Population and Society

Instructor: J. R. Walker
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Office Hours: Thursday 1:30 to 3:00 pm and by appointment
Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:15, 114 Ingraham Hall

Course Objectives

This course is a survey of the field of Population Studies. It covers substantive, non-technical aspects of Demography. It is addressed to two groups of students (a) Upper-level undergraduates and (b) Graduate Students. For some this course will be their only class on population. For others, and especially for graduate students thinking about specializing in demography, the course is the first of several they will take. I have selected the readings and have developed lectures that I hope will be informative and challenging to both groups. Because of the mix of students, the amount of reading materials is probably higher than usually encountered in undergraduate courses.

The course has a historical, long-run perspective on population change. It will examine the determinants of demographic patterns and the consequences of these patterns on society. We will review trends and patterns for developed and developing countries.

Prerequisites

Junior standing or consent of the instructor. Some of the readings contain quantitative material. I assume students have a mastery of college level algebra (I will not use calculus in the lectures or assignments).

Every student is expected to be familiar with orders of magnitude of various rates and measures (e.g., crude birth and death rates, population growth rates, infant mortality rates, life expectancy at birth, total fertility rate). A convenient source is the latest World Population Data Sheet published by the Population Reference Bureau (www.prb.org).

Readings

There is no required textbook for the course. The list of readings is provided in the syllabus. For undergraduate students, the required readings are indicated with a star (*). All readings are required for graduate students.

All the readings can be downloaded from the web via your academic link in your MyUW account (http://my.wisc.edu). In addition, if there is sufficient demand, a class packet with all the starred readings is available for undergraduate students at the Social Science Copy Center on the 6th floor of the Social Science building.

Examination and Grading System

For undergraduates grades will be determined by (three to five) short assignments spread throughout the semester (100 points), two in-class midterm exams (100 points each), and a two-hour final exam (200). In addition, to the assignments and exams graduate students will write a course paper (500 points). The midterm exams will test on material covered since the previous exam. The first hour of the final will cover material from the previous midterm. The second hour of the final will be a comprehensive exam of the material covered in the course. There will be no make-up midterm exams. Missed midterm will increase accordingly the weight assigned to the final exam. The final must be taken. On exams, you will be responsible for readings (whether or not reviewed in lecture) and material presented in lecture.
The short assignments are an integral part of the course and will be either problem sets or short writing assignments. Assignments will be either one to two weeks in duration. **Late assignments will not be accepted for credit.**

**Short Paper (Graduate Students)**

The paper (8 – 10 double-spaced pages) will consist of a commentary on a recent article in *Population and Development Review, Population Studies* or *Demography* not included in the reading list. You are asked to summarize the argument of the article, cite relevant facts in the same context, and evaluate the paper critically, following the style of book reviews in *Population and Development Review* or *Population Studies*. Include references to other articles or books, with correct handling of the reference style.

A one-page summary of your paper is due by September 25, 2008. The paper is due on Tuesday, November 25, 2008.

**Class Participation**

You are strongly encouraged to participate in class. Please interrupt me if something is not clear. Chances are some (most) of your classmates don’t understand either. If you disagree, make your views known. If you have a supplementary observation make it.

**Planned Schedule**

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Midterm:  Exam 1: October 7, 2008  
Exam 2: November 6, 2008

Final Exam: Thursday December 18, 2008 at 12:25 – 2:25 pm
Reading List

1. The Field of Population Studies

2. The History of World Population

3. The Mortality Transition
4. **Mortality in Developing Countries**


- **Preston, S. H. 1980.** “Causes and Consequences of Mortality Declines in Less Developed Countries during the Twentieth Century”, in R. Easterlin (ed.), *Population and Economic Change*, pp. 289-315 (section 5.1 only)


- **Sen, A. 1993** “The Economics of Life and Death”, *Scientific American*, 268(5): 40-47


5. **Mortality in Developed Countries**


6. **Proximate Determinants and Classical Views on the Fertility Transition**


7. **Recent Views on the Fertility Transition and Policy Issues**


8. **Post-Transition Fertility**


9. **Families and Households**


10. **Immigration**


11. **Malthus: Population Change and Economic Development**


12. **The Population Debate**


13. **Persistence of Global Poverty**

• * Easterly, William 2006. *White's Man Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done so Much Ill and So Little Good*. NY: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-2. 3-57.


### 14. Population and the Environment


### 15. Population Aging and Its Consequences


• *Weil, David 2006. Population Aging. WP 12147. NBER.