

# POPULATION & SOCIETY

*Sociology 3650-001*

**Spring 2013**



Photo Credit: National Geographic

*Sample syllabus.*

*A more detailed and final syllabus will be distributed on the first day of class.*

## **Class Meeting**

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays from 9:40 – 10:30  
112 BEHS

## **Instructor**

Rebecca Utz, PhD  
rebecca.utz@utah.edu  
801-585-5496  
Office Hours: TBA

## **Course Overview**

The number of people living on earth continues to grow (*we recently achieved 7 billion people worldwide*). Not only is the overall world population growing, the composition of the earth's population is constantly changing. These changes exert powerful influences on society, impacting the well-being of people in many ways. For instance, population change influences economic development, the natural environment, health care, and other important societal phenomenon. This creates a need for studying and understanding population dynamics. This course is devoted to the study of demographic processes, their causes, and their consequences. We will review population trends across time and across cultures, learn how to empirically measure changes in the population, and discuss how these trends impact society, policy, and culture.

The course is divided into six units. Unit one provides an introduction to the study of population and population growth. Units two through four consider the basic demographic processes of fertility, migration and mortality. Unit five focuses on the age-sex structure and population aging. Unit six considers timely topics related to population and society – for example, the effect of wars and conflict on population change and whether the natural environment is affected by population dynamics.

## **Prerequisites**

Students must have completed SOC 3112 or FCS 3210 or ECON 3640 or PSY 3000 or an equivalent statistics course approved by the instructor – prior to enrolling in SOC 3650.

## **Gen Ed**

Successful completion of SOC 3650 will satisfy the following University of Utah general education requirements: IR, QB, and QI.

In fulfillment of the *IR-International Requirement*, the course focus is, at all times, global and comparative. Students will be encouraged to contrast demographic processes, as well as their causes and consequences, across regions and countries. The course will often compare demographic events occurring in global sectors described by terms such as ‘developed’ and ‘developing’. Specifically, in this course students will:

- Learn to interpret & apply global demographic data collected across international settings.
- Develop an understanding of worldwide variation in fertility, mortality, and migration patterns, cultivate sensitivity to how variations in cultural, economic, and historical factors contribute to cross-cultural differences, and acquire an ability to examine these differences using a comparative framework.
- Critically assess empirical research and theoretical perspectives offered to explain regional and cross-national differences in demographic outcomes.
- Build an awareness of how our livelihoods and those 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.

In fulfillment of the *QB-Quantitative Reasoning & QI-Quantitative Intensive* requirements, the course involves the calculation and interpretation of population statistics. Specifically, this class is designed so that students:

- Develop a critical understanding of how demographic data are created.
- Build quantitative skills that are essential for describing and analyzing features of population composition, distribution, and dynamics.
- Practice constructing, reading, and interpreting quantitative measures that describe population and population change.
- Learn how to communicate, orally and in writing, about the quantitative characteristics of populations & their significance.

## **Expectations**

In order to maintain a positive, civil environment for learning, students shall strive to meet the goals described in the University of Utah's Student Code, which states *"the mission of the University of Utah is to educate the individual and to discover, refine and disseminate knowledge. The University supports the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the University community. These goals can best be achieved in an open and supportive environment that encourages reasoned discourse, honesty, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship."*

It is assumed that all work submitted to instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code, *"includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."* For detailed definitions and possible academic sanctions please see: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>. A copy has been posted on Web-CT.

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking.

## **Accommodations**

As a general rule, please discuss any concerns, absences, or difficulties with the professor before they impede your ability to meet any course requirements.

*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.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Canvas & U-mail:

All course materials, including lecture notes and assignment sheets, will be posted on Canvas. Students are expected to check the course website frequently. Important course-related announcements will be made via Canvas, as well as through students' University of Utah U-mail addresses.

### Readings

All students should have access to the following textbook:

*Poston & Bouvier's Population & Society: An Introduction to Demography*  
(1<sup>st</sup> edition, Cambridge University Press). ISBN: 978-0521872874

Additional readings will be made available through Canvas. Readings should be completed before coming to class on the day they are listed on the course schedule.

