

# Course Syllabus for Sociology 43402

## Population Dynamics

### Spring 2009

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**Time and Place** Monday & Wednesday, 1:30-2:45, 240 DeBartolo

### Course summary

Demography, the science of population, is concerned with virtually everything that influences, or can be influenced by, population size, distribution, processes, structure, or characteristics. This course pays particular attention to the causes and consequences of population change. Changes in fertility, mortality, migration, technology, lifestyle and culture have dramatically affected the United States and the other nations of the world. These changes have implications for a number of areas: hunger, the spread of illness and disease, environmental degradation, health services, household formation, the labor force, marriage and divorce, care for the elderly, birth control, poverty, urbanization, and business marketing strategies. An understanding of these is important as business, government, and individuals deal with the demands of the changing population.

### Required Texts

David Yaukey, Douglas L. Anderton & Jennifer Hickee Lundquist. 2007. Demography: The Study of Human Population, Third Edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. Online Readings packet for Sociology 43402. Compiled by Richard Williams. Available on the the Course Web Page. (Approximately 600 pages, but most of it is not that difficult.)

Yaukey provides a very good overview of the facts, concepts and issues of population dynamics. The readings packet includes selections from a wide variety of mass media and scholarly sources, ranging from Newsweek to The American Sociological Review. Though sometimes lengthy, most of the material in the packet is fairly easy to read. The packet is designed to achieve the following purposes:

- To supplement Yaukey, providing additional information on key topics
- To illustrate the wide array of issues, controversies and opinions on population issues
- To show the “real” impact that population issues have on people’s lives

The packet reflects a wide range of views, but I do not claim to present a “balanced” perspective on each and every single issue. Students are encouraged to offer their own views on the issues and to do additional reading on topics of interest to them. Additional readings of interest may be passed out in class or placed on the course web page.

## Format

We will use a variety of learning styles in this class. Sometimes I will do lectures and/or PowerPoint presentations, usually asking questions or inviting comments as I talk. We may have one or two guest speakers. Near the end of the semester the students will take over the class as they present their papers.

Often, though, we will break down into small groups, especially when we consider population issues and controversies. I therefore expect you to be familiar with the readings in advance, especially the material in the readings packet. The course web page has discussion questions that will help you to focus your reading and prepare for class discussion; since similar or related questions often show up on the exam, it will be to your advantage to prepare answers for these questions as we go along.

To prepare for discussions, I want you to jot down notes from the readings that you think are especially important, any thoughts of your own on the subject, and questions which you would like to see discussed. Keep in mind, too, that you are reading opinions as well as facts, and that you are welcome to raise alternative viewpoints. Depending on how classroom discussion goes, I may start asking you to turn in your notes before class. In general, you should be prepared to make at least a few points about every major discussion question asked.

## Assignments, Exams, Grading

*Course Requirements.* There will be two take home exams (a midterm and a final) and one major paper/class presentation. Each will count for 30% of your grade. Class participation will account for the other 10%. There may also be a few short homework problems that will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Exams will consist of essay and short-answer questions. NOTE: You must complete both exams and the paper. I reserve the right to give a D or F to any student who does not do so, regardless of how well they have done on the parts they completed.

*Exams.* One of the things that will be most important on the exams will be your ability to incorporate material from the readings. The best exams will go beyond what was said in class and will cite specific facts, opinions, authors and articles. They will be like short research papers, incorporating information from a variety of sources, except I have provided you with the readings in advance. Since successful class participation also depends on mastery of the reading, it is important that you not fall behind.

*Attendance & Participation.* I expect everyone to attend class regularly; more than two or three unexcused absences will severely hurt your class participation grade and will leave me much less sympathetic to any problems you may have. *If absences are excessive, University policy allows me to give you a D or F after providing written notice.* I suspect class participation will be a fairly neutral factor in most people's grades, but you can help yourself by demonstrating that you are familiar with the required reading and offering intelligent insights and comments.

**Honor Code.** As with all undergraduate classes at Notre Dame, the academic honor code is in effect and I expect students to abide by it, as will I. I reserve the right to use University-approved mechanisms (such as Turnitin) if I suspect plagiarism or cheating.

