Sociology 312: 900

Population and Society
Spring, 2013
T-Th, 11:10 to 12:25
CHEN 102

Instructor

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I. The Course. This is an introduction to the sociological study of populations, i.e., social demography. My definition of demography is: the scientific study of human populations – their size, composition, and distribution – and the changes in these factors as they occur through the three processes of fertility, mortality and migration.

Our course will focus in particular on the demography of the United States, China, and Texas.
This course is a “writing intensive” (W) course. You will note above that our class has a “900” extension, which is indicative of “W” courses. A full 50 percent of the final grade is based on your writing a demographic autobiography and a county demographic profile. See the detailed descriptions below.

The course outline (below) pretty much follows my above definition of demography. When you complete this course, you will be able to perceive, analyze and discuss at rather sophisticated levels the dynamics of human populations. You will be especially knowledgeable about the populations of the U.S., China and Texas. You will also be able to discuss with anyone the theme of our course, “Demography is Destiny.” And, hopefully, you will have enhanced your writing skills.

Few issues in the world are as important these days as population growth and change. This course will enable you to view population issues from the perspective of the social sciences.

II. Texts.


3. There will be a few additional readings assigned, and I will place them on the e-learning page of our class.

III. Basis for Grade Computation. The final grade will be based on two examinations, a major writing assignment, and a shorter writing assignment, as follows:

--two 75-minute noncumulative examinations (25 points each, for a total of 50 points) will be held on March 7th and May 3rd. The exam on March 7th will be held at our regular class time; the exam on May 3rd will be from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

--two written assignments, as follows:
the first written assignment is a short (about 4 pages) population autobiography which will be submitted to me at the end of class on January 24\textsuperscript{th} (5 points).

the second written assignment is a "Demographic Analysis of Your Home County (CDP)." You will undertake a demographic study of your home county in Texas, i.e., the county in which you were raised. If you were not raised in Texas, you should choose a county in Texas - I will help you select one. No county may be chosen by more than one student. There are 254 counties in Texas, so there are more than enough counties for everyone to have his or her own county. Most of the demographic information that you will need to conduct your demographic study will be available on the internet. Each section of the "Demographic Analysis of Your Home County" will be submitted to me during the semester according to a schedule I will provide. My TAs and I will read and grade each section when it is submitted, and, if needed, we will provide you with information about the rewriting of the section. You will then revise and rewrite each section, as outlined by us, and will submit the final and revised version of your CDP to me on the last lecture day of our course (April 25\textsuperscript{th}). The CDP will count for 45 points. I will assign a maximum of 30 of these points to the eight sections as you submit them during the semester; and I will assign a maximum of 15 points to the final revised copy of the CDP submitted to me on the last class day of the course (April 25, 2013).

IV. Extra Credit. Students may earn extra credit in this course by reading, and writing a review of, a book selected from a list of books attached at the end of this syllabus. The review will consist of no less than 8 double-spaced typed pages (about 250 words per page), consisting of no less than 4 pages of summary and 4 pages of critique, appraisal and reflection. I will assign one of three grades to the review: A, B, or C. The grade of A on the review will raise the student's final course grade by 2/3rds of a grade, for example, raising it from B to A-. The grade of B on the review will raise the student's final course grade by 1/3rd of a grade, for instance, raising it from C+ to B-. The grade of C on the review will result in no change in the student's final course grade. The book reviews will be submitted to me on the last class day of the course (April 25, 2013). No more than two students may choose the same book to review. So, if you decide that you will write a book review for extra credit, make your selection soon from the attached list, and inform me in writing over email of your selection. If two others have already chosen the book you wish to review, you will need to choose another book. Students who usually receive the grades
of A or B on these book reviews are those who write more than the minimum eight page book reviews.

