**Syllabus**

**Sociology 3650-001 Population and Society**  
**Spring 2009**  
**University of Utah**  
**T,H 2:00-3:20 PM**  
**BEH S 115**

**Instructor:** Yong CAI  
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**Course Description and Objectives**

This course is devoted to study the relationship between population and society from a global perspective. Population is the foundation of our society. Population structure and its constant changing affect both macro social processes and individual choices. It won’t be an overstatement to say that there are always connections between population and social issues, e.g. over-population and global warming, immigration and border security, aging and social security crisis ……

This is an introductory course to the field of demography. The course is designed to help students learn three basics of doing demography: a demographic perspective that connects population to social theories on how the world/society operate, an array of quantitative measures that characterize population and its changes, and a working knowledge of past and current population trends, along with their socioeconomic determinants and policy implications.

The course meets the University of Utah’s International Requirement, Quantitative Reasoning and Quantitative Intensive requirements. In line with these requirements, the class is set up so that students will learn to take a global comparative perspective, gather and analyze empirical evidences, and assess the causes and consequences of demographic factors across regions and countries. Specifically, in this course, students will:

- Develop a critical understanding of how demographic data are gathered and analyzed, and learn to locate, interpret and apply global demographic data, such as data distributed by the US Census bureau, World Bank, United Nations, and other international organizations.
- Develop a working knowledge of worldwide variation in fertility, mortality, and migration patterns, cultivate sensitivity to how variation in social, cultural, economical and historical factors contribute to contemporary global demographic diversities, and acquire an ability to examine demographic differences using a comparative framework.
- Build quantitative skills that are essential for describing and analyzing features of population composition, distribution, and dynamics, and learn to critically assess empirical research and theoretical perspectives offered to explain regional and cross-national differences in demographic outcomes.
• Build an awareness of how the livelihoods of the world’s populations are interdependent through a host of phenomena, such as migrations, the spread of infectious disease, and the shared threats to natural resources and the physical environment posed by population pressure on ecosystems.

• Practice reading, constructing, and interpreting quantitative measures that describe population and population change, and learn how to communicate, orally and in writing, about the quantitative characteristics of populations and their significance.

Course Materials: Textbooks/Readings/Calculator

*Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues (10th Edition)*, by John R. Weeks, is the main text for this class. The text can be purchased at the University Bookstore (or at several online bookstores). A short set of additional required readings will be available via the course’s website (*webct*).

Several films will be shown during class. Those films will be available at the reservation desk in the Multimedia Center at Marriott library after they are shown in class.

Students need a calculator that can do basic calculations as well as logs and exponents. Please bring your calculators to every class for calculation exercises, and for periodic in-class quizzes.

Assessments and Grading

Grades will be based on exams (60%), assignments (30%), and quizzes (10%).

There will be a total of 3 in-class exams. Exams consist of multiple choice, short and medium length answers questions that test knowledge of concepts, measures and main ideas from the text, lectures, readings and films. Prior approval is necessary to miss an exam and will only be given in extreme circumstances. Exams are structured to increase in value as the class progresses in order to take into account improvements in student performance over time. There will be no make-up exams.

There will be a total of 6 assignments. Assignments are methodological, quantitative and require statistical interpretation. The first five assignments require students to work out demographic calculations and provide interpretations. The last assignment requires students to gather demographic information from library/web sources and write a report on the information. The first five assignments will be posted online one week before the due date. The last assignment will be posted three weeks before the due date. Students are to work on assignments independently.

Assignments are to be handed in before the start of class on the specified due day, *in person*. No assignments will be accepted via email. Any assignment handed in after start of class will be considered late. Late assignments are penalized by 10% of points for each day of being late. Any assignment not handed in within one week after the due date will be given a score of zero. I will drop your lowest assignment grade in calculating your final grade.

Class attendance is important to success in this course. To encourage class attendance, there will be several unannounced quizzes during the semester. No makeup quiz will be given, but I will drop your lowest quiz grade.
Points will be converted into a percent and translated into a grade using the following schedule:

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**Tentative Course Schedule** *(Subject to change)*

Week 1  Ch. 1 Introduction to Demography.

Week 2  Ch. 2 Global Population Trends.

Week 3  Ch. 3 Demographic Perspectives. *(Video World population).*

Week 4  Ch. 3 Demographic Perspectives.

Week 5  Ch. 4 Demographic Data  
Exam #1

Week 6  Ch. 5 The Health and Mortality Transition.

Week 7  Ch. 6 The Fertility Transition.

Week 8  Ch. 7 The Migration Transition. *(Video America’s Immigration Debate).*

Week 9  Ch. 7 The Migration Transition.  
Exam #2

Week 10  Ch. 8 The Age Transition.

Week 11  Ch. 9 The Urban Transition. *(Video Rise and fall—population and urbanization)*

Week 12  Ch. 10 The Family and Household Transition.

Week 13  Ch. 11 Population and the Environment. *(Video The People Paradox)*

Week 14  Ch. 12 Coping with Demographic Change. *(Video Global cities — immigration and the world economy)*

Week 15  Conclusion  
Exam #3
**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.