

Sociology 315 – Population Problems

Instructor: Dr. Paul Van Auken
Office phone: 424-2038
vanaukep@uwosh.edu

Meets: T/TH 3:00-4:30 p.m., 303 Swart
Office: 309 Swart Hall
Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 a.m.,
T 2:00-3:00 p.m.¹

“One source of public interest in demography is concern over population problems...demographers have learned to appreciate the changeable nature of demographic behavior, and even the changeability of even more transitory definitions of population problems.” Yaukey, Anderton, & Lundquist

Course Description:

As noted in the introduction to the primary text for this course, demography is a social science discipline that attempts to answer questions such as:

- How many people, of what kind, are where?
- How come?
- And so what?

These questions are often tied to so-called population problems, and in this course we will attempt to answer important questions like these, by studying *fertility*, *mortality*, and *immigration* in the U.S. and around the globe. Learning what these components of demography are, how to measure them, and what they mean is critical to not only understanding current affairs but also the future of human populations.

Goals:

Subject Oriented Goals

1. Increase your awareness of the fascinating array of population issues examined in discipline of demography and the different ways of looking at them. Demonstrate your progress toward this goal through thoughtful participation and performance on assignments and exams.
2. Learn to reference demographic concepts when considering demographic issues and current affairs. Demonstrate progress toward this goal by applying social concepts and sociological imagination in your assignments and exams.

Process Oriented Goals

1. Increase your critical thinking skills and broaden your worldview. Demonstrate this by seriously considering multiple viewpoints and perspectives in class discussions, assignments, and exams.
2. Increase active learning by applying course material to real world situations. Demonstrate this through participation in in-class case studies and application to your assignments.
3. Become active in the process of seeking, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Demonstrate this in your assignments by seeking important sources of information and analyzing and synthesizing that information into your work as appropriate.
4. Enhance your writing ability. Demonstrate this in all of your written assignments.

Required Books:

¹ I will be available at other times and on other days by appointment.

You have three required books for this course. The first is a demography textbook by Yaukey, Anderton, & Lundquist that will serve as the foundation for our work. The second is a supplementary book by Frey. For the third book, you will be required to read either the book by Martinez or the book by Setel (we will determine who reads which book early in the semester), both of which are listed as “recommended” at the book store; you will be asked to write a book review about this book. Additional readings are provided on electronic reserve (ER).

Frey, W.H. (2008). *Allyn & Bacon social almanac of the U.S.* Boston: Pearson.²

Martinez, R. (2004). *The new Americans: Seven families journey to another country.* New York: The New Press.

Setel, P.W. (1999). *A plague of paradoxes: AIDS, culture, and demography in Northern Tanzania.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yaukey, D., Anderton, D.L., & Lundquist, J.H. (2007). *Demography: The study of human population.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Assignments and Grading:

Exams: 150 points

Assignments: 60 points

Participation: 50 points

35 points from your instructor

15 points based on peer evaluation of your effort from your discussion group

Book Review: 25 points

Position Paper: 15 points

This is a total of 300 points. There will be no curve. Final grades will be distributed based on the following scale:

A: 93%+

AB: 89-92

B: 83-88

BC: 78-82

C: 70-77

D: 60-69

Exams: There will be three exams in this course, one in the early stages of the semester, another roughly in the middle, and the last at the end of the semester. Each exam will cover roughly one-third of the material presented in the Yaukey et al. text and information from class discussion.

Participation: Class attendance and participation is very important to our success this semester. I expect you to attend class (I will take attendance) and come prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion of the material as appropriate. In addition, you will be expected to collaborate appropriately with your book clubs – which will also serve as your small group discussion teams throughout the semester. Your group will also lead discussion of the readings for one class period during the semester. In the end, 35 points of your grade will be awarded by the instructor (based on your participation in class debates and discussions,

² Note that this is proper APA citation, which I expect you to learn and use in your work.

and attendance), and 15 points will be awarded by the peers in your book club, based on their evaluation of your participation in the club and contribution to discussion.

Assignments: You will complete six graded (ten-point) assignments that will help prepare you for the exams.

