

SOC 3650 Population and Society

Department of Sociology Spring Semester 2025

Online Course

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Office Hours: by Appointment
(Thursdays between 1pm – 4pm only)

Pre-Requisites: None

COURSE SUMMARY

The number of people living on Earth is growing exponentially. In addition, the composition of our population is constantly changing as differential trends in fertility, mortality, and migration cause some populations to grow while others shrink. These shifts exert powerful influences on society across a variety of domains—economic development, environmental degradation, and health care, to name a few. The widespread consequences of population change demand that we endeavor to understand the forces behind such change better. 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.

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's 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.' In fulfillment of the **QB-Quantitative Reasoning & QI-Quantitative Intensive**, the course involves the calculation and interpretation of population statistics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Learn to interpret & apply global demographic data collected across international settings.
- Recognize and discuss the extent to which fertility, mortality, and migration patterns vary worldwide, and cultivate sensitivity to how variations in cultural, economic, and historical factors contribute to such variation.
- Build awareness of and reflect on how individual lives and population characteristics are interdependent.
- Evaluate demographic data sources based on validity, reliability, and trustworthiness.

- Calculate and interpret quantitative measures that describe populations and population change.
- Learn how to communicate about the quantitative characteristics of populations & their significance.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- You will need access to a calculator that can do logs and exponents. Most calculators with more than four functions can do this, including smartphone calculators. Please try turning your iPhone sideways; that should display more options, including logs.
- Microsoft Excel or a similar spreadsheet program (e.g., Numbers on Mac, Google Sheets, Libre Office Calc) can be an excellent and useful tool for this class. This is not required but will make your life easier. If you do not have access to one of these and would like to get it, please contact me.
- There is no required text for this course.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

This course is designed to be **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 Data Analysis Assignments (40%), Content Quizzes (25%), Discussions (30%), and a Self-Evaluation assignment (5%)—making 100% of the grade for this course. *Please note this online course does NOT have exams or a final exam; students' final scores will consist of the sum acquired through the outlined percentages above.* There are NO extra points planned for this course, but I may enable towards the end of the semester the opportunity to get 5% bonus points through taking an anonymous Course Evaluation survey; if this is enabled, an official statement will be posted to Canvas under Announcements. Assignments, which I recommend you complete in groups, 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, which must be completed on your own, 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. I expect you to be invested in your own learning experience throughout the semester. As is the case with many online courses, what you get out of this course depends largely on what you are willing to put in. I imagine you'll end up spending approximately 10 hours per week slogging through the online course content. I will be responsive to individual and collective learning goals by providing opportunities for office hours, timely feedback on assignments, and a variety of teaching materials to help the student gain mastery in the subject area.

Canvas Time Zone Information

To ensure you are viewing due dates and times correctly, as well as events in the calendar, set your student Canvas time zone to your current location by following this [guide](#). If you do not change your time zone, all due dates and times listed in Canvas default to Mountain Time. Content written by instructors, such as office hours written in the syllabus, is in Mountain Time unless stated otherwise.

ONLINE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Instructor Expectations

Your course instructor is an expert in the topics you will learn about this semester. Your instructor is your

mentor and facilitator of the classroom experience and is committed to the following expectations for this course:

- The instructor will design the course to include lectures, reading materials, and assignments that will challenge students and provide them with opportunities to learn and practice course content.
- Although this online course includes pre-recorded lectures, it is **not** a class that is run “automatically” by technology. The instructor will interact with the class via announcements, virtual office hours, emails/the Canvas **Inbox**, feedback on assignments, and comments on lecture bulletin boards, among other methods.
- The instructor will respond to emails in a timely fashion. “Timely” in this instance means within 24 hours, not including weekends and holidays.
- The instructor will be available for individual consultations via virtual office hours (by appointment only, Thursdays between 1pm-4pm) and email. Students will not be required to come to campus in order to meet with the instructor.
- The instructor will provide feedback on the assignments in a timely manner.
- The instructor will follow all official University of Utah policies regarding conduct in the classroom, incomplete grades, and accommodations. Accommodations will be considered on an individual basis and only with required documentation.

Student Expectations

Though the online format allows students greater flexibility to complete their work, this course does have a structure and timeline, including due dates for course assignments. As such, the following is expected of all students in this class:

- Students will log in to the course a minimum of 3 times per week.
- Students may be expected to work with classmates; however, students are not expected to interact with their classmates in person. A good alternative to meeting in person would be online video conferencing, which allows students to find a time to meet that works best for their schedule. Depending on the assignment, students can also choose to interact with their classmates with whatever technology they are most comfortable with (Groupme, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etc).
- To do well in online courses, students must be self-motivated, organized, and willing to stay on top of their schedule. Students should take control of their learning while in this course.
- Students will regularly check course announcements. The **Announcements** area is the instructor’s official means of communication when distributing information to the entire class.
- Students will update their Canvas settings to ensure they receive timely notifications from the course.
- If students have any questions, are struggling with course materials, or need further assistance from their instructor, they will take the initiative to contact their instructor via the **Inbox** feature in Canvas or via email.
- Email isn’t perfect; sometimes, messages sent to instructors are lost before they are read. If you do not hear back from your instructor 3 days after sending a message, please contact your instructor again.
- Students will engage with the course, students, and the instructor in a respectful and professional manner at all times.

