Population and Society
Syllabus, Fall 2025

Course
920: 227:01 Population and Society

Instructor
Professor Julie Phillips
jphillips@sociology.rutgers.edu

Class Meetings
Mondays and Thursdays
12:10 – 1:30 pm
TIL 242, Livingston.

Office Hours
Mondays, 2:30 – 3:30 pm via Zoom
Right after class MTH

Office
Office 101C, Davison Hall
Douglass Campus

Course site
canvas.rutgers.edu

Soc Dept Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/rutgers_sociology/

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of human population, a field known as demography. Over the semester, we will explore the major social issues relating to population size, change, and composition. We will also explore the key concepts and measures used to study population dynamics, covering a range of topics that includes population growth and composition, fertility and mortality, immigration and the consequences of demographic changes for a number of pressing policy issues.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- define demography, the key features of the demographic transition, and debates about the environmental impact of population growth/overpopulation.
- understand how and why mortality and fertility have changed over the past two centuries, vary across countries and demographic groups, and are expected to change in the future, interpret tables and figures with demographic data.
- identify how demographic change in the United States and around the globe is relevant to contemporary public policy debates.

Course Materials

We will use one required text and a set of selected readings in this course.

Required text: Lundquist, Jennifer Hickes, Douglas Anderton and David Yaukey. 2015. *Demography: The Study of Human Population, 4rd ed.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-1-4786-1306-0

All articles and readings, including a pdf of the textbook, are available on the Canvas site. While I have made pdf copies of the New York Times articles available on Canvas***, I highly recommend that you access them through Rutgers Library to best see images and interactive text/figures. It will be a much better experience that way!*** To do this, go to the Rutgers Library website and create an account to access articles for free. You can do so here:
https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/news/now-available-new-york-times

Tips for Success

- If you are having problems, please seek out help early. Come in prepared, having gone over the lectures, text, homework assignments, and problems in the text.
- If you have missed any classes, make sure you get the missed notes from classmates. In cases like this, it usually pays to get the notes from at least two of your classmates.
- Please note that the readings are not substitutes for the lectures nor are the lectures a substitute for the readings. Not all the material in the lectures appears in the readings, nor is all the material in the readings covered in the lectures. You are responsible for the material in the texts and in the lectures. I make every effort to have class attendance a necessary (though not sufficient) factor in performing well on examinations.
- Make it a habit to read a national newspaper daily. A good exercise is to pick up the newspaper and apply concepts we've learned to pertinent news stories.
- Do not wait until after I have lectured on something to read the material work. Come to class prepared!
- The recommended/optional readings are for those who would like additional information. I may refer to recommended readings in lecture.

Grading Criteria

I will assess your performance in this class in the following way.
Exams: There will be three exams and one quiz which together comprise 85% of your final grade. These in-class tests will be designed to test your understanding and knowledge of material covered in readings, lectures, films, and discussion groups. The quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions.
In-Class Exercises: I will sometimes ask you to apply the concepts we are discussing in a lecture with a short exercise or set of questions. *These exercises must be completed with pen and paper – please come prepared for the possibility of an ICE each class period*. These exercises are graded on a credit/no credit basis and constitute 15% of your final grade. You are entitled to one freebie over the course of the semester. Please note that there are no opportunities to make up missed in-class exercises.

I will not take attendance in this class, but class and discussion section participation are vital to your success in the course. Students who actively participate in class discussions tend to perform better on assignments and exams. Engaging with the material really does enhance learning. When missing class is unavoidable, it is your responsibility to find out what material was covered and what announcements were made. Missing class is never an acceptable excuse for missing deadlines or not completing coursework.

There is no way to improve ex poste your grade on an examination; ***no extra-credit assignments are given out.*** Plan to do well on the required material. Please come and see me if you need help.

To summarize, your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Exam1	25%
Exam 2	25%

Exam 3	25%
Quiz 4	10%
In-class Exercises	15%

Makeup exams and timely completion of projects

Make-up exams are unfair to other students in the class, so I can only allow them under extraordinary circumstances. If you have a problem with a scheduled exam, **please notify me as soon as possible prior to the exam to inquire whether a makeup exam is possible**. If you have an emergency that arises the day of the exam, you should notify me as soon as you possibly can and reach out to the Dean of Students if you need additional support. Provided you have a valid excuse, a makeup exam can be scheduled. Makeup exams will be administered during scheduled department makeup periods and may contain both essay and oral components.

