

Economic Demography and Sustainable Development

ECON 496-04

DICKINSON COLLEGE

SPRING 2021 (hybrid remote/in-person format)

Professor: Tony Underwood

Office: Althouse 216

Office Hours ([via Zoom using this link](#) all semester and also in-person beginning in Week 3):
Monday, 3-4pm; Wednesday & Thursday, 11am-12pm ET; or by appointment.

Email: underwoa@dickinson.edu

I check my email very frequently. If you are unable to meet with me during my scheduled office hours, please email me to schedule an alternative time to meet. My door is (almost) always open!

Class Meets: Tuesday, 1:30 – 4:30pm, Althouse 110 ([if attending remotely use this Zoom link](#))

Prerequisites: ECON 268 and ECON 278 and (ECON 288 or ECON 298)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Demography is the study of the determinants and consequences of population change. It is concerned with effectively everything that influences or can be influenced by population size, population growth or decline, population processes, population spatial distribution, population structure, and population characteristics. As we go from the historical pattern of high birth and death rates to the increasingly common pattern of low birth and death rates, we pass through the demographic transition. This is actually a whole set of transitions relating to changes in health and mortality, fertility, migration, age structure, urbanization, and family and household structure. Each of these separate, but interrelated, changes have serious consequences for the way societies and economies work and the natural environment they are built upon.

Thus, the objectives of this course are threefold: (1) to develop knowledge of the underlying demographic theories explaining these transitions; (2) to use this knowledge to understand the interrelationships between these transitions; and (3) to determine the implications of these transitions for sustainable development, that is, for social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Some questions we will consider include (but are not limited to): Why are so many adults living alone? Why are women having fewer babies? What impact do sub-replacement birth rates have on economies and societies? What role do the rights of women have in demographic transitions? Why are adults waiting so long to get married or not getting married at all? What happens when the population ages? Why are more and more people choosing to live in cities? Is this expected growth of cities sustainable?

Often for familiarity and simplicity we will use data and readings focused on the United States, but since these transitions have evolved in ways that vary from one part of the world to another, this course will often have a necessarily international focus. Naturally, given the expansive subject matter, this course will require much from you – it is reading and writing intensive.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Textbooks & Website:

Required

Klinenberg, Eric. (2012). *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*. New York: Penquin. ISBN: 9780143122777

Recommended (I'll post any required chapters on Moodle)

Weeks, John R. (2021). *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues*. 13th edition. Cengage. ISBN: 9780357360576

Other required readings will be made available via Moodle.

Moodle (via Gateway)

Most materials for this course – syllabus, reading assignments, writing prompts, etc. will be available via *Moodle*. You should check *Moodle* regularly as I will post any additional supplemental material there.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation & Discussion Leaders

Because this is a seminar, each one of us is responsible for contributing to the learning that takes place in class. Thus, active participation is required. Participation in class means both sharing your ideas (by talking) and respecting and engaging the ideas of your classmates (by actively listening and responding). I keep track of all class participation.

You should come to class prepared to constructively discuss and analyze the course material; you should also have specific questions—designed to spark productive discussion—to ask our class. Constructive class participation also includes striving to be honest, thoughtful, open-minded, and respectful of others, including listening respectfully to others. Also, it is important that we don't fall into the trap of essentialism. When it comes to demography even similar statistics on paper can generate significantly different experiences. In other words, do not assume what anyone else's identity or experience is and do not stereotype anyone. Together, let us build an inclusive learning environment.

Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You come to class having done the day's reading.
- You bring the readings (and course work, if any) to class with you.
- You may miss one class during the semester without being penalized. The final grade will be reduced by one-half step for each unexcused absence after the first unexcused absence. Recall, since we meet only once a week, missing class is analogous to missing a week of class.
- You come to class on time.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation in a way that is respectful of others.
- While personal opinions, anecdotes, and reflections are welcome, you must offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you are expected to root your comments in the course material we are discussing. In other words, you must demonstrate you have read the assigned material.

- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals.
- You are present and engaged in every class i.e. you are not texting or on Twitter and you do not make a regular habit of excusing yourself in the middle of class to take a phone call, etc.

You should complete any and all assignments that will be made available through Moodle or listed below. Each assignment is due in the beginning of class unless otherwise stated. Please see the course schedule for assignment due dates. (Please note that the schedule is tentative to accommodate our pace. You will be notified of any changes to this schedule ahead of time.)

Discussion Leaders

Throughout the semester pairs of students (as assigned) will take the responsibility of carefully reading the week's articles and facilitating class discussion. During class, these students will be responsible for helping me guide discussion and will be expected to be very familiar with all of the week's readings. Discussion leaders are required to meet with me one to two days before to brainstorm about discussion topics and leadership. You should come to class prepared to discuss and analyze the readings and help guide class discussion. Things to consider when preparing for discussion (these guidelines are for all students, not just for discussion leaders):

- What are the main points of the readings? What do these readings have in common? How are they different in terms of their main points and/or their approach? How are these readings related to course material discussed earlier in the semester?
- What important aspects of the course material are worthy of further discussion?
- What ideas strike you as particularly interesting or relevant?
- What would you most like your fellow students to address?

