

POPULATION & SOCIETY
Sociology 3650 – 090
Summer 2020

COURSE OVERVIEW

The number of people living on earth continues to grow. Not only that, the age and sex composition of the earth's population are 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 phenomena. These profound effects create 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. In addition to an intro and final, the course is divided into six primary learning modules: 1) Study of Populations, 2) Fertility, 3) Mortality, 4) Migration, 5) Population Change and 6) Population Distribution.

Semester Period

May 11 – July 31

This is a fully online course.

We will not meet in person.

While you obviously have the freedom to access the course content and complete the required assignments on your own time, there is a predetermined schedule that spreads the introduction of new material and the completion of assignments across the full semester. **This is not a self-paced course.** Canvas does not offer instructors the ability to allow individual students to work ahead and having multiple modules open at the same time inevitably results in chaos, confusion, and tears (usually my own).

Instructor

Zubi Ahmmad, Ph.D. Candidate

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Office Hours & Consultation

When questions arise, students are expected to review the syllabus and online resources first. Most answers can be found therein. Should a student require additional information from instructors, the first line of communication should be carried out via Canvas's direct messaging function. I will do my best to reply within 24 hours (see below for a more detailed explanation of my email policy).

Learning Outcomes

Successful completion of SOC 3650 will satisfy the following University of Utah general education requirements: Quantitative Reasoning B (**QB**), as well as the following bachelor degree requirements: International (**IR**) requirement and the BS Quantitative Intensive (**QI**) requirement. This course will address the following approved learning outcomes: Inquiry & Analysis, Quantitative Literacy, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, Civic Knowledge & Engagement, and Intercultural Knowledge & Competence.

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.
- Build awareness of how individual lives and population characteristics are interdependent

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

- Develop a critical understanding of the source, validity, and production of demographic data.
- Calculate and interpret quantitative measures that describe populations and population change.
- Learn how to communicate about the quantitative characteristics of populations & their significance.

Outcomes Assessment

This course is designed to be highly **interactive, integrative, and applied**. A variety of teaching methods will be used, including online readings, recorded lectures, documentaries, and news media.

Assessment of learning outcomes will be done through assignments, quizzes, and discussions. Assignments are intended to help students learn how to compute and apply

quantitative data to better understand population dynamics in a real-world global setting. Quizzes are used to assess a student's understanding and comprehension of the course materials and concepts. Interactive discussion activities encourage students to apply what they learn to current events in the US and around the world.

Students are expected to be **fully engaged and participatory** in their own learning throughout the semester. It is estimated that students will spend approximately 10 hours per week engaging with the online course content. Instructors (professor & TA) will be **responsive** to individual and collective learning goals by providing opportunities for virtual office hours, timely feedback on assignments, and a variety of teaching materials to help the student gain mastery in the subject area.

Required Materials

All students need access to a calculator that is capable of performing logs and exponents (i.e., pretty much every calculator ever). If you have a smartphone, you're probably all set.

Also, all students are encouraged in the strongest possible terms to procure a copy of the following textbook:

Poston & Bouvier's Population & Society: An Introduction to Demography (2nd edition)
Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 110764593X

While it is certainly *possible* to succeed in this course without purchasing the textbook, I believe that doing so unnecessarily raises the degree of difficulty, particularly in an online setting. Before you decide one way or the other, you should consider the following:

- The quizzes that you will take in conjunction with each of the seven modules are timed. Given that the vast majority of the quiz questions refer to the subject matter discussed in the text, you may find that having the book in front of you whilst taking the quizzes makes them less painful.
- The authors do a better-than-average job of explaining the quantitative aspects of this subject matter (they even offer a few shortcuts), which can come in handy for those of you suffering from math anxiety.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS & RESOURCES

Spend Time Online.

Regular participation and engagement with the online material (via Canvas) are required. Students are expected to log-in and interact with our course webpage on Canvas regularly and frequently. Be sure to check the "Announcements" section more-or-less daily; this is where all important, course-related information will be posted and archived.

Be Respectful.

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.” Students are also expected to follow general “netiquette” guidelines to create a supportive online community. In other words, if any of our discussion threads start to resemble the 8chan board of an unhinged teenager, I'm going to be very, very upset.

Don't Cheat.

It is assumed that all work you submit is your own. When you have used the ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of misconduct 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> ([Links to an external site.](#)). As far as this class is concerned, the first occurrence of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade on the assignment in question; the second will result in a failing grade for the course as a whole.

Keep an Open Mind.

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.

Take a Deep Breath. (You will be doing math!)

