Course Objectives
Family demographers study the composition or structure of families and households and the processes that contribute to compositional change. They also investigate the linkages between family structure and well-being, broadly defined. This course will familiarize you with the core research questions in family demography as well as recent theoretical and empirical developments in the area. We will consider many of the substantive issues that are of concern to family demographers, including family formation and dissolution trends, such as the retreat from marriage and the rise of cohabitation; the effects of family structure and instability on child outcomes; families and racial and economic inequality; and families in an aging society. Additionally, we will explore family change and public policy by examining contemporary debates about the future of marriage.

Course Requirements
Evaluation of student learning will include a combination of class leadership, weekly essays, and a research proposal.

(1) Discussion Leadership and Participation. The class will follow a seminar format, with two students leading the discussion during each class meeting. Student leaders will present the main points of the assigned readings to the class and facilitate discussion of the intriguing, exciting, and controversial aspects of the readings. Discussion leaders should post a short memo on the course web page to alert participants to common themes, conceptual and methodological issues, and at least two questions to be addressed in the discussion. Memos should be posted on the course web page Discussion Board by 11:59pm on Thursday so that participants have time to prepare for Friday’s class. I am happy to meet with the discussion leaders in advance to discuss the readings and plan for the class sessions.

Other students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Attendance at all class meetings is expected. At the end of each class meeting, I will give a brief presentation on the upcoming week’s readings, highlighting key aspects.

(2) Weekly Essays. Each week for which a student is not a discussion leader, the student will write a one to two page essay on a topic to be circulated in advance via the course web page. These synthetic essays will address themes and major issues in the readings. I will post the essay topics on the announcement page for the course. Students must post their
essays on the course web page by 11:59pm on Thursday to allow everyone an opportunity to read the material before the seminar session.

(3) Final Exam. A comprehensive final exam will be given during final exam week. The exam will be open-note and open-book and will span four days.

Course Grades
Discussion Leadership and Participation 30%
Weekly essays 35%
Final Exam 35%

Plagiarism/Honesty Policy
The BGSU Academic Honesty Policy clearly outlines university-wide prohibitions against cheating, forgery, fabrication, and plagiarism, among others. All of these are unacceptable and will result in a failing (“F”) grade for the assignment. Work submitted to other instructors to fulfill other class requirements may NOT be submitted to meet requirements of this class. For more information see: https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/catalog/academic-honesty/official-policy.pdf

It is a privilege to be a member of the BGSU community. This privilege provides students with the opportunity to learn and to participate in the many programs that are offered on campus. Along with this privilege, students are expected to be responsible in relationships with others and to respect the interests of the institution. These interests are fully set forth in the University’s Student Conduct Code, which can be found at https://www.bgsu.edu/student-handbook/code-of-conduct.html

Accommodations
Students seeking academic adjustment or accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services. Any student with a documented disability who needs academic adjustments or accommodations is encouraged to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential.

Title IX: Sexual Discrimination
Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form are antithetical to the university’s mission and core values, violate university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. Faculty members are considered “Mandatory Reporters” and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and relationship violence to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please visit www.bgsu.edu/TitleIX to access information about university support and resources.

Zoom Etiquette
• Our class will be held in real time (synchronously) on Fridays via Zoom. If you have not yet downloaded Zoom, please sign up for your free account through BGSU: https://www.bgsu.edu/zoom.html
• Please do not share the Zoom link or meeting information with anyone who is not enrolled in our course.
• Students should keep their audio MUTED except when asking a question or participating in group discussions.
• Technological issues will happen, so please be patient with everyone. If I experience technological issues persisting for more than 15 minutes, then the remainder of the class will be cancelled. If this happens, please check Canvas for an announcement for more information.
• Learning remotely means that many of us are sharing our learning/work spaces with children, pets, partners, and roommates. That’s okay! Keep yourself muted when appropriate and do your best given the circumstances.

Course Readings
Most of the readings are available online and you should be able to access electronically via the library or electronic databases. Readings not available online will be made available via Canvas. Canvas will be used for course announcements, posting weekly discussion memos (for class discussion leaders), and essay responses. All readings should be completed prior to our class meeting. Optional readings are noted with an asterix (*).

COURSE OUTLINE
You are expected to complete the reading assignments on the dates they are due unless changes are otherwise announced in class.

JANUARY 15 (Week 1)
Introduction and Course Overview

JANUARY 22 (Week 2) (Yahirun)
Overview of Changing Family Patterns


**JANUARY 29 (Week 3) (Brown, Julian)**

Interpretations of Changing Family Patterns


**FEBRUARY 5 (Week 4) (Chin, Wentzlof)**

Transitions to Adulthood


**FEBRUARY 12 (Week 5) (Graham, Wiborg)**

**Marriage**


**FEBRUARY 19 (Week 6) – NO CLASS (WELLNESS DAY)**

**FEBRUARY 26 (Week 7) – Guest speaker, Wendy Manning (Gustafson, Yahirun)**

**Cohabitation**


**MARCH 5 (Week 8) (Julian, Brown)**

**Union Disruption**


**MARCH 12 (Week 9) (Wentzlof, Chin)**

**Repartnering**


**MARCH 19 (Week 10) (Wiborg, Graham)**

**The Separation of Marriage and Childbearing**


**MARCH 26 (Week 11) (Brown, Gustafson)**  
**Family Structure, Family Instability, and Child Outcomes**


**APRIL 2 (Week 12) (Chin, Wiborg)**  
**Families and Racial/Ethnic Diversity**


**APRIL 9 (Week 13) (Julian, Graham)**

**Families and Economic Inequality**


**APRIL 16 (Week 14) (Gustafson, Wentzlof)**

**Aging Families**


**APRIL 23 (Week 15) (Yahirun)**
The Future of the Family: Unions and Public Policy


**APRIL 30 – NO CLASS**

**FINAL EXAM DUE ON MONDAY, 5/3 BY 9AM**
(SUBMITTED VIA CANVAS)