Course Description and Organization:

This course will focus on human fertility from a sociological and demographic perspective. We will apply and review theories and conceptual frameworks used to understand aspects of fertility change in developing as well as developed countries, characteristics of family planning programs, fertility issues in the United States and current population policy concerns. Of course, we will not be able to cover every aspect of fertility, but we will focus on some key debates and topics.

The readings are available online; you should be able to access them all on-campus or by logging into the library if you are off-campus. Canvas will be used in this class to present the weekly essay questions and for course announcements. You are expected to complete readings before the class. Optional readings are indicated by a ‘*’.

Course Requirements:

Your grade will be determined by weekly participation (10%), research proposal (30%), reading essays (30%), leading class discussion (15%), presentation of research proposal (10%), and peer research proposal review (5%).

All assignments and material must be turned in on the dates assigned. Please plan accordingly!

1) Participation:

a) It is essential that everyone come to class prepared. Your participation should be ongoing and active. If you do not attend, you cannot participate. Personal vacation and travel should be planned around the class schedule.

2) Reading Essays:

After each topic, I will post questions for the following topic’s readings on Canvas as an announcement; these questions are designed to help you think about the readings in a general way and guide you as you read the papers. The questions will be available on Tuesdays. Each student will prepare a two-three page response (double-spaced) to these questions to be turned in 9:00 am via email the following Monday (except for weeks when we do not have class).

3) Lead Discussion:

For each topic, there will be two-three student leaders. The leaders will present the major points of the assigned readings, facilitate discussion of how the readings are interrelated (coming up with discussion questions),
present controversial features of the readings, and critically evaluate the readings. Leading class discussion is NOT just summarizing the readings. Each student will co-lead class discussion 3 times (5% each time, total=15%). Discussion assignments will occur on the first day of class.

4) Research Proposal:

Your research proposal (maximum 20 pages) will give you the opportunity to examine a topic related to the social scientific study of fertility. You should define the research question, provide a rationale for the study, review the relevant research literature, and describe the data, methods and analyses that will be used to address the research question. Model your proposals on the journal articles we read this semester. You will have two opportunities to revise your proposal – once based on Dr. Guzzo’s comments and then again after your classmate’s comments – before you turn in the final version. The idea is that you will write a proposal that can be used to develop a dissertation or thesis proposal, journal article, or conference paper.

5) Proposal Review

Each student will also serve as a reviewer of the proposal for one other student in the seminar. You will read through a classmate’s research proposal draft and produce a 1-2 page written document with suggestions, critiques, and questions for your classmate. We are going to follow the pattern of “single blind” reviews – Dr. Guzzo will assign each proposal to a student, and the student will submit their review to Dr. Guzzo, who will then pass along the anonymized review to the author. In this fashion, you will know whose paper you are reading, but they will not know who write their review. Your goal is to provide constructive criticism so your classmates can improve their proposal, both the theoretical and methodological aspects.

6) Proposal Presentation

Each student will make a 10-12 minute in-class oral presentation of their research proposal.

Research Proposal Deadlines:

a. Each student will submit a brief (2-3 page) research proposal that describes your research question and rationale no later than **SEPT 28th**. Please meet with me beforehand to discuss your topic.

b. A first draft of your proposal is due on **NOV 2nd**. I will read through and comment on your proposal and return it to you within 2 weeks (probably sooner).

c. On **NOV 23rd** you must give a send your revised research proposal to Dr. Guzzo, who will pass it along to a peer reviewer.

d. On **DEC 7th** the reviewer will provide written comments on the proposal Dr. Guzzo, who will pass it along to the author.

e. On **DEC 17th** each student will make a 10-12 minute in-class oral presentation of their research proposal.

f. Students must revise their research proposal in light of the comments of the instructor and reviewer. The final version is due on **Thursday, Dec. 17th by 1:15 via email**.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

The following is copied from the Graduate College Handbook.
Academic honesty is the central value of an academic community. It is expected that graduate students will neither engage in nor facilitate cheating (using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids), fabrication (falsification or invention of any information or citation), or plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of others as one’s own) in their academic work. The Academic Honesty Policy can be found at the following web address: http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/studentdiscipline/index.html.

The Academic Honesty Policy contains strict sanctions, including expulsion, for all forms of academic dishonesty. Students found guilty of violating other University regulations, such as engaging in moral and ethical misconduct, or in actions that are injurious to others or threaten the orderliness and wellbeing of the campus, are subject to equally strict sanctions in accordance with the provisions set forth in those regulations.

**TOPIC SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS**

**August 24th:** NO CLASS – AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL MEETING

**August 31st:** INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW, AND MEASUREMENT

*World Population:*

Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet and Summary 2014


*Measurement of Fertility:*


*Fertility Trends & Differentials:*


*Determinants of Fertility*


Trussell, James and L. L. Wynn. 2008. “Reducing Unintended Pregnancy in the United States.” *Contraception* 77: 1-5. **pay attention particularly to Table 2 on effectiveness of specific contraceptive methods**


September 7th: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

September 14th: DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION THEORY


September 21st: SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION & FERTILITY THEORIES FOR THE DEVELOPED WORLD


September 28th: CHILDBEARING PREFERENCES/VALUE OF CHILDREN

--- RESEARCH QUESTION & RATIONALE DUE OCTOBER 5TH ---


October 5th: FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH


**October 12th**: NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

**October 19th**: NO CLASS – SOCIETY FOR LONGITUDINAL AND LIFE COURSE STUDIES CONFERENCE

**October 26th**: EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES ON FERTILITY


**November 2nd**: (FEMALE) EMPLOYMENT AND FERTILITY
**FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE NOVEMBER 9TH**


**November 9th: CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF FERTILITY**


**November 16th: NONMARITAL FERTILITY**

Curtin, Sally C., Stephanie J. Ventura, and Gladys M. Martinez. 2014. “Recent Declines in Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States.” NCHS Data Brief No. 162. [link](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db162.pdf)


**November 23rd: TEEN AND EARLY FERTILITY**

- **SEND REVISED RESEARCH PROPOSAL TO REVIEWER** -


November 30th: RACE AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN U.S. FERTILITY


December 7th: CHILDLESSNESS & BELOW REPLACEMENT FERTILITY

- PROPOSAL REVIEWER COMMENTS RETURNED -


December 17th 1:15-3:15: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS and FINAL PAPERS due prior to class via email