**Paper.** The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and approximately 10 to 20 pages long. The paper should include a bibliography and all sources for material should be clearly cited. *I want both an electronic and printed version of your paper.* Papers are due April 8 (although you are welcome and encouraged to hand them in well before that.). On April 15, 20, 22 or 27, you will be given 15 minutes to discuss some aspect of your paper that you think would be of interest to the class (Amount of time and dates may be adjusted based on final enrollment). As a courtesy to your fellow students, I expect everyone to be there on those days.

I must approve your topic. By March 4, you should give me a one-page typed summary briefly describing your proposed topic. I encourage you to schedule meetings with me to talk about your ideas. If you want to give me a draft of your paper by March 25, I will return it with comments within about 7 days. Note that there is nothing that stops you from starting or even completing your paper well in advance of the due date; if you get a lot of the work done early the end of the semester will be a lot less hectic for you.

The paper should be a major, in-depth examination of some major demographic issue or problem. It should demonstrate that you are familiar with the relevant research, and that you understand the issues and controversies involved. Your own original thinking, or your ability to offer some sort of critique, may be most helpful (but your own thoughts must not be used as a substitute for adequate research). A minimum of a half-dozen scholarly sources should be cited (e.g. books, journal articles). You can also cite other sources - Time and Newsweek often have excellent articles - so long as you have the minimum number of scholarly references.

Throughout his book, Yaukey suggests a number of references that you may find useful. You'll also likely find that the Population Bulletins published by the Population Reference Bureau are very helpful to you; use these as a starting point, but don't stop there. Depending on your topic, you may find it helpful to do some original empirical research using sources like the Census Bureau's web site.

### **Some Possible Paper Topics**

Following are possible topics for your paper, but you are free to choose others. We will cover many of these in class, but I am sure you will be able to provide a much more in-depth examination.

- Population status, problems, and prospects in the region/country of your choice (e.g. the former USSR, China, Israel, Latin America). I'll probably focus more on the United States, so you may find it worthwhile to look at other countries that are of interest to you.
- Overpopulation in the developing countries. Is starvation inevitable? Do famine relief programs only make the long-term problems worse? What effect does overpopulation in developing countries have on the United States, and on world peace and stability?
- Demographic and social consequences of improved technological control over fertility. You might consider the possible impacts of couples being able to choose the sex of their child, test-tube babies, abortion pills, more effective contraceptive methods, surrogate motherhood, etc.

- Catholic perspectives on population issues (e.g. abortion, artificial insemination, birth control, stem cell research). Why does the church hold certain positions? What impact do those positions have? You might offer some sort of critique, or some sort of defense or attack, of Church positions. (Don't just be dogmatic; remember, this is to be a scholarly paper. You are free to take whatever positions you want, but I expect serious research and facts to be backing up your claims.)
- The American family - what did it used to be like, how has it changed, what will it be like in the future? You might look at changes in family size and composition, the feminization of poverty, changes in family routine, divorce, gay families, etc.
- Demographic effects of changing women's roles (such as on the labor force, fertility, male/female differentials in mortality).
- Demographic effects of changing men's roles and statuses. Do men continue to be the privileged ones? Or is there, as Christina Hoff Sommers claims, a "war against boys" that is turning men into the disadvantaged sex?
- Possible effects of demographic changes on businesses, marketing and politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What types of products/services will rise/decline in importance? What will the impact be on the American labor force or American politics? Conversely, how will changes in the labor force affect business? You might discuss the effects of changing age composition and changing lifestyles.
- The AIDS epidemic - how serious is it? How did it reach such proportions? What kind of research can demographers do that would aid in dealing with the crisis?
- Contemporary health problems. Why have health problems such as obesity and diabetes increased in recent years? What effect are they having on US and/or world population?
- The future of social security - is a "crisis" coming? How will America deal with the elderly in the 21st century? Can "generational warfare" be averted?
- The effects of legal and illegal migration on the United States, both currently and in the future. Do American workers suffer from it? What strains do immigrants place on public services? What benefits do they bring? Will the new immigrants eventually be absorbed into American society the way their predecessors were?
- The effect of demographic characteristics on poverty and wealth in America. How much do family origins, race, sex, etc., affect the status attainment of individuals in America today?
- Housing and segregation in America. What effect has racial segregation in housing and other areas had on American life? Is segregation declining, or will it change in the future?

