

# SOC 007–401: Population and Society

Fall Semester 2005

Tuesday & Thursday, 1:30–3:00 PM in 286-7 McNeil

Hans-Peter Kohler\*

September 8, 2005

## 1 Course Description

Life is characterized by interactions with populations at the local, national and global level. The size, composition and structure of these populations affects almost every aspect of our lives. At the same time, the populations surrounding us—and their changes over time and space—are the result of a myriad of individual decisions that are taken within socioeconomic contexts that may be very similar or strikingly different to our own. This interaction between demographic behavior, population and social change is the focus of this course. Population size and structure, for instance, importantly determine the need for resource allocations of governments, families and individuals, and they affect living conditions, income distributions, and the technology that we have at our disposal. Interactions within and between populations may have shaped our life-histories, and our ability to survive and become a centenarian several decades from today. Demographic changes have also a profound effect on how individuals plan and realize their goals and/or dreams at every state of their life: for instance, whether, when and why we marry or have children, how we behave within partnerships, or how we plan and prepare for our retirement. Population changes also shape political systems and affect the economic vitality of countries. Not surprisingly, population changes feature prominently in important national and international debates, including the support of the rapidly growing elderly population in the United States and many other developed countries, the consequences of the AIDS epidemic on families and societies in Africa or other developing countries, or the implications of differential population growth rates and age-structures among countries on their international role and influence. *Population literacy* is therefore an important part of an individual's knowledge to understand current social, economic and political debates. In addition, population literacy is essential for yourself as you think about planning *your own life* in terms of human capital investments, marriage, fertility, labor force participation, saving, migration, and many related aspects!

Sociology 007-401 *Population and Society* is an introduction to the discipline of *Demography* that investigates the above issues and related topics. During this course, for instance, we will discuss (a) the demographic, social and economic determinants of fertility, health, mortality and related demographic aspects, and (b) the effects of population size, composition and structure on economic and social conditions. In addition to these substantive aspects, the course includes an introduction to newly available information on the internet about population and population change.

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## 2 Class Administration

- The course meets Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:30–3:00 PM in 286-7 McNeil.
- Contact info: **Hans-Peter Kohler**, 272 McNeil Bldg, *Phone*: (215) 898-7686,  
*Email*: hpkohler@pop.upenn.edu,  
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*Office hours*: Monday, 2–4 PM
- Teaching Assistant: **Rania Tfaily**, 254 McNeil Bldg  
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*Office hours*: Thursday 3–4 PM
- The course website is available via the U Penn Blackboard system at <http://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>
- Blackboard will be used as a primary tool for electronic communication with students—**please** make sure that you are enrolled in the class and that your email address is correct! There are also two discussion boards on the Blackboard site. The “Student Discussion Board” is for discussions among students, and I will not follow or respond to these discussions. For “General Discussion Board” is for questions to the instructor about the course, assignments, the materials discussed in class, or follow-up questions to course discussions. I will follow the discussions on this board and respond where necessary.
- After the first introduction into the topic, the classes on Tuesday and Thursday will generally follow a different structure. Tuesday meetings will usually consist of lectures on the material discussed in the assigned chapter of the textbook (Weeks, J. R. (2004). *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Ideas* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning). These lectures are intended to introduce students to the respective topic, provide background about the corresponding empirical trends in the United States and other countries, and discuss relevant demographic theories and concepts. Thursday meetings will usually consist of discussions of one or two current research issues. While I will make a presentation of the corresponding papers and/or research questions, an important part of the class meeting will be devoted to discussions of these papers and the corresponding findings. Your participation in these discussions will be an important aspect of the class, and assignments (see belows) will help you to prepare for these discussions.
- Course Requirements:
  - Complete at least six out of eight assignments (= responses to questions about the readings)
  - Outline of class project, due October 13;
  - Midterm exam (in class), October 20;
  - Class project (see below), due November 22;
  - Final exam (cumulative); December 15, 12–2 PM (to be confirmed).
- Grade composition: midterm (25%), class project (25%), final exam (35%), class participation and assignments (15%).
- There are no classes on October 18 (fall term break) and November 24 (Thanksgiving).

## 3 Readings

The textbook for this course is: Weeks, J. R. (2004). *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Ideas* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning (available at the UPenn Bookstore). Some additional readings are available through the links in the pdf version of this document (available on the Blackboard site for this course). The readings for the Thursday discussions will be made

available under “Course Documents” on the Blackboard site for this class. Students are expected to read the assigned readings prior to the class meeting.