V. Examinations. Each of the two examinations will be available in multiple-choice and essay formats. If the student wishes to take the essay examination, he/she must inform me via electronic mail, on no later than the class day before the exam day, of the intention to take the essay exam. If I am not informed otherwise I will assume the student will be taking the objective version of the test. The two examinations will be administered on March 7th and May 3rd. All students must take both exams. There will be no make-up exams unless there is some extraordinary and unique situation (e.g., extreme sickness, or death in the immediate family). In the case that the student misses an examination owing to such a situation, s/he must provide to me a written letter from a medical person (in the case of sickness) or a letter from a parent or close relative, accompanied by a copy of a death notice from a newspaper or a copy of the funeral program for the deceased person (in the case of a death in the immediate family). If I decide in such extreme cases to administer a make-up exam, the exam will be an essay exam.

VI. Written Assignments. As already noted, the first written assignment will be submitted on January 24th. The second assignment, the CDP, will be submitted to me in eight sections during the semester, and the final version of the revised CDP will be turned in on the last class day of the course (April 25, 2013). Each assignment will be typed double-spaced. Detailed instructions about each of the two assignments will be provided in writing. I will downgrade assignments if they contain spelling and grammatical mistakes. Both assignments must be submitted and completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

The first assignment will be considered "late" if I do not have it in my possession when I leave the classroom at the completion of the class lecture on the day (January 24th) it is due. If the first assignment is submitted late, the following rule will apply. The assignment will be read and graded. I will then reduce the assigned grade by one full grade (e.g., a B+ to a C+) for every class period it is late; the maximum reduction a late paper will receive is three grades, irrespective of how late it is turned in.

The final version of the second assignment, the CDP, will be considered "late" if it is not submitted to me by 3:00 PM on April 25th. If it is submitted to me after 3:00 PM on April 25th, but by 12 Noon of the day of the 2nd examination (May 3rd), I will downgrade it
by eight points. If the assignment is submitted to me after the date of the 2nd examination, I will downgrade it by 10 points.

Each of the eight sections of the CDF will be submitted to me according to a schedule I will provide you. Each section will receive a maximum of 3-4 points (eight sections for a maximum total of 30 points). If a section is submitted late, I will downgrade it by one point for every class period it is late, up to three periods.

Both assignments must be submitted and completed to receive a passing grade in the course.

VII. Attendance Requirements. Students are required to attend class on a regular basis. Class attendance will be taken during each class, beginning on January 22nd. At the end of the semester after I have calculated the student’s final course grade, I will raise by 1/3rd of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to an A-) the final grades of all students who have missed no classes or one class during the semester. I will reduce by 1/3rd of a letter grade (e.g., from a B- to a C+) the final grades of all students who have missed between four and seven classes during the semester. I will reduce by 2/3rds of a letter grade (e.g., from a B- to a C) the final grades of all students who have missed between eight and eleven classes during the semester. I will reduce by a full letter grade (e.g., from a B- to a C-) the final grades of all students who have missed twelve or more classes during the semester.

VIII. Powerpoint Lecture Notes/Slides. I will post on the e-learning page for our course at least one day prior to each class lecture a copy of the Powerpoint Slides of my lecture.

Also, I will also post on the e-learning page all class hand-outs (syllabus, assignments, etc.).

IX. Class Electronic List. I will use electronic mail to communicate on various topics with the students in this class. Also, students are encouraged to raise and send questions and reflections to me about any of the topics covered in this course. I will answer/respond to the questions, and will also send the questions/answers to all students on the electronic list. If you send me an electronic message and do not want your question, and my answer, sent to all the students in our class, indicate so by typing “PRIVATE” at the beginning of the message. I check my electronic mail several times daily.
The best way to communicate with me, outside the classroom, is through electronic mail. My e-mail address is: d-poston@tamu.edu

X. Schedule of Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments. Here is a general schedule, with reading assignments, for the various demographic topics to be covered in this class. The dates of the two non-cumulative examinations are firm.

January 15
Course Introduction

January 17, 22, 24
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier, chapter 1.
2. Wattenberg, chapter 1.

January 29, 31
Lecture 2: The Sources and Materials of Demography
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier, chapter 2.

