Demographic Issues in Asia: Demographic Change and its Social Consequences

JSISA 431/SOC 434
Instructor: William Lavely
lavely@uw.edu

Meeting: MW 1:30-3:20 in Savery 131
Office hours: F 10:30-11:30 in Savery 275

Course description: In the latter half of the twentieth century most of East Asia experienced a rapid demographic transition to low mortality and fertility. This transition has profound implications for marriage, family structure, economy and society. This course will inquire into the causes of demographic change in East Asia (mainly, greater China, Japan, and Korea), as well as the consequences. It will consider the role of state-sponsored population policies in guiding demographic change, including China’s one-child policy; important contemporary trends, such as rural-to-urban migration, the retreat from marriage, very low fertility, population aging and the “missing girl” phenomenon; and the implications of female deficits for marriage markets, public health, and social order. The class format will consist of lectures, video documentaries, and discussions.

Learning Goals: The course aims to provide a basic understanding major trends in East Asian populations, and of basic concepts related to these trends, including:

- demographic transition, and how East Asian transitions differ from transitions elsewhere
- demographic and family systems; comparison of European and Chinese systems
- the role of the state in promoting fertility change in East Asia
- the retreat from marriage and the advent of very low fertility
- population aging, and its implications for social welfare and economy
- rapid urbanization in China, and the emergence of a migrant underclass
- the origins of son preference, the rise of sex ratios, and the broader social implications
- the costs and benefits of coercive family planning programs

Course requirements and grading: There will be an in-class midterm, a take-home final examination, two short papers, and occasional diagnostic quizzes and exercises. The course grade will be determined as follows: midterm 25%, final 25%, papers (2) 20% each, and diagnostic quizzes combined 10%.

Midterm. The in-class midterm is scheduled for Wednesday November 4th. It will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Short papers. Two short papers are assigned. The paper assignments and specifications will be introduced in more detail at a later time.

The first paper will be on a topic (of your choice) related to Asian demography. It should focus on two articles (of your choice) selected from scholarly population studies.
journals. The paper will be no more than two pages of text and one of appurtenances (tables or graphs). **Paper #1 is due in class on Wednesday October 28th.**

**The second paper** will be a review of a book pertaining to the problem of high sex ratios in Asia. It will be no more than two and one-half pages. The book in question is:


The Hvistendahl book is available for purchase at booksellers such as Amazon.com for less than $15. A copy is also available on course reserve at the East Asia Library. **Paper #2 will be due in class on Monday November 23rd.**

**Diagnostic quizzes.** There will be several short quizzes which will not be announced in advance. The answers will form the basis for discussions.

**Final examination.** Final exam questions will be distributed in class on the last day of class, Wednesday December 9th. Final exam answers should be saved in pdf format and emailed to the instructor (lavely@uw.edu) no later than the time of the regularly scheduled final, Monday Dec 14th at 2:30 pm.

**Course readings:** Readings are available through the Libraries website via JSTOR and other electronic journals, and on the course website.

**Course website:** The website, http://courses.washington.edu/soc434, contains the syllabus, course readings, reading guides, and lecture slides (which will be posted after the lecture). A login ID and password are necessary to access the internal section of the site. These will be given out in class.

**Graduate Students:** Graduate students may substitute a longer substantive paper in lieu of the short papers and the final examination. Those who adopt the long paper option may make a brief presentation to the class on the subject of their paper. Graduate students should meet with the instructor early in the quarter to discuss their plans.

**Instructor absence:** There will be no office hour on Friday October 24th or on December 11th. Please make an appointment.

**Important Dates:**

- Weds 10/28: Paper #1 due
- Weds 11/4: In-class midterm exam
- Mon 11/23: Paper #2 due
- Weds 12/9: Take-home final distributed
- Mon 12/14: Final exam due
*Readings marked with an asterisk are not required; they are provided for reference only.

**Week 1: Introduction**

9/30 Course overview

**Week 2: Theory and history**

10/5 Demographic Transitions; basic measures


10/7 Pre-transition Asia; comparative demographic systems


Week 3: Asian Fertility Transitions

10/12 Family Planning: the liberal model

Writing workshop: discussion of paper requirements and suggestions


10/14 Birth Planning: coercive transitions


**Week 4: Urbanization and migration**

10/19 Urbanization and public policy in China


10/21 The plight of migrants

Video: *The Last Train Home*. 85 minutes [Note: Instructor absent]


**Week 5: The retreat from marriage and very low fertility**

10/26 The retreat from marriage


Very low fertility: a second demographic transition in Asia?


Week 6: Age structure effects of transition: aging and labor force

11/2 Aging, welfare, and the labor market


Week 7: Missing Girls

11/9  The rise of missing girls in East Asia


Video: It’s a Girl. Shadowline Flims 2012. 58 minutes.


11/11  No class: Veterans Day Holiday
**Week 8: Son preference and sex selection in (some) Asian societies**

11/16  Family systems and gender preference


Video documentary: *Keep her under control: law’s patriarchy in India*. Produced by Erin Moore, 1998. 52 minutes.

11/18  Family change, variation, and sex preference


**Week 9: Critiques of the Chinese Birth Planning**

11/23  Sex-differential mortality  **Paper #2 due**


11/25 Evaluating the one-child policy; and what comes after?


Week 10: Effects of high sex ratios

11/30  Marriage markets and marriage squeeze


12/2  Consequences of high sex ratios


Week 11: Book discussion

12/7 Discussion of Hvistendahl, Unnatural Selection.

TBA

12/9 Conclusions

Take-home final examination distributed
(to be emailed to instructor by Monday 12/14 at 2:30)