Human Fertility and Family Planning  
Sociology 7280  
FALL 2019  
Monday 2:30-5:15  
Business Administration Annex 1000

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00-11:00 (and by appointment), email anytime!

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 industrialized countries, challenges in studying and providing family planning services, fertility trends and topics 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. There are a few readings that are not available online, and these readings are indicated below and are available on Canvas, under ‘files.’ 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, with optional readings indicated as such.

Course Requirements:

Your grade will be determined by weekly participation (10%), research proposal (30%), weekly essays based on the readings (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 class, I will post questions for the following week’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 read the papers. Each student will prepare a 2-3 page response (double-
spaced) to these questions to be turned in 9:00 am via email prior to that week’s class.

3) Lead Discussion:

For each topic, there will be two 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. You must turn in a copy of your notes/questions to me at the beginning of class. 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 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 would be used to address the research question, followed by a discussion of the expected findings, their contributions, and the limitations of the proposed project. Model your proposals on the journal articles we read this semester; copies of prior years’ fertility proposals will also be available to serve as examples. I expect proposals to be around 15 pages (20 pages max) not including references or tables. You do NOT have to do any data analysis, but you are welcome and encouraged to do so if you have access to data. I recommend Add Health, TARS, or the NSFG if you’d like to incorporate some basic analysis; the NSFG is the go-to for studying reproductive behavior, and the CFDR is offering an introduction to the NSFG on October 21st.

You will have two opportunities to revise your proposal – once based on my 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, conference paper, and possibly a journal article.

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 – I will assign each proposal to a student, and the student will submit their review to me, and I 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 noon on SEPT 30th via email. You must meet with me beforehand to discuss your topic.

b. A first draft of your proposal is due by noon on OCT 28th via email. I will read through and comment on your proposal and return it to you within 10 days.

c. By noon on NOV 18th you must email your revised research proposal to me, and I will pass it along to a peer reviewer.

d. By noon on DEC 2nd the reviewer will provide written comments on the proposal via email, and I will pass those along to the author.

e. Students must revise their research proposal in light of the comments of the instructor and reviewer. The final version is due by noon on DEC 9th via email.

f. On DEC 12th each student will make a 10-12 minute in-class oral presentation of their research proposal during the final exam period (3:00-5:30). The presentations need to be emailed to me by 2:00 pm.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

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/content/dam/BGSU/catalog/academic-honesty/official-policy.pdf

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

8/26 Introduction, Overview, and Measurement

World Population:

Measurement of Fertility:
http://www.prb.org/pdf07/62.1LivelyIntroduction.pdf - pages 5-8

Fertility Trends & Differentials:

Determinants of Fertility
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/27f8/2c7d2600f97014a116a8cada9a84c3867e69.pdf

9/5 The (First) Demographic Transition (make up for 9/2 Labor Day – 9-12 in CFDR conference room)

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2808010


https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00557.x

https://doi.org/10.1086/508791


9/9 Post-Transition Theories


Optional


9/16 Defining the Scope and “Problems” for Fertility Research


Reproductive Justice


Measuring Key Concepts


Optional


9/23 Contraception and Abortion

Contraception


Abortion

Guttmacher Fact Sheet: [Induced abortion in the United States, 2018](https://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fs-2018-induced-abortion)


Foster, D. G., Steinberg, J. R., Roberts, S. C., Neuhaus, J., & Biggs, M. A. (2015). A comparison of depression and anxiety symptom trajectories between women who had an abortion and women denied one. Psychological Medicine, 45(10), 2073-2082. [https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291714003213](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291714003213)


9/30 Childbearing Intentions, Desires, and Behaviors

PROPOSAL IDEAS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL


Optional


Kavanaugh, M. L., Kost, K., Frohwirth, L., Maddow-Zimet, I., & Gor, V. (2017). Parents’ experience of unintended childbearing: A qualitative study of factors that mitigate or
exacerbate effects. *Social Science & Medicine, 174*, 133-141. [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.12.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.12.024)

**10/7 Socioeconomic Differences in Reproductive Attitudes and Behavior**


**Optional**


**10/14 Gender, Work, and Fertility**


Optional


10/21 Macro and Microeconomic Influences

**Macroeconomic Conditions**


**Microeconomic Conditions**

Mansour, F. (2018). Economic insecurity and fertility: Does income volatility impact the decision to remain a one-child family? *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 39*(2), 243-257. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-017-9559-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-017-9559-y)


Optional


10/28 Timing and Relationship Contexts

**PROPOSAL 1ST DRAFTS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL**


**Early Childbearing**


**Cohabitation and Marriage**


**Fertility in Higher-Order Unions**


*Optional*


**11/4 Reproductive Behaviors among Marginalized Groups**

*Race-Ethnicity*


*Sexual Orientation & Identity*


*Optional*


11/14 Religiosity and Cultural Shifts across Generations and Time (*make up for 11/11 Veterans’ Day – 9-12 in CFDR conference room*)


Optional


11/18 – NO CLASS (*NCFR meeting*)

REVISED PROPOSAL DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL

PROPOSALS DISTRIBUTED FOR REVIEW VIA EMAIL
11/25 Men, Couples, and Fertility

Men


Couples


Optional


12/2 Childlessness and Low Fertility

REVIEWS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL

PROPOSAL COMMENTS DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL

Childlessness


*Low Fertility and Policy*


Gauthier, A. H. (2016). Governmental support for families and obstacles to fertility in East Asia and other industrialized regions. Ch. 11 in Rindfuss, R. R., & Choe, M. K. (Eds.) *Low Fertility, Institutions, and Their Policies: Variations across Industrialized Countries* New York: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32997-0_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32997-0_11)

*Optional*


**12/9 FINAL PROPOSALS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL**

**12/12 FINAL EXAM PERIOD, 3:00-5:30 – Research Presentations**

**EMAIL PRESENTATIONS BY 2:00**