Course Overview

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the field of population studies, also known as demography. Demography covers all of the factors related to changes in the size and characteristics of a human population. The topics that demographers study are as diverse as health disparities in the United States, the impact of AIDS on longevity in Africa, migration patterns from Latin America, the reasons why sex-selective abortions in Asia occur, and the implications of the current low birthrates in Europe.

An understanding of demography and population dynamics is crucial to professionals in a diversity of careers and industries. For example, city planners, environmental engineers, and health policy experts all utilize demographic expertise about population growth, migration patterns, and health and longevity in decisions on issues such as how many schools a city should build, how much water a region will need over twenty years, and what type of public health initiatives would best serve a community. Professionals in business also rely on demographic knowledge to make decisions about which markets to enter, what products are needed, and how to best market their products.

In this course, we will explore the key concepts and measures used to study population dynamics. These demographic “building blocks” include techniques for describing population characteristics and for understanding population dynamics. We will also discuss the centrality of population dynamics to social, political, and economic issues around the globe.

Course Goals and Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to 1) define demography and describe the key features of the first and second demographic transitions; 2) use key concepts related to population structures (including population age structure, sex composition, population size, population growth rates, etc.) to describe a population; 3) understand how mortality and fertility have changed over the past two centuries and vary across countries; 4) explain how demography is intertwined with global health and economic inequalities; 5) interpret tables and figures with demographic data; and 6) identify how demographic changes in the U.S. and around the globe are relevant to contemporary public policy debates.

This course will emphasize understanding quantitative data relevant to the course topics, but no prior statistics courses or calculus background is required. By the end of the course, students will be expected to know how to read and describe figures and graphs, and how to perform simple calculations using demographic techniques. These skills will be taught in the course, and no advanced math skills are needed.

All readings listed on the syllabus are either in the textbook or are available in the course packet. The textbook is *Demography: The Study of Human Population, 4th edition. 2015. Authors: Lundquist, Anderton, and Yaukey. ISBN: 978-1-4786-1306-0.* The non-textbook readings are comprised of
original scholarly articles on specialized topics and recent reports on issues of particular importance. Students should note that some articles include policy suggestions about the subject matter. Students are welcome to disagree with the opinions or policy prescriptions in these articles and should note that these opinions do not necessarily represent the professor’s opinions.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to do all required reading and engage deeply with the subject material. Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Homework assignments: 20%
- Project: 10%
- Weekly quizzes: 20%
- Final exam: 40%

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in class. Active participation includes volunteering to answer questions, asking questions, or contributing to the “In the News” segment of class. Students who rarely or never speak up in class will earn a failing grade for this component of the class.

Weekly Quizzes: Weekly quizzes provide students with an opportunity to gauge their learning throughout the term. Quizzes will be given during scheduled class time, and students who miss a quiz will earn a grade of zero. The lowest two quiz scores will be dropped.

Final Exam: The final exam will take place as scheduled by the Registrar on Tuesday, June 7 at noon. The exam will include short answers, graphs and figures to interpret, and longer essay questions. A review guide will be provided to help you study. All University policies regarding final exams apply.

Homework Assignments:
A paper copy of each assignment is due in class (unless otherwise specified). Additionally, assignments must be uploaded onto Canvas. For all homework assignments, please include your name, the course number, and the date in the top left corner. The homework assignments will be graded as complete, incomplete, or missing. Students will not lose points for incorrect answers or mistakes. Late assignments will be accepted the day after the original due date (as a paper copy in my faculty mailbox in 1810 Chicago Ave.) with a late penalty. If you are seriously ill or have a family emergency, I am happy to work out alternate due dates for homework assignments.

Project: Students will be asked to compile selected parts of the homework assignments from throughout the term, correct their mistakes, and submit these along with a short summary write-up for a final grade. (More detailed directions will be distributed.) The final project must be submitted by the start of the final exam.