## 4 Assignments

In order to facilitate the discussions on Thursday, all students class will be required to complete *six out of eight* assignments that consist of short responses to the week’s readings and focus questions. The assignments with the focus questions will be handed out at least one week prior to the class in which the materials are discussed. Electronic copies of the assignment will be available under “Course Documents” on the Blackboard site for this class.

Your responses to the focus questions (1–2 paragraphs per question; in total, no longer than one single-spaced page per assignment) should critically analyze the readings and respond in some way to the focus questions listed on the syllabus for each week; you may also consider linking readings to previous class readings and discussions and/or providing additional discussion questions to guide our conversation. Responses should *not* simply be a summary of the readings.

You must submit the completed assignment on 8:00 AM on the day the assignment is due (see below for due dates) using the Blackboard assignment tool. Responses will be graded on a 0–10 point scale. You must also bring a copy of your comments with you to class to refer to during our discussion (as I may ask you to expand upon something you wrote).

Regardless of whether or not you have written comments on a given day, EVERYONE is responsible for reading all of the material BEFORE class and coming prepared to discuss them thoughtfully.

## 5 Class Project

The requirement for the course include a class project in which students are asked to do some original research using demographic data to research some of the substantive issues covered in class.

The first part of this project is an outline (max 1 page, due October 14) that describes (a) the topic to be investigated, (b) a short motivation of why it is relevant, and (c) a short outline about the data that is to be used. The final class project is due on November 23. The primary requirements of this project are that you (a) conduct original empirical research and (b) integrate your project and its empirical findings with the conceptual frameworks discussed in class. Your analyses do not need to be complicated or use an statistical techniques, but you should use empirical data to shed some new light on a topic of your interest. The goal of the project is that you do your *own* empirical research and analyses, and that you draw your own conclusions from the original data. Examples of possible topics will be discussed in class. Papers should be 3–5 printed double-spaced pages, plus references, figures and tables.

Some do’s and don’ts for the research project include:

- **do** provide a motivation for your topic and state why it is interesting and/or relevant;
- **do** label graphs completely;
- **do** cite all data used completely (for websites, this means complete URL, the date, and the organization publishing it);
- **do** think about the topic and your choice of data early;
- **don’t** use any data or publication without citing it;
- **don’t** use secondary data analyses based on results already presented in a published paper (with exception to support your own original analyses);
- **don’t** write a boring class project.

## 6 Course Outline and Reading list

Students are expected to read the assigned readings prior to the class meeting.

**Textbook:** Weeks, J. R. (2004). *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Ideas* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning (available at the UPenn Bookstore).

**Additional readings:** Additional readings, mostly for the Thursday meetings of class, are available through the links in the pdf version of this document (available on the Blackboard site for this course).

**Assignment readings:** The readings for the Thursday discussions will be made available under “Course Documents” on the Blackboard site for this class.S

### Lecture 1. (Thursday, September 08, 2005) – Introduction

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 1 (skim);
- Population Reference Bureau (2004). World population data sheet. Online available at <http://www.prb.org> [PDF] (optional – this is a good reference for global demographic patterns and trends);

### Lecture 2. (Tuesday, September 13, 2005) – Global Population Trends

- Population Reference Bureau Staff (2004). Transitions in world population. *Population Bulletin* 59(1), 3–40 [PDF];
- Weeks (2004), Chapter 2;

### Lecture 3. (Thursday, September 15, 2005) – Film: World in the Balance

### Lecture 4. (Tuesday, September 20, 2005) – Demographic Perspectives

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 3;

### Lecture 5. (Thursday, September 22, 2005) – Demographic Data and Online Resources on Demographic Issues

**Note: Assignment 1 is due at 8 AM.**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 4;
- Haupt, A. and T. T. Kane (2000). *Population Reference Bureau’s Population Handbook* (Fourth ed.). Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau. Available at <http://www.prb.org> [PDF] (optional – this is a good reference for demographic concepts and methods);

### Lecture 6. (Tuesday, September 27, 2005) – Mortality

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 5;
- Oeppen, J. and J. W. Vaupel (2002). Broken limits to life expectancy. *Science* 296(5570), 1029–1031 [PDF] (skim);
- Lamptey, P., M. Wigley, D. Carr, and Y. Collymore (2002). *Facing the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*. Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau. Online available at <http://www.prb.org> [PDF] (skim);
- Marmot, M. (2002). The influence of income on health: Views of an epidemiologist. *Health Affairs* 21(2), 31–46 [PDF];

### Lecture 7. (Thursday, September 29, 2005) – Discussion

**Note: Assignment 2 is due at 8 AM.**

- Assignment readings TBA

### Lecture 8. (Tuesday, October 04, 2005) – Fertility

**Note: Short student survey on fertility will be conducted in class**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 6;