Examination Rules

1. You cannot enter the exam 20 minutes or more after the exam has begun.
2. Exams will include multiple choice type questions. Be sure you bring a #2 pencil and eraser to the exams.

Grading Criteria

A	90-100%
B+	85-89%
B	80-84%
C+	75-79%
C	70-74%
D	60-69%
F	< 60% ☹️

Expected Conduct

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted.

Technology

Technology is a powerful and increasingly important tool in our lives. The rapid developments in Artificial Intelligence are exciting and scary all at once. While these tools have the power to greatly enhance our productivity, they can also distract us and impede the development of critical thinking abilities. Thus, the classroom will be a technology-free space. The use of all electronic devices – laptops and phones -- is **prohibited** in the classroom unless otherwise specified. Come prepared with pen and paper to take notes and complete in-class exercises. If you need to use technology in the classroom due to a documented accommodation, please come and speak to me as soon as possible. Please take a moment to read these articles to understand why I arrived at this decision.

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/26/opinion/culture/ai-chatgpt-college-cheating-medieval.html
https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/12/opinion/ai-college-classrooms-chatgpt.html
https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/21/opinion/mobile-phones-college-classrooms.html

Academic Integrity

The consequences of academic dishonesty are very serious. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are among the behaviors that constitute violations of Rutgers's academic integrity policy. Please review the Policy on Academic Integrity and

the Code of Student Conduct. You can find academic integrity resources for students here. All suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Submitting AI-generated work in place of your own work is prohibited in this class and constitutes a serious academic integrity violation. For the purposes of this class, you may use AI tools to *improve* your writing, but you are prohibited from using AI to *generate* original writing. You may use AI tools to enhance your understanding of a reading or an argument, but you are expected to read the original materials yourself and develop your own arguments and ideas about the material. Be aware that AI summaries are a poor substitute for engaging with the original material, and your comprehension of the material (and performance on class assignments) may suffer as a result.

Department of Sociology Diversity Statement

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Other Resources

General Student Support

In the last few years, we have all been going through a lot, individually and together. It is important to acknowledge that events and circumstances outside of the classroom can impact our ability to be present and engaged at any given moment. At Rutgers, we are focused on the whole student. If, at any point, you experience anything impacting your performance or ability to participate in this class, please reach out to me. Please also see the academic, health, and mental wellness resources on the syllabus as well as those listed below.

Student Success Essentials: https://success.rutgers.edu
Student Support Services: https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support
Dean of Students: http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/ Students faced with persistent challenges, extenuating circumstances, and emergencies should contact the Dean.

Learning Resources

Learning Centers: https://rlc.rutgers.edu/
Writing Center: https://writingctr.rutgers.edu/
Academic Advising for SAS students: https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/advising/advising
Rutgers Libraries**:** https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/
Online Learning Tools from Rutgers University Libraries including Rutgers RIOT, Searchpath and RefWorks
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials

Technology

Please visit the Rutgers Student Tech Guide page for resources available to all students. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email Dean of Students deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the Office of Financial Aid at https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus / https://ods.rutgers.edu/

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations in this course, please contact me at the beginning of the semester. Students with disabilities must verify eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/gettingregistered.

Health Services

Rutgers Health Services is dedicated to health for the whole student body, mind, and spirit. For more information, go to https://health.rutgers.edu.
Student Wellness Program: https://ubhc.rutgers.edu/swp/overview.xml
Counseling Services: http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/
Crisis Intervention: http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counselingservices/counseling/crisis-intervention/
Victim Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA): https://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/
Report a Concern: http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/

Veterans and Military Services

Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services: https://veterans.rutgers.edu

Sociology Department

Sociology Undergraduate Director: Dr. Jeffrey Dowd, ug-dir@sociology.rutgers.edu
Sociology Undergraduate Program Coordinator: Kevin McCarthy, undergrad-soc@sociology.rutgers.edu

Tentative Course Schedule

September 4 Introduction and Course Overview

1. Lundquist, Chapter 1, pp. 1-16.
2. "The world's population may peak in your lifetime. What happens next?" *The New York Times*, September 18, 2023.

