Department of Sociology
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—LINCOLN

POPULATION DYNAMICS
Spring 2019

Course Information:
Course Number: SOCI 444/844
Credits: 3 Hours
Instructor: Professor David Warner
Office: Oldfather Hall 726
E-mail: via Canvas
Office Hours: T 3:30-4:30pm, Th 11:00 am-12:15pm, or by appointment

Course Description:
Population and social structure are inextricably linked, as changes in one elicit changes in the other. The study of these population dynamics is formally known as “social demography.” Social demography examines these links between population and social structure through the systematic study of the size, composition, and distribution of populations and their relationship to the social, political, and economic organization of societies. This course will provide an overview of (1) mortality and morbidity, (2) fertility and family and household organization, and (3) migration urbanization as the processes of population change. The population dynamics of the United States will be emphasized, with select comparisons to other developed and developing countries.

Course Objectives:
The primary objective of this course is to expose students to field of social demography and the analysis of population structure and social change. To this end, students successfully completing this course will:

- Describe the major population processes of mortality, fertility, and migration and their respective counterpart “minor” processes of morbidity, family and household organization, and urbanization;
- Explain the interrelationships between the population processes in defining the size, structure and distribution of human populations;
- Articulate major population trends in the United States, and compare and contrast those trends with population developments in the developed and developing world;
- Be familiar with the empirical methods employed by demographers, including how data are gathered and interpreted;
- Critically evaluate the scope of research on a social demographic topic of their choosing (Undergraduate Students Only);
- Use a social demographic perspective to craft a proposal for an empirical research project (Graduate Students Only).
**READINGS:**
Scientific journal articles and academic book chapters as specified in the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus. These readings are primary source materials selected to provide exposure to a mix of classic and contemporary articles on the core themes in social demography. You must read all of the assigned material. As listed in the Course Schedule, readings marked with ** are required for graduate students only.

Students are responsible for acquiring the assigned peer-reviewed journal articles. Most, if not all, of the course readings are available through the various e-databases of the University Libraries. Book chapters will be made available via Canvas.

**COURSE FORMAT:**
This is an advanced course in Sociology; accordingly, class meetings will be primarily discussion based. Typically, as we start a topic, I will provide some general comments or background information in a more traditional “lecture” for at most one class meeting. The remainder of the class meetings will be some mix of discussion, in-class activities, and films. This discussion-based and interactive format is successful only insofar as participants read assigned readings carefully and critically, and come prepared to discuss them along with their questions about those readings.

**GENERAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**
Learning cannot occur in an environment devoid of respect and I place the utmost premium on respectful conduct in this course. Respectful course conduct encompasses at least two things:

1) **Engaging in classroom behavior that facilitates the educational goals of your fellow classmates.** Accordingly, I expect students enrolled in this course will: (a) arrive on time; (b) turn off/silence their cell phones; and (c) stow away laptops/iPads/tablets for the duration of each class session.

   Please also refrain from eating during class—the noise and odors are also distracting. Beverages are fine, so long as they are not disruptive.

2) **Engaging in behavior that respects the opinions of all members of the class.** We will discuss controversial issues involving families. We all have experiences and opinions about the family as a social institution. Differing viewpoints are welcomed and students are encouraged to share their opinions in a respectful manner that does not belittle, demean, or personally-attack another.

Students are allowed to use laptop computer and iPads/tablets for course related purposes, but cell phones, MP3 players, or other personal communication devices should be turned off and put away at all times during class. Individual misuse of technology during class will result in lower class participation scores. Excessive misuse may result in the prohibition of technology from the classroom altogether.
**Course Communication**

Please contact me using the Canvas Conversations/Inbox function. Students are prohibited from emailing other students through Canvas Inbox. Any messages sent to other students via Conversations/Inbox will be monitored, and inappropriate contact (in violation of the UNL Student Code of Conduct) will be reported.

**Attendance:**

Given the discussion-based and interactive format of this course, attendance is essential and expected. Students with three or more \(\geq 3\) unexcused absences will have their final grade penalized 5%; students with five or more \(\geq 5\) unexcused absences will have their final grade penalized 10% (one full letter grade).