February 5, 7
Lecture 3: Population Increase/Decrease and the Demographic Transition
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier, chapters 9 and 10.
2. Wattenberg, chapters 2-3.

February 12, 14
Lecture 4: Population Composition: Age and Sex
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier, chapter 8.

February 19
Lecture 5: Population Composition: Marital Status

February 21, 26
Lecture 6: Sexuality
Readings:
1. Poston/Bouvier, pp. 231-236.
2. Walther, Poston and Gu, "Ecological Analyses of Gay Male and Lesbian Partnering in the Metropolitan United States in 2000" (available on course e-learning page).

3. Poston and Baumle, "Patterns of Asexuality in the United States" (available on course e-learning page).


February 28, March 5
Lecture 7: Population Distribution and Urbanization
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier chapter 11.
2. Wattenberg, chapters 4 and 5.

March 7
First Examination

March 11-15, SPRING BREAK

March 19, 21, 26
Lecture 8: Fertility
2. Wattenberg, chapters 6 and 7.

March 28
Movie: "Kinsey" or "Mona Lisa Smile"

April 2, 4, 9
Lecture 9: Mortality
Readings: 1. Poston/Bouvier, chapter 5

April 11
Movie: "And the Band Played On"

April 16, 18, 23
Lecture 10: Migration
Readings: 1. Pcston/Bouvier, chapters 6 and 7

April 25
Lecture 11: Population Policy and Applications of Demography
Readings: 1. Pcston/Bouvier, chapters 12, 13 and 14
2. Wattenberg, chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

May 3
Second Examination, 1:00 to 3:00 PM

XI. COPYING AND PLAGIARISM AND OTHER ISSUES. The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials I have generated for this class, including but not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, course assignments, review sheets, etc. Also included are the powerpoint slides I will provide to you over email. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy them, unless I expressly grant permission. I do hereby give each of you permission to make one copy of the powerpoint slides and articles for your own use. Making more than one copy is not allowed without my permission.

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom
Cell phones should be turned off during lectures. If a person’s cell phone rings, he/she is expected to turn it off immediately and to leave the classroom; in such an occurrence, the person will be counted as absent for that class.

Viewing your email or texts as well as sending text messages during my lectures or during examinations is strictly prohibited. Persons found to be texting during a lecture will be asked to leave the classroom and will be recorded as absent for that class. Persons found to be texting during an examination will be asked to leave the classroom and will receive a zero on the exam.

No electronic devices (laptop computers, palm pilots, blackberries, tablets, i-phones, translators, calculators, cell phones, etc.) may be used during any lecture sessions or examinations, unless specifically requested in advance by TAMU student services on the student’s behalf, or approved by the instructor.
Scholastic Dishonesty. The Aggie Code of Honor is simple: "Aggies do not lie, cheat, or steal, nor do they tolerate those who do."

Cheating in any form during quizzes, take-home assignments, or exams, will result in a zero for that examination and possible other disciplinary actions per current TAMU Student Rules. Students observed giving or receiving answers during an exam will receive a zero on that examination.

More generally, instances of scholastic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with Section 20 of the TAMU Student Rules. Please inform yourself about the rules regarding cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information, and conspiracy at the website:

http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, one is committing plagiarism if one copies the work of another person and turns it in as his or her own work, even if one should have the permission of that person to do so. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely conducted and communicated.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules at:

http://student-rules.tamu.edu

Look under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

Grade Disclosure. All personal information concerning your performance in this course is covered by federal privacy legislation, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). I am not allowed to provide grades or grade/enrollment status questions to students by telephone or email.

ADA Statement. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for the reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the
Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

XII. Books for Review

Any of the books on this list may be used for the extra-credit book review in this course. The Texas A&M University Library should have most, if not all of them. I do not want more than two students to review the same book. So if you decide to review a book, make your choice and inform me in writing (electronic mail is best) right away. Once a book has been selected by two students, no one else may use it for his/her review.