Netiquette

Students are expected to follow the [core rules of netiquette](#) at all times while participating in the class, interacting with other students, and communicating with the course instructor.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Semester Grading Scheme

As mentioned above, your final grade will be based on a combination of discussions, assignments, and quizzes. The point totals for each assignment and the semester grade scheme are available on Canvas in the **Grades** area.

Course Outline & Assignments

The course is organized into 8 modules, with a break included that coincides with Spring break. The first module is a one-week introduction, and the following 7 modules are all 2 weeks. Assignments, Content Quizzes, and Discussions are distributed as follows:

Module	Assignment	Quiz	Discussion
Course Orientation		Syllabus and Class Policies	Introduce Yourself!
What is Demography?	Developing a Fact-Based Worldview	Intro to Demography	Population Facts
Fertility	Calculating and Interpreting Fertility Measures	Fertility	Fertility in the News
Mortality	Calculating and Interpreting Mortality Measures	Mortality	The Future of Mortality
Migration	Migration Streams	Migration	Migration in the News
Population Age and Aging	An Aging World	Population Aging	Reimagining Life After 65
Population Change and Growth	Population Growth	Population Growth	Should We Panic?
Population Policy		Population Policy	What's the Solution?
The End			Current Events

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH GRADING SCALE

A	100%–94%	A-	93.9%–90%		
B+	89.9%–87%	B	86.9%–84%	B-	83.9%–80%
C+	79.9%–77%	C	76.9–74%	C-	73.9%–70%
D+	69.9%–67%	D	66.9%–64%	D-	63.9%–60%
E	59.9%–0%				

COURSE POLICIES

Technology Issues and Tech Help

Your instructor has invested time before the start of the semester to ensure that the technologies used in this online class will operate smoothly. Nevertheless, technology doesn't always do what we want it to do! As

such, this course has the following expectations regarding tech problems:

- Students are required to contact the instructor immediately when they notice broken links or inaccessible files in the course. Links and files are assumed to work unless students indicate otherwise. Points lost on assignments due to inaccessible links and files cannot be made up if students do not notify the instructor of the problem prior to the assignment's due date.
- The instructor is committed to fixing broken links and inaccessible files as soon as possible after being notified by the students. In the case that there will be a significant delay before these items can be fixed, the instructor will post an announcement to let the class know about the problem and to describe any alternate files/links or alternate due dates for assignments, if applicable, that students should be aware of.
- Students are responsible for submitting all assignments and activities by their due dates. In the very rare case that technical problems prevent a student from submitting an assignment, students are required to—
 - Immediately contact their instructor via email or the Canvas Inbox to let them know about the problem and to submit a copy of their assignment as an attachment (where possible).
 - Then, immediately contact the Canvas help desk to troubleshoot and resolve the problem.
 - Submit an email updating the instructor on whether the problem was resolved and of any additional steps the student or instructor needs to take to get the assignment properly submitted to Canvas.
- It is not appropriate to send an email to your instructor informing them about tech problems after an assignment's due date.
- Students are expected to read all assignment instructions and to submit work in the required file formats. Work submitted as improper file formats will not be considered to have been handed in on time. The instructor will only grade work submitted using the proper file format.
- It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the appropriate help desk to troubleshoot and resolve tech problems in the course.

24/7 help is available to all students via the **Help** button in the far-left Canvas menu. For more detailed information about getting tech help, please review the information on the [Tech Help](#) page of the course.

Late Assignments

- *Late Work:* Unless you have prior approval for turning in an assignment late. Late work will be penalized by 3% per day, down to a minimum of 61%.

If you turn in an assignment shortly after the deadline, please ask me to override the automated late penalty. I know many of you will procrastinate and work right up to the wire, and while I do not think this is a great strategy, I would prefer you take your time on an assignment and turn it in slightly late rather than rush just to beat the deadline.

A note on Content

Simply put, this course deals with subjects (i.e., abortion, birth control, and/or migration) that elicit strong reactions in many students. In spite of their controversial nature, however, such phenomena play an important role in population change, and you will be required to analyze each in terms of both variation over time and potential causal factors. If you are unable or unwilling to discuss such issues in a rational, polite manner, I

strongly recommend you enroll in a different course.

Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also adjust the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be posted to Canvas under Announcements.

Institutional Policies

All students and instructors are expected to adhere to the following university policies:

The 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.

Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

University Safety Statement

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, 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 (Links to an external site.).

Addressing 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).

Drop/Withdrawal

Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A "W" grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade "W" is not used in calculating the student's GPA. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for the last day to withdraw from term, first and second session classes.

Deadlines for courses with irregular start and end dates policy:

<https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/miscellaneous.php>

Plagiarism/Cheating

It is assumed that all work submitted to your 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, and/or failure in the course. 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 sanctions, see the Student Code:
<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

Wellness Statement

Your 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 instructor or TA before issues become problems.

For helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Veterans Support Center

The Veterans Support Center is a "one stop shop" for student veterans to find services, support, advocacy, and camaraderie. They are located in the Park Building Room 201.

You can visit their website for more information about their services and support at:
<http://veteranscenter.utah.edu>

LGBT Resource Center

The University of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 of the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm.

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>.

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:

Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu>)

Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu>)

English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli>)



About the U

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

CSBS Emergency Action Plan

Not every online student comes to campus, but some do. Familiarize yourself with the [CSBS Emergency Action Plan](#) before you come to campus.