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 twice (for a total of 14%), presentation of research proposal (10%), and peer research proposal review (6%).

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. You do not need to provide a reference list unless you are citing research not assigned in that week’s readings, though you should cite that week’s readings within the essay.

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, come up with discussion questions to guide the discussion, 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 nor is it just coming up with questions – you are expected to make sure you identify the key research questions, motivating theoretical framework, and major findings. You should also try to connect the readings to each other. Each student will co-lead class discussion 2 times (7% each time, total=14%). 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 must use the National Survey of Family Growth (R:\CFDR\Public\Data\NSFG\ for Stata files and https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/nsfg_2017_2019_puf.htm for general information), which is the go-to for studying reproductive behavior in the U.S. You are expected to produce at least basic descriptives and cross-tabs. 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/or 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 during the final exam period. There is no final exam for the class.

**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 OCTOBER 4th** via email. You must meet with me beforehand to discuss your topic.

b. A first draft of your proposal is due **by noon on NOVEMBER 1st** via email. I will read through and comment on your proposal and return it to you within 10 days.

c. **By noon on NOVEMBER 22nd** you must email your revised research proposal to me, and I will pass it along to a peer reviewer.

d. **By noon on DECEMBER 6th** 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 DECEMBER 13th** via email.

f. On **DECEMBER 15th** 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.

**COVID19:**

Students are expected to follow BGSU COVID-19 protocols at all times, which includes wearing a face covering in all classroom, studio, lab, and office spaces for as long as a University mandate is in place. Failure to comply with these protocols may result in disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. Please refer to the BGSU COVID-19 website for the most current information about expectations and requirements.
TOPIC SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS

8/30 Introduction, Overview, and Measurement

World Population:


Measurement of Fertility:


U.S. Fertility Trends & Differentials:


Determinants of Fertility


9/6 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS

9/13 The (First) Demographic Transition


Optional

Timæus, I. M., & Moultrie, T. A. (2020). Pathways to low fertility: 50 years of limitation,
curtailment, and postponement of childbearing. *Demography, 57*(1), 267-296. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00848-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00848-5)


**9/20 Post-Transition Theories**


Optional


**9/27 Defining the Scope and “Problems” for Fertility Research**


Reproductive Justice


Measuring Key Concepts


Optional


10/4 Contraception and Abortion

PROPOSAL IDEA SHORT DRAFT DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL

Contraception

Guttmacher Fact Sheet on Contraceptive Use: [https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states](https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states)

Guttmacher Fact Sheet on Contraceptive Method Choice: [https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states](https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states)


**Abortion**

Guttmacher Fact Sheet on Abortion, U.S.: https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states

Guttmacher Fact Sheet on Abortion, Worldwide: https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide


**Optional**


**10/11 Childbearing Intentions, Desires, and Behaviors**


Optional


10/18 Socioeconomic Differences in Reproductive Attitudes and Behavior


unmarried women who do not want to get pregnant contracept inconsistently? Mixed-
https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023116629464

**Optional**

https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0681-8

socio-economic background and family formation in four European countries. *Population

Wright, L. (2019). Union transitions and fertility within first premarital cohabitations in Canada:
diverging patterns by education?. *Demography*, 56(1), 151-167.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0741-0

10/25 Gender, Work, and Fertility

Brinton, M. C., & Oh, E. (2019). Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women’s employment
and fertility in east Asia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 125(1), 105-140.
https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/704369

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2010.00355.x

towards female employment influence fertility? A macro-level analysis. *European

Frejka, T., Goldscheider, F., & Lappegård, T. (2018). The Two-Part Gender Revolution,
Women's Second Shift and Changing Cohort Fertility. *Comparative Population

https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9411306

Bueno, X., & Brinton, M. C. (2019). Gender egalitarianism, perceived economic insecurity, and
https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2019.1604979

**Optional**

https://dx.doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2017.36.11

Stanfors, M. (2014). Fertility and the fast-track: Continued childbearing among professionals in
research.org/volumes/vol31/15/31-15.pdf

11/1 Macro and Micro Influences

PROPOSAL 1ST DRAFTS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL

Macro level Factors


Microlevel Factors


Optional


11/8 Timing and Relationship Contexts

Fertility Timing and the Life Course


**Fertility and Unions**


**Optional**


**11/15 Reproductive Behaviors among Marginalized Groups**

**Race-Ethnicity-Immigration**


**Sexual Orientation & Identity**


**Optional**


**11/22 Religion and Religiosity**

**PROPOSAL 2ND DRAFTS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL (I will distribute to peer reviewers)**


Optional


11/29 Men, Couples, and Fertility

Men


Couples


Optional


12/6 Childlessness and Low Fertility

**PEER REVIEWS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL (I will distribute peer reviews by email)**


**Low Fertility and Policy**


**Optional**


12/13 FINAL PROPOSALS DUE BY NOON VIA EMAIL
12/15 FINAL EXAM PERIOD, 3:00-5:30 – Research Presentations
EMAIL PRESENTATIONS BY 2:00