

Preserving and Providing the Best Religion Data and Resources



The Best Religion Data. Always Free to Access.

Browse over 1,340 data files archived on the ARDA including international surveys, US Church membership data, and US surveys of the general population, religious groups, or other subgroups.

Membership Reports

Explore interactive congregational membership reports with maps and charts for states, counties, and metro areas.

Religion Census

Download the 2020 or earlier iterations of the US Religion Census at the country or state levels.

National Profiles

Examine the religious composition and multiple social and political measures for hundreds of nations and dozens of regions.

Other Resources for Researchers and Educators



Ahead of the Trend

Each month, Dr. Ryan Burge, author and political scientist at Eastern Illinois University, publishes two columns highlighting the latest news in religion research. Articles include some of today's most notable questions on religion and culture, all drawing on religion data available on the ARDA.

Teaching Resources

The ARDA provides several interactive teaching resources designed to enhance research skills and religion knowledge. These resources assist educators and students in their understanding of religion data, histories, and contexts.