We will discuss expectations for discussion leaders in more details in class and I will provide a rubric for assigning discussion leader grades soon.

Writing Assignments on Readings

Students are required to complete a writing assignment for most class periods. Writing prompts will be administered the week prior (typically the Wednesday after class). The ability to distill what you have read, to critically analyze arguments, and to express oneself clearly and concisely in written work is invaluable to your success in any future endeavor. These writing assignments should be no more than two pages, single-spaced, using 12-point font and one-inch margins. Your writing assignment grade will be assessed according to the following rubric:

- You addressed all questions and handed in the assignment on time (*1 point*)
- You have addressed all the questions in the prompt accurately and completely (*1 point*)
- You are thoughtful and compelling and there are few (if any) mechanical errors (*1 point*)
- Your writing is academic in nature and uses in-text citations where appropriate (*1 point*)

If your grade is 4 points, this will be indicated by ✓++; 3 points = ✓+; 2 points = ✓; 1 point = ✓-If your grade is a zero please see me during my office hours as soon as possible. Late assignments automatically earn a zero and your assignment will be penalized one point for every half-page beyond two pages. These writing assignments will comprise 35% of your final course grade.

Papers

Students will be required to submit two major papers for this course: (1) a personal demographic analysis and (2) a cross-national demographic comparison.

Paper #1 is a variation on the theme of tracing one's roots, which is a form of family reconstitution long familiar to historical demographers. The twist in this project is that you need to place the demographic behavior of your own families in the context of the broader demographic and social trends taking place over time. What I am looking for in this assignment is *your story*. Is your story consistent with – what we come to call – the first and second demographic transition? If so, why? If not, why not? What has shaped your story? Is it consistent with the demographic trends we've discussed? For now, you should begin to gather information immediately from your families, going back at least three generations (to your great-grandparents). Students who do not have access to data from their own families can "adopt" a family for which a genealogy has been published or that you otherwise have access to. A detailed prompt will be administered shortly.

Paper #2 is a cross-national demographic comparison. Each student will pick one less developed country and one more developed country. Preferably these are countries in which you have some personal interest, either by way of ancestry or travel or having read about them. You should begin thinking about which countries you may want to focus on now so that you can begin searching for data sources. A detailed prompt will be administered in a few weeks.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading System: Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Assignment/Task	Percentage
Class Participation	10%
Discussion Leader	10%
Writing Assignments	35%
Paper #1 – Personal Analysis	20%
Paper #2 – Demographic Comparison	25%
Total	100%

The grading scale will be as follows:

- A: 92.5 – 100%
- A-: 89.5 – 92.4%
- B+: 86.5 – 89.4%
- B: 82.5 – 86.4%
- B-: 79.5 – 82.4%
- C+: 76.5 – 79.4%
- C: 72.5 – 76.4%
- C-: 69.5 – 72.4%
- D+: 66.5 – 69.5%
- D: 62.5 – 66.4%
- D-: 59.5 – 62.4%
- F: 59.4% or below

Classroom Environment:

In the classroom, during lectures and discussions, the goal is to develop and maintain an environment of mutual respect: respect for me, respect for your fellow classmates, and my respect for you. What this means is that I will do all I can to teach effectively and listen to your questions, comments, jokes, or complaints; and respond as best I can. While at the same time you listen while I am talking, avoid talking amongst yourselves, keep your cell phones away, and keep laptop usage to in-class topics. If we all abide by these policies we can learn a great deal, have enlightening discussions, and hopefully have a little fun along the way!

Academic Integrity:

Students have an obligation to integrity in all academic work. In this course, submission of written work to be counted toward your course grade automatically implies a personal pledge that you have neither given nor received unapproved information about the assignment. Violation of this pledge in even the slightest degree is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in a failing grade for the assignment in question, an F for the course, suspension, expulsion, or other consequences. In other words, no cheating, it's just not worth it!

Accommodations for Disabilities:

Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to www.dickinson.edu/access, email access@dickinson.edu, call (717) 245-1734, or go to ADS in Old West (lower level), Room 005.

If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can meet to review your Accommodation Letter and complete your Blue Forms. If you will need test proctoring from ADS, remember that you will need to provide them with at least one week's notice.

Classroom Recording:

This class, including lectures, classroom discussions and laboratory sessions, may be audio recorded as an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If this is the case, the course instructor will inform all members of the class. The course instructor may, for pedagogical and/or assessment purposes, require that you be audio or video recorded during specific course activities. If such activities are a part of this course, this syllabus will indicate the purposes for recording, when recording will occur, how recordings will be used and how long they will be retained. In addition, the instructor will clearly announce to all participants when the recording is starting and when it ends. Audio or video recording of any lecture, classroom discussion, or laboratory session in this course other than for the above purposes is strictly prohibited and may be a violation of Pennsylvania's Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance law (18 Pa. C.S. Section 5701 et seq.).

