DEMOGRAPHY AND POPULATION RESEARCH
Sociology 570
Spring 2012
Monday, 9:50 am - 12:30 pm

Professor: Sharon Bzostek
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Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 – 3:00 pm, or by appointment

Course Website: sakai.rutgers.edu (“Soc 570: Demography and Population Research”)

Course Overview
This course will provide students with a basic introduction to the core topics in contemporary demography (including both the classic topics of fertility, mortality, and migration, and more contemporary extensions into the fields of health, aging, and families) and to the basic methods used in demographic research, including life tables and the calculation of life expectancy, fertility and mortality rates, and a basic overview of population projection techniques. Emphasis will be placed on relating demographic concepts and methods to current events and pressing social and political issues. Course readings will be a mixture of recent substantive journal articles about the course topics, journal articles about particular demographic methods, and selected chapters from a few demographic textbooks.

Readings & Course Materials
All assigned and recommended readings and other course materials will be available on the course Sakai website or through E-Reserves.

Course Requirements
This class will be taught as a seminar, with a combination of lectures and discussions. The balance between lecture and discussion will vary by the week depending on the topics to be covered that day. Students should thoroughly read the assigned readings before coming to class. Most weeks (all those EXCEPT those with asterisks next to them in the course outline below), students should submit two to three discussion questions based on the readings via email to the instructor and weekly discussion leaders by 5 pm on the Sunday before class. During our first class, students will sign up to lead (in pairs or groups of three) two discussion sessions over the course of the semester.

Grades will be determined by: two problem sets (25 percent of the final grade); leading two discussion sessions over the course of the semester (10 percent); actively participating in classroom activities and discussions and consistently submitting discussion questions on time (15 percent); and writing four short discussion papers (about 5 pages double-spaced), which will be critical analyses of the course topics and
readings as well as outside research for at least one of the papers (50 percent). The papers will be due
two weeks after the topics are distributed.

Course Schedule & Assigned Readings
(subject to modification with advance notice)

1/23 Course Introduction and Overview: Core Demographic Issues & Data Sources


1/30 Population Growth & Change, Demographic Transition Theory


**Recommended:**


**2/6 Measuring Mortality, Morbidity & Life Expectancy**


Note: Palmore & Gardner’s *Measuring Mortality, Fertility and Natural Increase: A Self-Teaching Guide to Elementary Measures* covers these topics (particularly life tables) in a more elementary manner than Hinde. Interested students are welcome to look at the instructor’s copy of this book (Rutgers does not own a copy so I cannot put it on E-Reserves). I would be happy to recommend specific pages to read related to these topics.

**2/13 Trends and Patterns in Mortality & The Future of Life Expectancy**


Couzin-Frankel, J. 2011. “A Pitched Battle Over Life Span.” Science 333: 549-550 (Be sure to read this article before the Olshansky & Oeppen & Vaupel pieces).


Recommended:


2/20 Social Disparities in Health


Recommended:


2/27 Measuring Fertility & Nuptiality*


Note: Palmore & Gardner also have a more basic introduction to fertility and nuptiality measures, and interested students are welcome to ask the instructor for recommended pages in this book.

3/5 Fertility Transitions: Historical Trends & Theories


3/12 SPRING RECESS
3/19 Second Demographic Transition & Changing Demography of American Families


Recommended:


3/26 Policy Issues in Low- and High-Fertility Countries


**Recommended**


**4/2 Population Aging**


**4/9 Population Projections, Stable Populations and Age Distributions**


4/16 International Migration


Recommended:


4/23 Urbanization, Urban Poverty & The Environment


Myers, D. and J. Pitkin. 2009. “Demographic Forces and Turning Points in the American City, 1950-


**Recommended:**


**4/30** Class wrap-up, topics and readings TBD in collaboration with students