### Calculator

All students should have access to a basic calculator, in order to complete homework assignments, exams, and in-class exercises. Students should bring calculators to class. The calculator needs to do addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, exponents, and logs. *Note: telephones & computer-based calculators will not be permitted during exams.*

### Attendance & Participation

(25 points)

Active participation and regular attendance is a critical part of the learning process. Active participation consists of asking and answering questions, participating in in-class activities, and coming to class prepared by having read the assigned material. Attendance will be taken on six random, unannounced class periods throughout the semester (1 day per unit; not on the first day of class and not on exam days). Each class period will be worth 5 points. To receive full points, students must be present during 5 out of 6 attendance checks.

### Assignments

(175 points total: 25, 25, 30, 35, 35, 25)

There will be a series of 6 assignments throughout the term; these are mostly designed to practice calculations and interpretations of empirical data. Detailed assignment sheets (with instructions and grading criteria) will be posted on Web-CT at least one week prior to the due date. All assignments are due in-class at the start of the assigned class period. Late assignments that are turned in within one week of the due date are penalized at least 5 points. No assignments will be accepted after one-week of the due date.

### Exams

(250 points total: 75, 75, 100)

There will be three in-class exams, each consisting of multiple choice questions, short answer, calculations, and interpretations. Exam 1 covers Units 1 and 2; Exam 2 covers Units 3 and 4; Exam 3 covers Units 5 and 6, but will also cover material from throughout the semester. Material covered may include assigned readings and in-class speakers, discussions, and films.

- a calculator and a single sheet of notes are permitted for all exams
- no make-up exams are available

## COURSE GRADING

- Instructor will post all grades on Web-CT within 7-days of submission.
- It is the student's responsibility to report and discuss grade discrepancies with the instructor.
- The instructor will entertain grade change requests, but such discussions should occur outside of class time, and at least 24 hours after the assignment/exam was handed back. (i.e., take the time to reflect on the comments and review the answer keys prior to disputing a grade)

### Final Course Grades

Final course grades will be determined by summing the points received on six assignments (175 points), three exams (250 points), and attendance (25 points) – for a total of 450 points. Letter grades will be assigned based on the following:

Points	Percent	Grade
417 to 450	93 -100%	A
416 to 403	90 - 92%	A-
402 to 390	87 – 89%	B+
389 to 372	83 – 86%	B
371 to 358	80 – 82%	B-
357 to 345	77 – 79%	C+
344 to 327	73 – 76%	C
326 to 313	70 – 72%	C-
312 to 268	60 – 69%	D
000 to 267	0 – 59%	E

### Extra Credit

- Up to 10 points of extra credit can be earned.
- All extra credit must be submitted prior to the final day of class.

*Option #1:* Attend a lecture, performance, or film screening that deals with a topic relevant to the course. While some events may be announced during class, students are generally expected to identify appropriate lectures/events that are occurring on campus or in the community. After the event, students should submit a 4-5 page paper (double spaced) summarizing and discussing the event they attended. The essay should provide a detailed summary of the event, but more importantly a critical discussion and application of the event's topic to the topics and issues discussed in class. [up to 10 points possible; you can only do this once]

*Option #2:* Clip newspaper or magazine articles that are relevant to the course. Each article should be accompanied by a short essay of 2-3 pages (double spaced) describing how the article pertains to the issues and topics discussed in class. [up to 5 points possible; You can do this twice]

*Option #3:* Propose an alternate assignment to the instructor. [up to 10 points possible; you can only do this once]

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: A more detailed schedule will be provided on the first day of class.

Week	Topic	Readings*	Assignment
1	Intro: What is Demography?	Chpts 1-2	
2	Intro: What is Demography?		1: World Populations
3	Population Growth	Chpts 9-10	
4	Population Growth		2: Pop Growth & Projections
5	Fertility	Chpts 3-4	
6	Fertility		3: Fertility Measures
7	Migration	Chpts 6-7	<b>Exam #1</b>
8	Migration		
9	Mortality	Chpts 5	
10	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>		
11	Mortality		4. Mortality Measures
12	Mortality		<b>Exam #2</b>
13	Age Structure & Pop Aging	Chpts 8	
14	Policy & Implications	Chpts 11-14	5. Age Structure & Pop Aging
15	Policy & Implications		
16	Review & Summary		6. Self Evaluation
Final Exam Week			<b>Exam #3</b>

\* in addition to the relevant chapters in the text, each topic will include a couple of readings posted on Web-CT