Introduction to Demography  
SYD 5045  

Fall 2020  

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Class meets: Thursdays, 1:00 – 3:30 PM, via Zoom  
Office hours: by appointment, Zoom or FaceTime  

Course Description and Objectives  
This course provides an introduction to demography and population studies. A quick google search will reveal many definitions of both demography and population studies as well as some disagreement about what each encompasses. Broadly speaking, however, most observers agree that demography is the study of human populations (size, spatial distribution, composition) and the processes through which populations change (fertility, mortality, migration), and population studies address the causes and consequences of population change. In addition, demography is associated with statistical description and the mathematical techniques used to study population—an association which drives many students away from enrolling in courses like this one! As you’ll learn this semester, what demographers actually “do” extends well beyond what these definitions suggest and demographic research draws extensively from a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, economics, public health and sociology. Readings for this course are drawn from all of these disciplines and have been selected to emphasize the breadth of the field and the variety of theoretical and policy perspectives that characterize it.

By the semester’s end, you will be able to:  
• describe global trends in human fertility, mortality, and migration, and their social and economic impacts;  
• demonstrate, through class discussion and written assignments, familiarity with conceptual frameworks and important issues within the field of demography/population studies; and  
• explain how recent research has contributed to and sometimes challenged our understanding of the relationship between social context and individuals’ demographic behaviors.  

This course is recommended for—but not limited to—Sociology graduate students planning to take their area exam in Demography, and students in the Demography MS program. There are no course prerequisites.

Course Materials  
Most of the readings for this course are available through the internet, using https://www.lib.fsu.edu/ or the links included on the syllabus. There is one required book, which we will discuss in November:  


The FSU Bookstore will have a limited number of copies for about $25. It is also available as an e-book for about $17, and through various on-line retailers for approximately $20.00.
Course Structure
This course is a seminar, the defining characteristics of which are discussion and the exchange of ideas about a specific topic. A seminar works only if all members are active, informed and engaged, which means that you must do the readings, come to class, and take part in the conversation.

This semester, class meetings will take place on Zoom. Dr. B~ will set up each meeting and make the link available on Canvas. At the start of each meeting, seminar participants will meet in four small groups in a Zoom breakout room for about 30 minutes. Each group will be assigned responsibility for summarizing the key points of one the week’s four readings and determining how that reading relates to the other readings for the week. We will then reconvene, and each group will have about 20 minutes to present their summary and insights and entertain questions from members of the other groups.

Course Requirements
1. Class attendance, preparation, and participation. As explained above, you must do the readings, come to class, and take part in the conversation. Guidance about reading scholarly articles in a graduate course is available on Canvas. Here are some guidelines for participating in a seminar:
   - Your participation should be aimed toward a better group understanding of the materials and not towards showing that you know more or work harder than everyone else. Think cooperation, not competition.
   - Monitor your participation relative to others. Engage with your peers; don’t dominate them and don’t let them render you voiceless.

2. Weekly discussion questions: Beginning with the readings for Week 3, you will come up with four discussion questions, one for each assigned reading. You’ll submit these questions through Canvas but you should also have them available during class so that we can integrate them into our discussion of the readings.

3. Review essay: You will write a course paper that reviews a topic, question, or issue in demography that interests you. These papers should be 10 to 12 pages, organized as follows: an introduction of the topic and statement of its relevance to the field of demography and/or population studies (1.5 to 2 pages), a review of the research and theoretical literatures structured around a particular question or a comparison of different perspectives on the topic (6-8 pages), and a concluding section in which you provide an answer to the question or come to a conclusion about which perspective best fits the available data (1.5-2 pages). This assignment is intended to help MSD students develop an idea for their Master’s research papers and doctoral students to further their research agendas.
   - October 1: Submit a paragraph describing your topic and its relevance to the course, along with a preliminary reference list. Please see me by September 25th if you’re having trouble coming up with a topic.
   - November 2: Submit a paper outline along with an annotated bibliography for 10 – 15 articles.
   - December 3: Submit your completed paper.
Grades
Class attendance and participation: 30% of course grade. Evaluated weekly using a three-point scale:
• 0 (did not attend);
• 2 (either limited participation in discussion or nature of participation suggested unfamiliarity with assigned readings);
• 4 (active engagement with class members and clear familiarity with readings).