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

(some scheduled readings may change – see weekly plans and Moodle for updates)

January 26: Introduction to Demography

- Weeks, Chapter 1
- [Human Population Through Time](#) (video: 6:24)

February 2: Population Trends

- Weeks, Chapter 2
- Pew Research Center. (2019). [6 demographic trends shaping the U.S. and the world in 2019](#). FactTank.
- Iceland, J. (2014). Introduction. In: *A Portrait of America: The Demographic Perspective*. Oakland: University of California Press.

February 9: Population and Sustainability

- Weeks, Chapter 10 (in 13th edition) or Chapter 11 (in 12th edition)
- NY Times (2015): [The Unrealized Horrors of the Population Bomb](#) (video: 12:56)
- Pearson, C. (2015). *On the Cusp: From Population Boom to Bust*. New York: Oxford.
 - Chapter 2: The Long and Baleful Shadow of Thomas Robert Malthus.
 - Chapter 3: Malthus Redux.
 - Chapter 7: The Upside of Downsizing.

February 16: Demographic Perspectives: Theory and Reality

- Weeks, Chapter 3
- Lee, R. (2003). The demographic transition: three centuries of fundamental change. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(4), 167-190.
- Iceland, J. (2014). Chapter 1: American Demographic Growth. In: *A Portrait of America: The Demographic Perspective*. Oakland: University of California Press.

February 23: The Health and Mortality Transition

- Weeks, Chapter 4 (in 13th edition) or Chapter 5 (in 12th edition)
- Cutler, D., Deaton, A., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). The determinants of mortality. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(3), 97-120.
- Case, A., & Deaton, A. (2017). Mortality and Morbidity in the 21st Century. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 397-443.

March 2: The Fertility Transition

- Weeks, Chapter 5 (in 13th edition) or Chapter 6 (in 12th edition)
- Guinnane, T. W. (2011). The historical fertility transition: A guide for economists. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49(3), 589-614.
- Feyrer, J., Sacerdote, B., & Stern, A. D. (2008). Will the stork return to Europe and Japan? Understanding fertility within developed nations. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(3), 3.
- Livingston, G. (2019). Is U.S. fertility at an all-time low? Two of three measures point to yes. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/22/u-s-fertility-rate-explained/>.
- Kearney, M. and Levine, P. (2020). The coming COVID-19 baby bust: Update. *Brookings Institution*. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/12/17/the-coming-covid-19-baby-bust-update/>

March 9: The Second Demographic Transition

- Weeks, Chapter 9 (in 13th edition) or Chapter 10 (in 12th edition)
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2014). The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(51), 18112-18115.
- Lundberg, S., & Pollak, R. A. (2007). The American family and family economics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2), 3-26.
- Klinenberg, E. (2012). *Going Solo*. p. 1-84

March 16: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 23: The Household and Family Transition

- Klinenberg, E. (2012). *Going Solo*. p. 85-184
- Goldscheider, F., Bernhardt, E., & Lappegård, T. (2015). The gender revolution: A framework for understanding changing family and demographic behavior. *Population and Development Review*, 41(2), 207-239.
- Stevenson, B., & Wolfers, J. (2007). Marriage and divorce: Changes and their driving forces. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(2), 27-52.

March 30: The Household and Family Transition: Implications for Sustainability

- Klinenberg, E. (2012). *Going Solo*. p. 185-233
- Dunkelman, M. (2011). The transformation of American community. *National Affairs*, 8, 135-51.
- Lundberg, S., Pollak, R. A., & Stearns, J. (2016). Family inequality: Diverging patterns in marriage, cohabitation, and childbearing. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(2), 79-102.
- Underwood, A., & Zahran, S. (2015). The carbon implications of declining household scale economies. *Ecological Economics*, 116, 182-190.

PAPER #1 DUE

April 6: The Age Transition

- Weeks, Chapter 8
- Pearson, C. (2015). Chapter 8: Downsizing. In: *On the Cusp: From Population Boom to Bust*. New York: Oxford.

April 13: The Age Transition: Implications for Sustainability

- Pearson, C. Chapter 9: Aging and the Generational Bargain. In: *On the Cusp: From Population Boom to Bust*. New York: Oxford.
- Maestas, N., & Zissimopoulos, J. (2010). How longer work lives ease the crunch of population aging. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 24(1), 139-160.

April 20: The Urban Transition (Urbanization) & Demographic Inversion

- Weeks, Chapter 7 (in 13th edition) or Chapter 9 (in 12th edition)
- Iceland, J. (2014). Chapter 7: Migration and Residential Segregation. In: *A Portrait of America: The Demographic Perspective*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Ehrenhalt, A. (2012). Prologue: Trading Places. p. 3-21. In: *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American city*.

April 27: The Urban Transition: Implications for Sustainability

- Bloom, D. E., Canning, D., & Fink, G. (2008). Urbanization and the wealth of nations. *Science*, 319(5864), 772-775.
- Glaeser, E. (2011). Conclusion: Flat World, Tall City. In: *Triumph of the City*, New York: Penguin.
- Fremstad, A., Underwood, A., & Zahran, S. (2018). The environmental impact of sharing: household and urban economies in CO₂ emissions. *Ecological Economics*, 145, 137-147.

May 4: The Big Picture

- Readings TBA

PAPER #2 DUE: Friday, May 14, 11:59pm ET