SECTION I: What is Demography? Elements of Population Change and Measurement

September 8 Understanding Population Growth and Change

1. Lundquist, Chapter 3, pp. 47-64.
2. "Nigeria's Population is Soaring in Preview of a Global Problem." *The New York Times*, April 15, 2012.
3. "The World is Becoming More African." *The New York Times*, October 28, 2023 [In-Class Discussion].

September 11 Perspectives on Population Growth and Change

1. Lundquist, Chapter 3, pp. 65-84. Review Chapter 1, pp. 6-11.
2. Malakoff, D. 2011. "Are More People Necessarily a Problem?" *Science* 333, pp. 544-546.
3. "Nigeria's Population Boom: A Problem, or Not?" *The New York Times*, April 23 2012.

September 15 Impact on the Environment, Part I
Film: How many people can live on planet earth?

1. Dovers, Stephen, and Colin Butler. 2015. "Population and environment: A global challenge."

September 18 Impact on the Environment, Part II

1. "Want To Slow Global Warming? Researchers Look to Family Planning." National Public Radio, July 18, 2017.
2. "It's wrong to blame 'overpopulation' for climate change." *The Washington Post*, May 25, 2021.

September 22 Demographic Data Sources

1. Population Reference Bureau. 2009. *The U.S. Census Tradition*. Washington DC.
2. "Two Huge Questions Loom as 2020 Census Winds Down." *The New York Times*, October 12, 2020.
3. "How Do You Self-Identify? For Many Americans, Checking a Box Won't Do." *The New York Times*, July 8, 2025.

Optional: Lundquist, Chapter 2, pp. 19-43.

September 25 Key Demographic Concepts and Measures

1. Lundquist, Chapter 1, pp. 6-11; Chapter 4, pp. 93-116. Chp 11 405-432
2. "The World has a Problem: Too Many Young People." *The New York Times*, March 5, 2016.

September 29 EXAM 1

SECTION II: Mortality as a Source of Population Change and its Consequences

October 2 Components of Mortality and History of Mortality Decline

1. Lundquist, Chapter 5, pp. 150-158.
2. "So Big and Healthy Nowadays, Grandpa Wouldn't Know You." *The New York Times*, July 30, 2006.
3. "Mortality in the United States: Past, Present, and Future." Penn Wharton Budget Model, June 27, 2016.

October 6 Course of Mortality Decline in Less Developed Regions

1. Lundquist, Chapter 5, pp. 158-165, Chapter 6, pp. 191-193.

2. Sohn, Emily. "People are living longer in places you wouldn't expect." *National Public Radio*, October 5, 2017.
3. "The Top Ten Causes of Death." World Health Organization, August 7, 2024.

October 9 **Measurement of Mortality and the Demography of Longevity**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 5, pp. 145-150.
2. Couzin,-Frankel, J. 2011. "A Pitched Battle over Life Span." *Science* 333, 549-550.
3. "Have We Reached Peak Human Life Span?" *The New York Times*, October 7, 2024.

October 13 **Threats to Life Expectancy: The HIV/AIDS Pandemic and Emerging Infectious Diseases**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 5, pp. 167-176.
2. UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2023. Press Release. July 13, 2023.
3. "The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States; The Basics." KKF, June 7, 2021.
4. Das, Maitreyi Bordia. "Six reasons why demography matters during the pandemic," World Bank Blog, July 11, 2020.

Optional: "Photos from a Century of Epidemics," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2020.

October 16 **Threats to Life Expectancy: The Obesity Epidemic and Chronic Disease**

1. "Are We Thinking about Obesity All Wrong?" *The New York Times*, September 19, 2024
2. "An Epidemic of Chronic Illness is Killing Us Too Soon." *The Washington Post*, October 3, 2023.

Optional: "How America is Causing Global Obesity, Hasan Minhaj.

