Sociology 830

Demography: Theory, Substance, Techniques, Part I

Fall 2008
M & W 9:00 - 10:15am
151 Hamilton Hall

Instructor: Lisa Pearce
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Office Hours: M & W 10:30-11:30 am

Course Website: http://www.unc.edu/~ldpearce/soci830/

Description: This is the first part of a two-course series serving as a graduate-level introduction to the field of demography. This first course covers the foundational theories, concepts, measures, and tools used to study demographic topics including population dynamics relating to mortality, fertility, family demography, and the environment. While learning key demographic techniques for studying these topics, students will also read and discuss key theoretical and practical contributions in these fields. Classes will be a mix of lecture, discussion, and hands-on computations, depending on the topic of the day.

Reading Materials:


- Other required readings are available on the course website or through electronic journal databases, as indicated on the reading list.

Requirements: A student’s performance in this course is based on four criteria: class participation, reading notes to be turned in every class day, four homework assignments, and a comprehensive final exam.

1. Class Participation. All students are expected to actively and thoughtfully engage in class discussions.

2. Reading Notes. Students are to turn in written notes to questions posted on the course website applying to each assigned reading. Some weeks, answers will be in the form of formulas or computations. Some weeks, answers will be in the
form of thoughtful responses to substantive questions. Class lecture and
discussion will focus on these questions and all students should have their notes
complete prior to class. Notes will be graded on a \(\checkmark+\), \(\checkmark\), and \(\checkmark-\) scale.

3. **Homework Assignments.** Throughout the course of this class, four assignments
designed to expose students to demographic data sources and fundamental
calculations will be given and collected on the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Assigned</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Rates &amp; Probabilities</td>
<td>Sept 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>Life Tables</td>
<td>Sep 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Fertility</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>Family Demography</td>
<td>Nov 26</td>
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4. **Final Exam.** Students will be given a take-home final exam covering the
demographic theory, substance, and techniques covered in this course. The
exam will be emailed to students on Wed, Dec 8\(^{th}\) at 9am and will be due back
via email or in Dr. Pearce’ s mailbox (Hamilton Hall or CPC) by Dec 9\(^{th}\) at 4pm.
Please mark your calendars now and report any scheduling conflicts as soon as
you are aware of them.

**Grading:** Final grades will be equally based on a student’ s participation in class, the
regularity and thoughtfulness of reading notes, the score on homework assignments,
and on the final exam grade. Students excelling at all four components of this seminar
will receive Hs (usually only a couple students achieve this grade, but it can vary).
Students showing satisfactory mastery on all four levels will receive Ps (normally the
modal category). Those who consistently perform less than satisfactorily will receive Ls
(rare, but possible), and those who give little to no effort will receive Fs (even more
rare, but also possible).

**Course Schedule**

Wed, Aug 20: Introduction & Overview

**Readings**
  *Population Bulletin* 58(4).
Mon, Aug 25: Defining Demography

Readings


Wed, Aug 27: Sources of Data

Readings


Mon, Sep 1: Labor Day–NO CLASS

Wed, Sep 3: Data Quality

Readings


Mon, Sep 8: Foundational Concepts and Measures

Readings

• *Demography*, Chapter 1

Wed, Sep 10: Age-Specific Rates and Probabilities

Readings

• *Demography*, Chapter 2

Assignment

• Rates & Probabilities Assignment, Due Sep 15
Mon, Sep 15: Life Tables
Readings
• Demography, Chapter 3

Wed, Sep 17: Life Tables Continued
Readings

Assignment
• Life Tables Assignment, Due Sep 24

Mon, Sep 22: Mortality Transitions
Readings

Wed, Sep 24: Mortality Transitions, continued
Readings

Mon, Sep 29: Life Expectancy & Longevity
Readings
• James Oeppen, and Vaupel J W., Broken Limits to Life Expectancy, Science, vol. 296 (May, 2002), pp. 1029-1031.10

Wed, Oct 1: Mortality Differentials
Readings

Mon, Oct 6: Infant and Child Mortality
*Readings*

Wed, Oct 8: HIV/AIDS
*Readings*

Mon, Oct 13: Multiple Decrement Processes Using Life Tables
*Readings*
• *Demography*, Chapter 4, Sections 4.1-4.3 (pp.71-80)

Wed, Oct 15: Applications of Multiple Decrement Life Table Methods

Mon, Oct 20: Fertility Measures & Concepts
*Readings*
• *Demography*, Chapter 5

*Assignment*
• Fertility Estimates Assignment, Due Oct 27
Wed, Oct 22: Demographic Transition Theory

Readings


Mon, Oct 27: Fertility Transitions

Readings


Wed, Oct 29: NO CLASS

Mon, Nov 3: More Fertility Transitions

Readings


Wed, Nov 5: Studying Determinants of Fertility Transition

Readings


Mon, Nov 10: Fertility Patterns in the West

Readings

Wed, Nov 12: Family Planning Research
Readings

Mon, Nov 17: Abortion and Contraceptive Use
Readings

Wed, Nov 19: Family Demography
Readings

Assignment
• Family Demography Assignment, Due Nov 26

Mon, Nov 24: Cohabitation & Marriage
Readings

Wed, Nov 26: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK
Mon, Dec 1: Connections between Demographic Behaviors

Readings


Wed, Dec 3: Population and Environment

Readings