### **Key Dates:**

First take home exam: Due Feb. 25 by 5:00pm  
 Paper Topics submitted for approval: March 4  
 Drafts due if you want advance comments: March 25  
 Papers due: April 8  
 Class presentations: April 15, 20, 22, 27  
 Final take home exam due: Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am

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**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

Jan 14, 19 – Introduction; Overview of the World's Population

Yaukey, Ch. 1, "Introduction"  
Yaukey, Ch. 2, "Demographic Data"  
Readings packet, "Population: Historical overview"

Jan 21, 26 - Population, resources, environment, and food. A look at the theories of Malthus, Marx, the demographic transition, and others, followed by an examination of the effects of overpopulation in the world today.

Yaukey, Ch. 3, "Population Growth."  
Readings packet, "Population, resources, environment & food"

Jan 28, Feb 2 - Fertility: concepts and trends ; also, Birth Cohorts. A look at fertility concepts and measurement; The importance of age and sex structure; current status of fertility in the United States and the world; the Baby Boom and other birth cohorts

Yaukey, ch. 7, "Fertility."  
Yaukey, Ch. 4, "Age and Sex Structure."  
Readings packet, "Fertility: Concepts & Trends"  
Readings packet, "Birth cohorts."

Feb 4, 9 - Fertility: Issues, problems, policies. Includes adolescent fertility: costs and consequences; New reproductive technology and the issues it raises; the battle over reproductive rights.

Readings packet, "Fertility Issues: Teenage Sex & Adolescent Pregnancy"  
Readings Packet, "Fertility Issues: The battle over reproductive rights"  
Readings packet, "Fertility issues: Reproductive technology"  
Readings packet, "Fertility Issues: The struggle within the Catholic Church" (time permitting)

Feb 11, 16 - Women, men, families, households. A discussion of the demographic implications of recent changes in gender roles, families, and households.

Yaukey, Ch. 8, "Marriage and Householding."  
Readings packet, "Marriage, divorce, families and households"  
Readings packet, "The status and roles of women and men"

Feb 18 - Demographics. A look at how demographic information is used in business, political, and social planning. [This may get moved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the course if we are running behind.]

Readings packet, "Demographics."

Feb 23 – Catch up, Review for first exam; Take home exam handed out

Feb 25 – TAKE HOME EXAM DUE BY 5:00; NO REGULAR CLASS.

Mar 2, 4 - Mortality; also, AIDS. Includes causes of death; differences in mortality by sex, marital status, age, etc.

Yaukey, Ch. 5, "Mortality."

Yaukey, Ch. 6, "Morbidity and Health."

Readings packet, "Health, disease, mortality & AIDS."

Mar 4 –PAPER TOPICS ARE DUE. Drafts are due March 25 if you want me to offer comments.

Mar 16, 18 - The elderly. Characteristics of the elderly; caring for the elderly; social security; social problems presented by the elderly.

Yaukey, Ch. 4, "Age and Sex Structure", pp. 99-108.

Readings packet, "Aging: The Elderly & Their Caregivers"

Readings packet, "Aging: Generational warfare? Clashes between the young and the old."

Readings packet, "Aging: Social Security."

Readings packet, "The future of aging."

Mar 23, 25 - Race. We'll be talking about the importance of race throughout the course. In this part, we'll pick up some new issues, such as what is race and the controversy over multiracial classifications. We'll also talk about housing and segregation and general demographic issues concerning minorities not covered elsewhere.

Readings packet, "The Relevance of Race"

Readings packet, "Diversity & Affirmative Action"

Readings packet, "Housing and Segregation."

Yaukey, Ch. 11, "Population Diversity."

Mar 30 - Poverty and Wealth. Effects of sex, race, and other characteristics on status attainment; Poverty and welfare in America; the financial problems of the middle class, including credit & bankruptcy.

Readings packet, "Poverty & Welfare"

April 1, 6 - Migration. Causes and consequences of migration.

Yaukey, Ch. 9, "Migration."  
Readings packet, "Migration."

April 8 – PAPERS DUE

April 8 - Urbanization. We will talk about the urbanization process; the status of cities today; density and crowding.

Yaukey, Ch. 10, "Urbanization."  
Readings packet, "Urbanization."

April 15, 20, 22, 27 - In-class paper presentations.

April 29 – The Future. Discussion will focus on the bleak vision of the future presented in Doug Massey's Presidential Address to the Population Association of American, and the responses to it.

Readings packet, "The Future."

April 29 – Catch up; Review for final exam; Take home Final handed out

May 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – Take home final is due (but are welcome sooner). **DO NOT BE LATE!!!** I only have 3 days to get your grades in, and I am not allowed to give incompletes.