Assignments will require students to do calculations, as well as interpretations of numerical data (the quizzes, however, are entirely math-free). There are no formal prerequisites to enroll in this course. However, students are expected to be familiar with algebraic manipulation of formulas, calculations involving logs and exponents, and basic arithmetic functions including addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. Resources and practice problems will be provided, but students will be expected to do math within this course.

What weird, idiosyncratic policies do you have as an instructor?

I'm so glad you asked! Here's what you need to be aware of:

- I am aware that my class is not the center of your personal universe, just as I am aware that your busy lives will occasionally restrict your ability to participate fully in this course. It is your responsibility, however, to inform me of any challenges you are facing. In general, students are expected to speak with the instructor ASAP if there is any issue or concern that may impede your ability to complete the requirements of the course.

- I do my absolute best to respond to emails within 24 hours, though additional time may be required if your query requires considerable thought and/or a lengthy explanation. Or if you email me on a Friday night.
- With the previous point in mind, I do not respond to emails within 24 hours of exam or assignment due dates. Any questions or requests for clarification should be made well in advance. In other words, you can be the kind of student who requires a lot of help from the instructor (and that's totally fine), or you can be the kind of student who leaves everything until the last minute (and that's also fine), but you cannot be both simultaneously.
- Also, lately, I've been making an effort to only respond to student emails when I'm in a good mood, which means that you might have to wait a little bit longer for a response than you might like (depending on how my week is going, naturally). The upside, however, is that I'll be much more likely to give you what you want.
- I do not accept late work without prior approval, though I'm generally pretty generous in giving out prior approval.
- All assignments and exams must be picked up within six weeks of the end of the semester. After six weeks, any student submissions that have not been claimed will be shredded and subsequently recycled.
- I reserve the right to amend this document at any time and for any reason.

Where can I go for help and/or support?

Here are the resources available at the University of Utah to support students with specific circumstances:

Wellness Statement: Personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructors before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the course-assigned SSA or the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Americans with Disabilities Act. 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 this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the

Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

University Safety Statement

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

LGBT Resource Center: The U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5 pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/>. Please also let us know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language. If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu/>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). Please let us know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class

Student Names & Personal Pronouns:

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the student profile section of your CIS account). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, group projects, etc. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes (and update CIS) so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun will be respected.

GRADES & GRADING

There are three different types of activities that will be used to assess student learning:

Assignments, which are problem sets wherein you practice calculating and interpreting population statistics

Discussions, which are interactive assignments wherein you discuss with other students the application and implications of population concepts and issues

Quizzes (and a Final Exam), which are composed of multiple-choice, T/F, and essay questions used to assess your understanding of major concepts and themes presented in the course.

The table below shows the points associated with each individual assignment, as well as the total points associated with each learning module and type of assessment activity.

	Assignments	Discussions	Quizzes/Exams	Total Points
1. Intro		Hello! <i>5 points</i>	Quiz #1 <i>15 points</i>	20
2. Population Studies	World Populations <i>25 points</i>	Population Statistics <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #2 <i>20 points</i>	55
3. Fertility	Fertility <i>30 points</i>	Family Planning <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #3 <i>20 points</i>	60
4. Mortality	Mortality <i>25 points</i>	Population Health <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #4 <i>20 points</i>	55
5. Migration	Migration <i>20 points</i>	Refugee vs. Immigrant <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #5 <i>20 points</i>	50
6. Population Change	Population Growth <i>30 points</i>	Should We Panic? <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #6 <i>20 points</i>	60
7. Population Distribution		What's a Solution? <i>10 points</i>	Quiz #7 <i>20 points</i>	30
8. Final	Self Evaluation <i>20 points</i>	Current Events <i>20 points</i>	Exam <i>30 points</i>	70
Total Points	150	85	165	400

Course Letter Grades

Course grades are determined by the sum of individual scores from

6 Assignments	150 points	37.5% of the final grade
8 Discussion Activities	85 points	21.25% of the final grade
7 Quizzes + 1 Exam	165 points	41.25% of the final grade

Letter grades will be awarded as follows:

Points	Percent	Grade
370-400	93 -100%	A
358-369	90 - 92%	A-
346-357	87 – 89%	B+
330-345	83 – 86%	B
318-329	80 – 82%	B-
306-314	77 – 79%	C+
290-305	73 – 76%	C
278-289	70 – 72%	C-
238-277	60 – 69%	D
0-237	0 – 59%	E

General Grading Policies

The instructor will post all assignment and exam grades to the course Canvas website within 7 days of submission

It is the student's responsibility to report and discuss grade discrepancies with the instructor as soon as humanly possible.

The instructor will entertain grade change requests, but such discussions should occur at least 24 hours after the assignment/exam was handed back. (i.e., take a day to reflect on the comments provided and review answer keys prior to disputing a grade)

No late assignments are accepted.

No extra credit is available.