Book Review: You will complete 1 short (roughly 2-3 typed double-spaced pages) book review (of either the Martinez or Setel book) worth 25 points. Early on, the class will be divided into book clubs/discussion teams of 5-6 students each. Class time will occasionally be devoted to book club meetings so that you can thoughtfully discuss the book with your peers. I encourage club members to share drafts of reviews, make comments, and generally help one another to produce an appropriate review. Book clubs may schedule out of class meetings as members choose; this is not necessary, but may be helpful. I encourage collaboration throughout the book review process, but the actual paper that you turn in must be written by you alone (i.e. no copying what a peer writes, and of course no plagiarizing something off the internet). Guidelines on the structure and content of the review paper will be provided in class, but you will want to start reading the book right away. Each group will be responsible for leading discussion on the book during the week the review is due. **Due March 13.**

Position Paper: You will complete 1 short (1-2 page), 15-point position paper in which you explain which of the three primary elements of demography (fertility, mortality, and immigration) is most important at this point in time, backing up your assertions with demographic facts and sociological thinking. It will be due towards the end of the semester.

Extra Credit: You will have the opportunity to earn up to five points extra credit by either 1) turning in a copy of a current newspaper or magazine article that relates to the topic matter covered in our course and attaching a one page (double-spaced) reaction to the article; or 2) attending a relevant event/presentation and submitting a summary of the presentation and your reaction to it. It will be graded based on relevance of the article and the thoughtfulness of your response and will be due at the end of the semester.

Submitting work: You will submit all your written work to a dropbox on D2L.

Some Ground Rules:

- Lively debate and discussion will be encouraged and will be the basis for what should be a very interesting and enjoyable class. Note, however, that you will be expected to show respect for the opinions and ideas of others at all times.
- Please let me know ASAP if you have any disabilities or special needs that I should be aware of.
- Make sure your cell phones are turned off before you come to class. If yours rings during class, you will be asked to leave.
- Laptops will not be allowed to be used during class.
- Feel free to email me when you have questions about assignments and to schedule a meeting for a time during my office hours, etc. Please use common sense and moderation in terms of your frequency of emailing and expectations for responses from me.
- Academic dishonesty will absolutely not be tolerated. I expect you to do your own work and properly cite ideas you get from things you read. We will spend time early in the semester talking about proper citation and plagiarism to ensure that we're all on the same page. You will find UW-O rules here: <http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/conduct.htm>.

Course Outline³:

Week 1:

*February 5 session: Intro to the class, discussion of the syllabus.

*February 7 – Please complete *prior* to this session:

- Read Chapter 1 in Yaukey et al.

Week 2:

*February 12 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 2 in Yaukey et al.
- Read O’Keefe, Chapter 1

*February 14 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 1 in Frey
- **Assignment #1 due [via D2L by class time]**

Week 3:

*February 19 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 3 in Yaukey et al.

*February 21 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 3 in Frey
- **Assignment #2 due [via D2L by class time]**

Week 4:

*February 26 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 4 in Yaukey et al.

*February 28 – Please complete prior to this session:

- **Exam #1**

Week 5:

*March 4 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 5 in Yaukey et al.
- Read Chapter 4 in Frey

*March 6 – Please complete prior to this session:

³ The schedule is subject to change, and additional readings may be added.

- Read Chapter 5 in Frey
- **Assignment #3 due [via D2L by class time]**

Week 6:

- *March 11 – Please complete prior to this session:
- Read Chapter 6 in Yaukey et al.

- *March 13 – Discussion of Book Review Books:
- **Book Review due** [via email prior to start of class]

Week 7:

- *March 18 – Discussion of Book Review books
- *March 20 – Lab: Evan will be there. Possibly a film (or two)

Week 8: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 9:

- *April 1 session - Please complete prior to this session:
- Read Chapter 7 in Yaukey et al.

- *April 3 session – Please complete prior to this session:
- Read Frey Chapter 6
- **Assignment #4 due [via D2L by class time]**

Week 10:

- *April 8 session – Please complete prior to this session:
- Read Chapter 8 in Yaukey et al.

- *April 10 session – **Exam #2**

Week 11:

- *April 15 –
- Read Chapter 9 in Yaukey et al.

- *April 17 – Please complete prior to this session:
- Read Chapter 7 in Frey

Week 12:

- *April 22 – Please complete prior to this session:

- State of the World – State of the World [ER]
- State of the World – Chapter 1 [ER]

*April 24:

- Read Chapter 8 in Frey
- Read Bell, Chapter 4 [ER]

Week 13:

*April 29 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 10 in Yaukey et al.
- **Assignment #5 due [via D2L by class time]**

*May 1 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 9 in Frey
- Crossing the Border, Chapter 2

Week 14:

*May 6 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 11 in Yaukey et al.
- **Assignment #6 due [via D2L by class time]**

*May 8 – Please complete prior to this session:

- Read Chapter 2 in Frey
- O'Keefe – Chapter 12

Week 15:

*May 13 – **Exam #3**

*May 15 – Course wrap-up