Population and Society is a central course for graduate students in demography and sociology. This general course offers a chance for scholars to apply social theory to the study of basic research and measurement issues. The core goal is to develop an appreciation for the concept of a population. We will study how populations have character, impact, momentum, and expression within and across societies and cultures. We will explore the meaning behind the statement that “a population is an entity with constitutive properties that are greater than the sum of its individuals.” We have five goals this semester:

✓ to learn classic demographic transition theory and address its continuing relevance for current demographers and policymakers
✓ to understand the classic Malthusian perspective and debate 21st century visions, revisions, and criticisms of Malthus’ work
✓ to discuss some of the more important contemporary population trends, scholarly debates and demographic research issues facing societies, while discussing the increasing internationalization and globalization of research on demographic processes
✓ to develop a preliminary working knowledge of the key scholars in demography
✓ to acquire a facility for some standard demographic indicators by applying them to the study of different nations in more and less developed regions of the world

Course requirements

Take-home essay exams. Twice during the semester, you will complete a take-home essay examination that requires you to use the reading material to answer general questions about basic issues we addressed. You are expected to synthesize and analyze the material to demonstrate competency over the readings. The essay exams will be given to you in class the week before they are due, and the return due dates for the first and second exams are in the 8th and 15th week of class. Each exam is worth 30% of your grade.

Short paper about a PAA presidential address. On the day the final exam is due, you will turn in a short 10 page paper that critiques a presidential PAA address published in any November issue of the journal *Demography*. I will give you the assignment instructions in the 3rd week of class. You will give an oral presentation of the main points of the PAA address and your critiques in class on Thursday of the 14th week, but the final draft is due on the final examination date. This paper (and presentation) is worth 15% of your grade. The final examination due date is Friday, May 6th, 8:30-10:30am.

Nurturing a global demographic perspective with a global conference on well-being. You will develop yourself as a scholar and activist aware of international population issues who can translate these initiatives for novice audiences, such as undergraduates. For that purpose, we’re going to host our own global conference on well-being. You will represent a nation of your choosing. You will develop a population perspective for that nation, using academic research articles, government and academic statistics, and approved media stories to prepare yourself for the role of an ambassador. You should know the fertility, mortality, migration, youth and aging, cultural, racial/ethnic, political, economic, environmental, and social diversity issues facing the population of your nation. You should know how to situate your nation on the global
demographic divide. You should use at least 15 academic or news resources and you will turn in those resources to me as a bibliography on the first day of our two-day conference which will be held during Week 15, April 26th-28th. On the first day of our conference, you will have 8 minutes to paint a portrait of your nation – we should understand the demographic metabolism of your nation, the major political, economic, environmental, and social issues facing your nation, and what you think your nation needs to achieve important United Nations sustainable development goals. On the second day of the conference, we will debate the needs of our nations and explore commonalities and divergences in interests in terms of the 17 sustainable development goals targeted by the U.N. This assignment is worth 15% of your grade!

Teacher for a Day. You are expected to show your ability to explain and critique the topics by presenting and teaching the reading material, during one day in the semester. You may select your week. Your grade will be based on your ability to explain the issues and offer your critiques of the strengths and limitations of the debates, your view on what the readings contribute to our understanding of the issues, and your views on what are important points to consider in future research or theory on the topic. You are also expected to explore the news media a bit before your presentation and report about a news item or a few news items that address your topic. We should be able to see your lesson plan through how you present the material. Consider demonstrating to us how you perceive this week’s work as a graduate-level scholar with a demographic sensibility and how you would present it to undergraduates for the first time in their lives. You must meet with me to discuss your plans before your teaching day. Your entire lesson plan should take about 30 minutes. This teaching moment is 10% of your grade.

Texts


Various articles found on reserve on Canvas.

Here’s what I think the truth is: We are all addicts of fossil fuels in a state of denial, about to face cold turkey.

Kurt Vonnegut

Week 1 (January 12, 14): Introductions – What are your populations? Awakening the demographer within!

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<th>Introduction to course, Thomas Friedman’s vision of our global population and society</th>
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Go to the following webpages and simply explore!

Suggested Readings.


Week 2 (January 19, 21): The emergence of a modern society of demographers

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Suggested readings.


Questions for the day. Thinking about the history of demography as a science and a discipline, what paths do you think the field will take in the future? What do you think will be the most important issues that demographers should address on the horizon? Why? What’s your perspective on the tension between research and activism on the development of the field?
**Week 3 (January 26, 28): Why is a population more than the sum of its parts?**


**Suggested readings.**


**Question for the day.** What are some metaphors that you use to describe, explain, or envision the concept of a ‘population?’

**Week 4 (February 2, 4): Malthusian impact on population theories**


**Suggested readings.**


**Where would you place your position on the continuum of anti- and pro-Malthusian perspectives on population growth? Why?** What do you think are the most and least compelling parts of Malthus’ original arguments? When and where in your life have you felt the spirit of demography?

**Week 5 (February 9, 11): Demographic transition theory**

Suggested readings.

Task for the day. Go to a coffee shop or bar and talk with a friend about what you think are the most important prerequisites for a “complete demographic transition.” Be sure that you describe your definition of a demographic transition and that you explain which determinants you think are most relevant: supply/demand, institutional, cultural, diffusion, etc. After you’ve covered this terrain, step back and allow yourself to fantasize what the next major “demographic transition” will be over the next few centuries. What will the best demographers on earth be discussing 200 years from now?

Week 6 (February 16, 18): Fertility

Suggested readings.

**Week 7 (February 23, 25): Health, disease, mortality**

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**Suggested readings.**


Note. Your take-home first examination will be handed out, Thursday, February 25th.

Week 8 (March 1, 3): HIV/AIDS


Suggested readings.


Note. Your take-home first examination is due in class, Thursday, March 3rd.

Week 9 (March 15, 17): Migration/Urbanization


Suggested readings.


Week 10 (March 22, 24): Measurement and data issues


Suggested readings.
15. Watkins, Susan Cotts. 1993. “If all we knew about women was what we read in Demography, what would we know?” Demography 30: 551-577.
19. Henderson, Tammy L., Maria Sirois, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, Christopher Airries, and David A.

**Week 11 (March 22, 24): China and India, global giants!!**


**Suggested readings.**

Week 12 (April 5, 7): Population, environment, development


Suggested readings.
### Week 13 (April 12, 14): Gender and demography

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**Suggested readings.**

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**Week 14 (April 19, 21): Population youth and aging**


**Suggested readings.**


THURSDAY – Creative Takes on PAA Presidential Addresses – Oral presentations!

**Note.** Your take-home second exam will be handed out, in class, Thursday, April 21st.

**Week 15 (April 26, 28): Global conference on sustainable development and well-being!**

You can’t wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club.

*Jack London*

**Note.** Your take-home second examination is due, in class, Thursday, April 28th.

**Note.** Your PAA presidential address paper is due to Dr. Sanchez, Friday, May 6th, 8:30-10:30am.