Written work is expected to be grammatically correct and without typos. Students are encouraged to seek and give help to classmates. Students are welcome to discuss the assignments and work cooperatively provided that they write up their answers independently AND include a note at the end of the assignment acknowledging that they worked with a classmate. Example: “Note: I worked with classmate Jose Hernandez on the age pyramid problems.”
Core Topics and Reading Assignments

March 29, Class 1: *Introduction to Demography*
   [http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/population/pop-intro-movie.xhtml](http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/population/pop-intro-movie.xhtml)

March 30, Class 2: *History of the Human Population*
2. TEXTBOOK, pages 6-11 & 47-53 (stop at *Classifying Countries*)

April 4, Class 3: *Understanding Population Growth*

*Quiz #1*
2. TEXTBOOK, pages 6-11 (stop at *Problems of a Changing World Distribution*)

April 6, Class 4: *Global Population Size and Environmental Impacts*

*Assignment #1 due*

April 11, Class 5: *Environmental Impacts (cont’d) & Introduction to Key Demographic Concepts*

*Quiz #2*
   [http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/population/3336042-malakoff-v1.xhtml](http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/population/3336042-malakoff-v1.xhtml)
3. Video clip produced by Population Reference Bureau: 

April 13, Class 6: *Key Demographic Concepts and Sources of Demographic Data*

*Assignment #2 due*
1. TEXTBOOK, pages 94-114
2. Video clip produced by the Census Bureau: 
April 18, Class 7: Introduction to Fertility

Quiz #3
1. TEXTBOOK, pages 227-231 (stop at Recent Fertility Declines) & 235-256 (stop at Gestation Variables)

April 20, Class 8: The Second Demographic Transition

Assignment #3 due

April 25, Class 9: Future Fertility Patterns

Quiz #4

April 27, Class 10: Sex-Selective Abortion and Reproduction

Assignment #4 due

May 2, Class 11: Introduction to Mortality

Quiz #5
1. TEXTBOOK, pages 145-163 (stop at Sex Differences in Mortality)
2. Excerpt from Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague by Geraldine Brooks.

May 4, Class 12: Global Burden of Disease

Assignment #5 due
2. TEXTBOOK, pages 189-200 (stop at Morbidity Problems)
May 9, Class 13: *Health Disparities*

**Quiz #6**


May 11, Class 14: *Changes in Life Expectancy*

**Assignment #6 due**


May 16, Class 15: *Introduction to Migration and International Migration*

**Quiz #7**

1. TEXTBOOK, pages 325-344 (stop at *Internal Migration*) & 348-353 (stop at *Migration Problems*)

May 18, Class 16: *Immigration to the U.S.*

**Assignment #7 due**

1. TEXTBOOK, pages 360-366

May 23, Class 17: *Migration within the U.S.*

**Quiz #8**


May 25, Final Exam Review

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, June 7 at noon**
Additional Information:

Respectful Dialogue: Some of the topics that we discuss in this course may challenge closely-held personal, moral, or political beliefs, or may be controversial. I will do my best to create an intellectually vibrant and respectful atmosphere. I request that you contribute to this by acknowledging the diversity of opinions related to the course material, treating others with respect and civility, and honestly communicating with me and your classmates if you feel that we are not treating a particular perspective with respect. Please make me aware of any concerns that you may have, and I will do my best to address them.

Additionally, students are requested to turn off their CELLPHONES and not use their COMPUTERS for non-course related purposes during class (i.e. no surfing the web or email!). If you have to leave early or arrive late, please do so quietly!

Communication: The best way to contact me is through email. Please include an informative subject line such as “Soc 305 Assignment Question” and sign your full name.

Academic Integrity: Northwestern has strict policies regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include passing off other people’s work as your own, cheating on exams or other in-class assignments, collaborating with other students on assignments where collaboration is prohibited, and not giving others credit for their ideas or words. Additionally, students are not allowed to reuse more than a paragraph of writing from work for another class without my permission. Respecting the academic integrity of yourself and others means always citing sources correctly and never contributing to or benefiting from any activities that further academic dishonesty (e.g. selling or buying term papers, contributing exam copies to exam banks, etc.). If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask me.

Students should be advised that they may be required to submit their work electronically in addition to or in place of printed form. All student work may be analyzed electronically for violations of the university's academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated! All suspected violations of academic integrity will be handled according to University policy.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Per university policy, any student with a documented need for accommodation is requested to speak to AccessibleNU and to me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of class). All discussions will remain confidential.