Sociology 574
Introduction to Demography
Spring 2010 (First seven weeks of semester)
Monday 1:10-3:50 p.m.
Lucy Stone Hall A256

Professor: Deborah Carr
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30 - 4:30, and by appointment.

Course Description: This seven-week course will provide an overview of the core concepts of
demography (mortality, fertility, and migration) and their implications for social life. The course
will begin with an overview of the methods, measures, and theoretical frameworks used to study
historical patterns and subgroup differentials in mortality, fertility, and migration. We will
identify and discuss the social, economic, cultural, and technological forces driving these
demographic patterns. Throughout the course, we will discuss the implications of fertility and
mortality patterns for important aspects of social life, including gender and family roles,
intergenerational and intergroup relations, social stratification, and health. The final week of the
course is devoted to public policies that affect population size, distribution, and composition.

Prerequisites:
Graduate standing or permission of the instructor is required. Some familiarity with quantitative
research methods is also highly recommended. A handout distributed on the first day of class
provides a basic review of statistical methodologies; students with limited backgrounds in
statistics should familiarize themselves with this information.

Readings:
All required and recommended readings will be posted on the course Sakai website. Students are
strongly encouraged to read the recommended readings.

Course Requirements:
The course is organized as a seminar, and will blend lecture and discussion. During the first half
of class, I will provide a lecture clarifying key concepts and an overview of the week’s readings.
The remaining time will be dedicated to in-depth discussion of the week’s readings, and a
discussion of questions that students introduce. Each week a student (or pair of students) will
lead and moderate discussion. A core component of the discussion will be addressing questions
raised by students prior to the start of class. The discussion leader(s) should receive each class
participant’s questions via email, by 5 p.m. on the Sunday prior to each Monday class.

Course grades are based on three components: leading a class discussion; serving as discussion
leader; and completion of four discussion papers.
(1) **Leading a discussion section (10 percent of class grade).**

Each week, a student or pair of students will be responsible for leading discussion. The student leader(s) may base the discussion on the questions submitted by class participants, or may design a discussion that incorporates both assigned readings and his/her own research interests. Each week, all class members will email 2-3 discussion questions to the discussion leader and professor, no later than 5 p.m. Sunday on the day prior to class.

(2) **Participation in weekly discussion (10 percent of class grade).**

This grade reflects one’s class attendance, participation in discussion, and the quality of the questions submitted each week. All seminar participants are responsible for all of the required readings. Students should read carefully so that they come to class with both insightful comments and questions. Students who read materials that are not on the syllabus but that are germane to the discussion should feel free to contribute this knowledge to the discussion; the class as a whole will benefit from the specialized expertise of all participants.

(3) **Discussion papers (80 percent of class grade).**

The main course requirement is the preparation of four short discussion papers (about 6-8 pages, double spaced). Each discussion paper is worth 20 percent of the overall course grade. The purpose of these papers is to help students integrate the assigned readings and to critically evaluate the arguments surrounding important issues in demography. A secondary goal is to teach students how to evaluate and interpret demographic data. *At least one of the discussion papers will be based on a student’s independent research, and the reading and integration of materials not included in the required reading list.* Each paper is due two weeks following the date that the assignment is distributed. I will not accept late assignments.

**NO INCOMPLETES WILL BE GIVEN**
READING SCHEDULE


Symposium on Qualitative Methods in Population Studies:

Recommended:


February 1:  Demographic Transition and Population Change


Recommended:


**February 8: Fertility [Class session to be held 9:10-11:50 a.m., Friday 2/12]**


Recommended:


**February 15: Marriage, Cohabitation, and Divorce**


See also:


Recommended:


**February 22: Mortality**


**Recommended:**


**March 1: Migration**


**Recommended:**


**March 8: Population Policy**