Excused absences may be granted in the case of documented (1) serious illness / medical issue, (2) death of a family member, (3) athletic/extra-curricular activities or (4) religious observances. For an exception to be granted due to athletic/extra-curricular activities or religious holidays, you must notify me via Canvas in advance of your absence. For all types of absences, you must submit official documentation verifying the reason you will be or were absent from class. You must submit this documentation no later than your return to class following the absence (except in the case of #3 and #4 where the date of the absence is known in advance and thus documentation must be provided in advance). This policy complies with that outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

**Course Requirements:**

1) **Class Participation** (20% of Final Course Grade)

Assigned readings should be completed before the first session of each topic, unless otherwise announced. Students need to demonstrate their proficiency with the readings through regular and relevant class participation, as determined at the end of the course. Proficiency means that (1) you should be able to speak about all aspects (e.g., theory, basic analysis, findings) of an assigned reading and (2) you should have questions about each assigned reading. In the interest of maintaining classroom discussion and equitable “airtime” among participants, I will call on students in class as needed. Students who do not demonstrate regular and relevant participation will earn a grade no higher than a B in this course (and indeed may earn a lower grade; see Attendance above).

2) **Take-Home Area Exams** (60% of Final Course Grade)

The course is divided into four broad topic areas. At the conclusion of each area, there will be a short take-home essay exam. Area Exams are due on the Friday immediately following the conclusion of that topic. Exams will be available via Canvas beginning on the Wednesday prior to the due date and we will not meet in class on that Thursday so that you may work on your exam.

Area Exams are to be 3-5 double spaced typed pages (see Writing Guidelines on Canvas). These are **NOT** “reaction” papers. You answers should reflect a professional writing style: coherent and well-reasoned, integrative, and with a minimum of spelling and grammatical errors. These should be polished demonstrations of your writing ability, not rough drafts. You
must support your answer with evidence, citing sources (in ASA or APA format) for everything that is not an original idea. You will not be penalized for drawing on outside or recommended readings, but must show sufficient familiarity with all of the required readings within each topic (i.e., you must cite and discuss all of the assigned readings in your exam).

As the semester progresses, in order to demonstrate successful integration of the course material, I will expect you to draw on relevant readings previously assigned in the course. If you cite material not listed on this syllabus, you must provide a full reference at the end of your exam (again, in either ASA or APA format).

Area Exams are due as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Exam</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Population Growth &amp; Structure</td>
<td>Friday 1/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Mortality &amp; Morbidity</td>
<td>Friday 2/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Fertility &amp; Family and Household Organization</td>
<td>Friday 3/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Migration &amp; Urbanization</td>
<td>Friday 4/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Late exams will not be accepted for any reason, including technology issues; please plan accordingly.

3) **Final Paper** (20% of Final Course Grade)

In lieu of an examination, students will write a final paper 8-10 double-spaced typed pages in length (following the Writing Guidelines on Canvas).

The final paper is a major, in-depth examination of some major demographic issue or problem (a list of possible paper topics can be found under the “Final Course Paper” module on the course Canvas site). I must approve final paper topics no later than the 9th week of class. Your final paper must cite a minimum of 10 outside scholarly sources and the relevant required course readings. Other popular print sources may be cited as well, but they do not count toward the 10 scholarly source minimum. You cannot cite material that is found only on the Internet (including wikipedia.org).

Students are expected to demonstrate that they are familiar with the relevant research and understand all sides of the issue or controversies involved. The paper may not simply be a summary of literature, however, but must critically analyze the previous research, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and, perhaps, offer directions for further study. Above all else, you must show original thinking about your chosen topic.

Graduate students are also required to give a 10-12 minute conference style presentation of their paper during the 14th week of the semester. Failure to complete the presentation will result in a letter grade penalty (assessed on the final course grade).

**Paper Deadlines:**

a) **Topic Statement.** You must submit through Canvas a 2-3 page prospectus of your final paper topic for approval no later than **Friday, March 8th**. I encourage you to meet with me prior to submitting your Topic Statement to ensure that your topic is appropriate and the scope of coverage feasible.

b) **Final Paper.** The final paper is due by 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, April 26th**. Papers on anything other than the approved topic will not be accepted and scored zero.
**SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:**

You will submit all written work in this course electronically through Canvas. All submissions must be uploaded as a PDF and conform to the assignment instructions listed on Canvas. It is each student’s responsibility to verify that their assignment has uploaded correctly.