October 20 **Health and Mortality in More Developed Regions: Social and Racial Disparities**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 5, pp. 176-178.
2. Williams, D.R. and P.B. Jackson. 2005. "Social Sources of Racial Disparities in Health." *Health Affairs* 24(2): 325-34.
3. "Without a College Degree, Life in America is staggeringly shorter." *The New York Times,* October 3, 2023.

October 23 **Aging Societies**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 4, pp. 118-134.
2. "The Social Security Fix Nobody Wants to Talk About." *The New York Times*, May 31, 2024.
3. "As Asian Societies Age, 'Retirement' Just Means More Work." *The New York Times,* January 7, 2023.

October 27 EXAM 2

SECTION III: Fertility as a Source of Population Change and its Consequences

October 30 **Introduction to Fertility: Measurement and Determinants**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 7, pp. 227-258.
2. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020. "World Fertility and Family Planning 2020: Ten Key Messages."

November 3 **Fertility in More Developed Regions**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 7, pp. 219-227.
2. Boling, Patricia. 2008. "Demography, Culture, and Policy: Understanding Japan's Low Fertility." *Population and Development Review* 34(2): 307-326.
3. "The alternative, optimistic story of population decline." *The New York Times*, January 20, 2023.
4. "White House Assesses Ways to Persuade Women to Have More Children." *The New York Times*, April 21, 2025.

November 6 **Fertility in Less Developed Regions: A Look at Family Planning Programs**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 7, pp. 258-268.

2. Ezeh, Alex, and Garumma Tolu Feyissa. "What's driving Africa's population growth. And what can change it," *The Conversation*, November 17, 2019.
3. "Desperate for Babies, China Races to Undo an Era of Birth Limits. Is It Too Late?" *The New York Times*, Feb 26, 2023.

November 10 **History of the Family and Recent Developments** [No in-person lecture: Narrated slides available on Canvas]

1. Lundquist, Chapter 8.
2. "The Divorce Rate is Dropping. That May Not Actually Be Good News," *TIME*, November 26, 2018.
3. The U.S. Birth Rate is Falling Fast. Why? It's Complicated." *National Public Radio*, July 8, 2025.

November 13 **Consequences of Family Change**

1. Livingston, Gretchen. 2018. "The Changing Profile of Unmarried Parents." Pew Research Center.
2. Lowrey, Annie. 2023. "Is Single Parenthood the Problem?" *The Atlantic*, September 23, 2023.
3. "Opponents of Same-Sex Marriage Take Bad-for-Children Argument to Court." *The New York Times*, February 22, 2014.

November 17 **Consequences of Family Change (Independent Work)**

1. *Five Short Videos on Falling Birth Rates around the Globe [On Canvas].*
2. "Bye-Bye, Baby." *The New York Times*, April 4, 2014.
3. "Why, despite everything, you should have kids (if you want them)." The New York Times, April 13, 2021.

*Optional: "*Not everyone is worried about America's falling birthrates." The Argument in *The New York Times*. Listen to experts debate this question.
In-Class Exercise: The Future of Fertility

November 20 **EXAM 3**

SECTION IV By-Products of Population Change: Migration, Urbanization, Income Inequality

November 24 **Migration**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 9, pp. 325-331, 334-353, 356-367.
2. "The Great Climate Migration has Begun," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 23, 2020.

November 25 **Thursday class CANCELLED – Happy Thanksgiving!**

December 1 **Urbanization**

1. Lundquist. Chapter 10.
2. Montgomery, M. 2008. "The Urban Transformation of the Developing World." *Science* 319: 761-4.
3. "The Places Most Affected by Remote Workers' Moves Around the Country." *The New York Times,* June 17, 2023.

December 4 **Income Inequality**

1. Lundquist, Chapter 11, pp. 433-440.
2. Neckerman, K.M. and F. Torche. 2007. "Inequality: Causes and Consequences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 335-57.
3. "The Shrinking of the Middle-Class Neighborhood." *The New York Times*, July 6, 2022.
4. "Income Inequality has been Transformed Globally." *The New York Times*, December 20, 2023.

December 8 **QUIZ 4**