- Morgan, S. P. (2003). Is low fertility a 21st century demographic crisis? *Demography* 40(4), 589–603 [PDF];
- Downs, B. (2003). Fertility of American women: June 2002. *Current Population Reports P20-548*. U.S. Census Bureau. Washington, D.C [PDF];

**Lecture 9. (Thursday, October 06, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Assignment 3 is due at 8 AM.**

- Assignment readings TBA

**Lecture 10. (Tuesday, October 11, 2005) – Migration**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 7;
- Martin, P. and E. Midgley (2003). Immigration: Shaping and reshaping America. *Population Bulletin* 58(2) [PDF];

**Lecture 11. (Thursday, October 13, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Outline of class project and Assignment 4 are due.**

- Assignment readings TBA

**Lecture 12. (Tuesday, October 18, 2005) – No Class, Fall Break**

**Lecture 13. (Thursday, October 20, 2005) – Review**

**Tuesday, October 25, 2005 – Midterm**

**Lecture 14. (Thursday, October 28, 2005) – Discussion of midterm**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 8 (skim);

**Lecture 15. (Tuesday, November 01, 2005) – Family and Households**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 10;
- Waite, L. J. (1995). Does marriage matter? *Demography* 32(4), 483–507 [PDF];
- Moen, P. (2001). The career quandry. *PRB Reports on America* 2(1). Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C. Available at <http://www.prb.org> [PDF];

**Lecture 16. (Thursday, November 03, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Assignment 5 is due at 8 AM.**

- Assignment readings TBA

**Lecture 17. (Tuesday, November 08, 2005) – The Changing Life-Course**

- Rindfuss, R. R. (1991). The young adult years: Diversity, structural change, and fertility. *Demography* 28(4), 493–512 [PDF];
- Lee, R. D. and J. R. Goldstein (2003). Rescaling the life cycle: Longevity and proportionality. In J. R. Carey and S. Tuljapurkar (Eds.), *Life Span: Evolutionary, Ecological, and Demographic Perspectives*, pp. 183–207. Supplement to *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 29. Population Council, New York [PDF];
- Goldin, C. and L. F. Katz (2002). The power of the pill: Oral contraceptives and women’s career and marriage decisions. *Journal of Political Economy* 110(4), 730–770 [PDF];

**Lecture 18. (Thursday, November 10, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Assignment 6 is due at 8 AM.**

- Assignment readings TBA

**Lecture 19. (Tuesday, November 15, 2005) – Population Aging**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 9;
- Lee, R. D. and J. Haaga (2002). Government spending in an older america. *PRB Reports on America* 3(1). Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C. Available at <http://www.prb.org> [PDF];

**Lecture 20. (Thursday, November 17, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Assignment 7 is due at 8 AM.**

- *The Economist* (2002, November 3). A tale of two bellies: The remarkable demographic difference between America and Europe. *The Economist* 364(8287), 11– [PDF];
- *The Economist* (2001, August 24). The new demographics: How to live with an ageing population. *The Economist* 361(8246), 5– [PDF];
- Boulding, K. (1965). The menace of methuselah: Possible consequences of increased life expectancy. *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 55(7), 171–179. Reprinted in *Population and Development Review* (2003), 29(2): 293–405 [PDF], (pages in pdf file are in reverse order);

**Lecture 21. (Tuesday, November 22, 2005) – Population, Development and the Environment**

**Note: Class Project is due.**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 11;

**Thursday, November 24, 2005 – No Class, Thanksgiving Break**

**Lecture 22. (Tuesday, November 29, 2005) – Population, Development and the Environment, Cont'd**

- De Souza, R.-M., J. S. Williams, and F. A. B. Meyerson (2003). Critical links: Population, health and the environment. *Population Bulletin* 58(3) [PDF];
- Bloom, D. E., D. Canning, and J. Sevilla (2002). *The Demographic Dividend: A New Perspective on the Economic Consequences of Population Change*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, Chapter 2 “Demographic Transitions and the Demographic Dividend” [PDF];

**Lecture 23. (Thursday, December 01, 2005) – Discussion**

**Note: Assignment 8 is due at 8 AM.**

- Assignment readings TBA.

**Lecture 24. (Tuesday, December 06, 2005) – Population Policies**

- Weeks (2004), Chapter 13;

**Lecture 25. (Thursday, December 08, 2005) – Review & Discussion**

*Last class meeting*

**Wednesday, December 15, 2005 – Final Exam, 12–2 PM**

*Date and place of final exam to be confirmed!*