Discussion questions: 30% of course grade. Evaluated using a three-point scale:
• 0 (did not submit questions);
• 1 (questions show limited engagement with readings);
• 2 (questions show satisfactory attempt to engage material).

Paper: 40% of course grade. The expectation is a thoughtful, well-written paper with a clear and logical argument, concise language, and no more than one or two grammatical errors or typos. Grades will be based on a letter scale, as follows:
• A to A+ Excellent work meeting the criteria above
• A- Very good work, but ideas could be more fully developed or writing improved.
• B- to B+ Work of average quality with respect to clarity and quality of writing.
• Lower Work falls short of the quality expected in a graduate course.

FSU has services available to help with the writing process. Visit the Reading Writing Center web site at https://wr.english.fsu.edu/reading-writing-center.

Student Responsibilities
As graduate students, you are “professionals in training,” and the course policies are intended to reinforce this role. Unprofessional behavior will impact your course grade adversely and may result in dismissal from the course.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be prepared for scholarly discussion. If you must miss class, please email me before the class meeting if at all possible. Missing more than two classes in a semester without an FSU-approved reason may adversely impact your grade.

Do not be late for class. Coming in late is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. Persistent lateness also will have an adverse impact on your grade.

I expect all students to treat class members in a courteous and considerate fashion, with respect for alternative viewpoints and diverse backgrounds. Your participation should be related to the class and course material rather than reflective of personal beliefs or individual experience. While discussions may be lively or even heated, avoid using aggressive mannerisms, yelling, or shouting. Remember, scholarly discussion may
entail follow-up questions and/or discussion about your comments or assertions; this is normal and expected and typically does not indicate personal dislike or animosity.

**Policy on Late Work**
In a seminar, late work inconveniences everyone: if students have not done the reading or prepared discussion questions, other class members must carry your share of the load. Please plan your schedule so that you can meet your obligations as a member of the class.

If you know that you will not be able to meet a due date because of some unforeseeable circumstance (e.g., illness, accident), letting me know as soon as possible will increase the likelihood that I will accept a late submission.

**Assistance and Office Hours**
If you have questions about course materials or encounter some problem related to the course or your performance in it, please send me an email to set up a time to talk, by Zoom or FaceTime. I check email at least twice daily on weekdays and, during the work week, I typically respond within 24 hours.

**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://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm](http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm)).

All work must be completed in accordance with the University Honor Code. Please read the Honor Code and make sure that you understand it. If you have any questions regarding the Code and how it specifically pertains to your work, please ask me.

**Plagiarism caution:** The Provost and legal counsel of Florida State University warn us that any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others.

As a general rule, if you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you should place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late. Do NOT appropriate the concepts, phrases, or ideas of other people without giving them credit. If you do so, you risk losing your good name and getting into legal trouble. Any confirmed instance of plagiarism will result in an F grade for this course and will also be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (a) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center, and (2) bring paperwork from the SDRC to the instructor indicating the need for and nature of accommodation during the first week of classes. You can find information about the services available to FSU students with disabilities at http://disabilitycenter.fsu.edu.

**Syllabus Change Policy**
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Changes will be announced in class and on the course web site.

**TOPICS AND READINGS**

**27 August: Defining Demography**

I will reference these articles during our first class meeting. They are not required but you may want to read them.


**3 September: Our demographic history and the making of demographic knowledge**


**10 September: Health inequalities and mortality differentials in high-income countries**


**17 September: Morbidity and mortality in the developing world**


**24 September: Fertility transition in contemporary contexts**


**1 October: One, two, or none? Fertility in advanced industrial societies**


**8 October: Families and households in high-income countries**


**15 October: Families and households in low- and middle-income contexts**


**22 October: Aging in people and populations**


**29 October: Mobility & Migration**


**5 November: Immigration and immigrants in the United States**


**12 November: Immigration and population dynamics**


**19 November:** The making of demographic knowledge, revisited


**26 November:** NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

**3 December:** What do you know that you didn’t know in August?