Assignments will be graded anonymously, so do not include your name in the body of your submission or in the file name.

*Late Assignments will NOT be accepted under any circumstances.* This also means that there will be no extensions granted for technology issues—*Canvas* maintenance, loss of internet connectivity, power outages, etc. Please plan to complete your assignments accordingly. If you do not submit an assignment on time, you will receive a score of *zero* (0) on that assignment.

**EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:**

Evaluating course participation and written assignments is inherently subjective and as such all assignments in this course will be evaluated using a letter-based system. Point-based “deductions” tied to specific criteria will not be provided.

Letter grades will be associated with corresponding numeric percentages as follows: A=95%; B=85%; C=75%; D=65%; and F= 50%. Plus/minus designations will also be used. A designation of + adds 3 percentage points to the above and a designation of – subtracts 3 percentage points. For example, a score of B+ corresponds to 88%, while a score of B– corresponds to 82%. Truly exceptional assignments, those that demonstrate a depth of knowledge and integration of material at the highest level and otherwise free from error, may be awarded a grade of A++ and scored at 100%. Other letter grade combinations will be used and correspond to the percentage midway between the constituent letter grades (e.g., A-/B+= 90%).

Students will earn their final grade in this course based on their total weighted performance on each of the requirements described above. Final grades in this course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Students with an average weighted performance of less than 60% will have earned a grade of F.

You will note that the percentage cutoffs for the final grades in the course are more lenient than those associated with the grades used for the course assignments. Students must earn the average weighted percentage listed for each grade; I will not “round-up” final grades.
**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln will provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Students with documented disabilities should contact the professor to set up an appointment for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation.

**RESOURCES FOR TRANS* AND GENDER NON-BINARY STUDENTS:**

UNL is committed to ensuring that all students of all gender identities and expression have a productive experience on campus. You can find a full list of resources at: https://involved.unl.edu/resources#transguide.

Directly relevant to this course is your personal identity. Not all students go by their legal name or find that the set information in Canvas does not accurately portray who they are. Any student who goes by a chosen or preferred name (other than their legal name) is able to fill out a preferred name form at the Registrar’s Office in Canfield 107, show their legal ID, and their preferred/chosen name will show up on class and grade rosters, in the UNL Directory, and on Canvas. If you simply edit your information in Canvas, the change will be temporary as the system resets periodically.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

“The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:… Cheating; Fabrication or Falsification; Plagiarism; Abuse of Academic Materials; Complicity in Academic Dishonesty; Falsifying Grade Reports; [and] Misrepresentation to Avoid Academic Work.” (from the UNL Student Code of Conduct, http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code).

Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entirety of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, including what constitutes an academic integrity violation under each of the categories listed above. Consistent with the Disciplinary Procedures described in the Student Code of Conduct, it is Course Policy that any student found committing acts of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade in this course and will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the University Judicial Officer.
**VIDEO/AUDIO RECORDING & PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY**

Due to the sensitive and controversial nature of some of the topics that will be discussed over the duration of the semester, all classes are closed to the Press/Media. No video/audio recording of class sessions or photography within the classroom is allowed unless you obtain my permission to do so.

**VISITORS & TRESPASS POLICY (REGENTS’ POLICY 6.4.7)**

I welcome visitors who attend as personal guests of students enrolled in the course and by my invitation. If you have a guest that you would like to attend class, please contact me in advance to discuss. On the day of the visit, please introduce your guest to me before the start of class. I expect guests to adhere to the same ground rules that apply to students.

The areas of University academic, research, public service, and administrative buildings of the University used for classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, and the areas of University student residence buildings used for student living quarters are not open to the general public. Any person not authorized to be or remain in any such building area will be deemed to be trespassing on University property and may be cited and subject to prosecution for criminal trespass in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat., § 28-520 or § 28-521.

**RIGHT OF REVISION:**

I reserve the right to modify any aspect of this course syllabus at any time as need be. All changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. It is each student’s responsibility to keep abreast of changes as announced.

**COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS (Distributed Separately)**