Sociology 513
Demography and Ecology
Syllabus

Course web site  http://depts.washington.edu/soc513/  The website contains a course syllabus, a list of suggested paper topics, a list of recommended books for review, links to course readings, and other information. To enter part of the site you will need a login ID and password which will be announced in class.

Objectives  This course is a graduate level introduction to the fields of social demography and human ecology with a survey of major issues, theories, and research exemplars. Sociology graduate students who plan to take the certification examination in demography and ecology should also consider taking three additional courses: Soc 430 (Urbanism and Urbanization), Soc 431 (Fertility and Mortality), and Soc 433 (Research Methods in Demography). There are also population-related courses offered in Geography, Anthropology and Economics.

The aim of this survey course is to help you acquire a basic "literacy" of the leading ideas and research directions in the field of population studies. A survey course, no matter how intensive, can cover only a small fraction of important topics in a field. This course concentrates on the traditional core subjects of population growth, fertility, mortality, migration, and urbanization. Demographic methods and measures are only covered to the extent necessary to understand substantive issues.

The course will be a mix of lectures and discussion. In order to fully participate in the discussion, you will need to keep up-to-date with the readings. Lectures will highlight important issues and explicate demographic evidence and problems of measurement. The course will emphasize the development of skills in understanding and interpreting research findings. Questions are always welcome. Ideally, the class will be an interactive experience.

Course Readings  Class readings closely follow the Soc 513 course developed by Professor Charles Hirschman, who has taught the course for many years, most recently in winter 2003. This is not merely sincere flattery. It reflects a broadly shared frame of reference in the field of population studies, and a conscious effort to provide a common core of knowledge across graduate student cohorts.


This is not a course on demographic methods, but some understanding of basic demographic measures is necessary for a full comprehension of the readings. Students who have not taken a previous course on demography should consult a basic methods text, such as James A. Palmore and Robert W. Gardner.

The required readings for the course consist of significant articles and book chapters from the research literature. There is a mix of older “classics” and more recent studies. Most of the readings were originally published in the three major journals in the field: *Demography*, *Population Studies*, and *Population and Development Review*. Regular reading of these three journals is essential for those who wish to advance in the field. The supplementary readings are included here for your future reference. You are not expected to read them for this course, but they may be referred to in lecture.

The required course readings are available online. Many of the required course readings and supplementary readings are also available from JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org). Some readings and reference materials are available on reserve in the CSDE Library.

**Exams and Required Assignments** There will be two take-home examinations. The first, the midterm exam, will be distributed on February 2 and is due on February 7. The final exam is cumulative over the term and will be distributed on March 9 (the last day of class) and will be due at the scheduled time for the final examination, Thursday March 17 at 2:30. Final exam papers should be provided in digital format (MS-Word, PDF, or RTF) and sent to lavely@u.washington.edu.

Students must also write two essays: either book reviews or a review essay on a specific topic. Each essay should be about 5 (double-spaced) pages and should critically review a book or an important research question. A list of suggested books and ideas for review essays will be distributed in class. The first essay is due in class on February 23 and the second on March 9. The final course grade will be a weighted average of the mid-term (20%), final exam (50%), and the two reviews (15% each).
Class Schedule

January 3    Introduction

January 5    Demography as a Field of Study

Read:

Suggested Readings and References on the Fundamentals of Demographic Science
January 10 Sources of Demographic Data: Censuses, Vital Statistics, and Surveys

Read:

January 12 Problems of Coverage, Errors, and Uncertainty in Demographic Data

Read:

Suggested Reading and References on Demographic Data and Measurement


January 17   No class: Martin Luther King Holiday

January 19   Demographic Transition Theory: Classical and Contemporary Statements

Read:


Suggested Reading on Demographic Theories


January 24  Introduction to Mortality and the Human Life Span

Read:


January 26  Mortality Trends in Historical Perspective

Read:


January 31  Health and Mortality Patterns in Developed Countries

Read:


The midterm examination will be distributed February 2 and is due on February 7. It will cover
course material up to and including February 2

February 2  Health and Mortality Patterns in Developing Countries

Read:


Suggested Readings and References on Mortality:


**February 7 Bio-social Models of Fertility**

**Read:**


**Suggested Readings**

John Bongaarts. 1975. Why are high birthrates so low? Population and Development Review 1:289-

February 9  Fertility Transitions: Past and Present

Read:

February 14  The Future of Fertility in Industrial Societies [Special Class, TBA]

Read:

Suggested Readings and References on Fertility


February 16  Fertility Trends in Developing Countries

Read:


February 21  No Class—President’s Day

February 23  The Impact of Family Planning and Public Policy on Fertility

Read:


Peter Donaldson. 2002. The elimination of contraceptive acceptor targets and the evolution of population

Supplementary Reading on Fertility and Population Policy in Developing Countries:


February 28  Marriage and Family Change in Industrial Societies

Read:


Andrew Cherlin. 1999. Going to extremes: family structure, children’s well being and social science.
March 2  

Marriage and Family Change in Developing Countries

Read:


Suggested Reading and References on Marriage and Family:


March 7  The Urban and Metropolitan Revolutions in Human History

Read:

The final exam will be distributed on the last day of class (Wednesday March 9) and will be due at 2:30 on Monday, March 17. The exam should be provided in digital format (MS-Word, PDF, or RTF) and sent to lavely@u.washington.edu.

March 9  Migration and Cities in Developing Counties

Read:

Suggested Readings and References on Migration and Urbanization:


