

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Department of Sociology

Sociology 451/557:A1 *Sociology of Human Fertility*

(Course # 61478 / 61604)

Mondays: 2:00 – 4:50 p.m. Tory Basement, Room 125

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Office hours: Tuesdays 9:15 a.m. – 12 Noon (or by appointment)

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF LECTURES

Recording of lectures is permitted **only** with the prior written consent of the professor or if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan. Section 23.4(4) of the *University of Alberta Academic Calendar stipulates:*

"Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s)."

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines theoretical (classical and contemporary) and empirical perspectives on the biosocial, cultural, economic, and psychological factors of human fertility and their interactions. The course entails a fair amount of reading of works published in demographic venues. It is assumed that students are familiar with the basic concepts and theoretical perspectives of demography and population studies. The course requirements are:

- class presentations (weight 30%)
- term paper (weight 30%)
- presentation of the term paper (10%)
- final exam (weight 30%)

COURSE STRUCTURE

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (lecture and discussion)

3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. (break)

3:15 p.m. – 4:50 p.m. (student presentations and discussion)

Class Presentations (Weight = 30%)

At the beginning of each class, selected students will be assigned readings for presentation at the subsequent class meeting. Each presentation should be approximately 15-20 minutes, including some time for class discussion. The student is responsible for locating the assigned reading materials for these presentations (most readings should be easily accessible on the internet or at the library). Presentations will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria, each scored out of 20:

- **Comprehensiveness:** does the student cover the main point(s) inherent in the reading?
- **Understanding:** does the student show a clear understanding of the material?
- **Clarity:** does the student explain himself/herself clearly?
- **Ability to raise and stimulate questions for discussion:** does the student raise important questions based on the assigned material?
- **Judgment of the overall quality of presentation:** overall assessment of the presentation).

Term Paper (Weight = 30%)

Students will prepare a term paper on a topic of their choice. The topic must be in some way related to human fertility. A number of *suggested* topics will be discussed at the beginning of the course. Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with the instructor. Terms papers will be presented on the last meeting of the class, and submitted to the instructor.

Final Exam (Weight = 30%)

The final exam will be based on the material covered in class lectures, readings, and student presentations. The exam will consist primarily of essay type questions. Sample questions for final exam will be discussed in class.

READINGS

Required readings comprise articles and some chapters from selected books. The articles listed in the required reading list (see below) can be obtained electronically from the web through the UA Library system. Book chapters are available at e-Class.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND CONTENT

Week	Date	Topic
1	Sept. 7	Introduction; Basic Concepts
2	Sept. 14	Social Biological Dimensions of Human Fertility
3	Sept. 21	Seasonal and Environmental Factors in Human Fertility
4	Sept. 28	Evolutionary Perspectives of Human Fertility
5	Oct. 5	Nuptiality and Fertility Transitions in Historical Perspective
6	Oct. 12	<i>Thanksgiving --- no classes</i>
7	Oct. 19	Economic Theory of Fertility, Part 1
8	Oct. 26	Economic Theory of Fertility, Part 2
9	Nov. 2	Social Psychological Theory of Fertility
10	Nov. 9-13	<i>Fall break – no classes</i>
11	Nov. 16	Religion, Ethnicity and Fertility: Theory and Research
12	Nov. 23	Low and High Fertility Settings: Theory, Research and Policy Issues
13	Nov. 30	Presentation of Term Papers (papers submitted at end of class)
14	Dec. 21	<i>FINAL EXAM 2:00 - 4:00 pm (to be officially confirmed)</i>

GRADING

Performance on the final exam, class presentations and term paper will be summed and a percentage score calculated at the end of the term. Grades will be converted to the four-point scale in accordance with the following schedule:

Performance	Term score as %	Letter grade	Numerical grade
Excellent	91-100	A+	4.0
	86-90	A	4.0
	82-85	A-	3.7
Good	78-81	B+	3.3
	74-77	B	3.0
	70-73	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66-69	C+	2.3
	62-65	C	2.0
	58-61	C-	1.7
Poor	54-57	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50-53	D	1.0
Fail	0-49	F	0.0

Note: The following rule is applied when rounding term grades. If a final term grade is on the margin of a cut-off point, it will be raised to the next higher category. For example, if a student's overall term score is 90.5, the final grade will be 91 and will therefore receive A+ and 4.0 as a final grade. If a student's overall term grade is 90.4, the score assigned will be 90, and will therefore receive a final grade of A and 4.0, etc.

For your information, the average undergraduate performance is expected to vary by level of the course: C+ in 100 or 1st year courses, B- in 200 and 300 or 2nd year courses, and B in 400 or 4th year courses. At the undergraduate level, grades D and above are passing grades; at the graduate level, passing grades are C+ and above.

MISSED EXAMS

Excused absence for a missed exam is not automatic and is granted at the discretion of the instructor *in the case of term exams*, or the student's Faculty *in the case of final exams*.

Instructors and Faculties are not required to grant excused absences for unacceptable reasons that include, but are not limited to personal events such as vacations, weddings, or travel arrangements.

If you fail to write the FINAL EXAM: You must formally apply to your Faculty office within two working days following the missed final exam in order to be considered for a deferred final examination (or as soon as possible having regard for the circumstances underlying the absence).. The decision to grant a deferred final exam is **not** the instructor's.

Deferred examinations are intended to accommodate students who have experienced an incapacitating illness or severe domestic affliction; applications based on minor or inconsequential ailments will not be approved if:

- (a) *has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or participation are required, and/or,*
- (b) *excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work, as stated in §23.3(2)c of the University **Calendar**.*

See: <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/>

Please Note:

There is only one date for granted deferred final exams.

January 16, 2016 (9 a.m. in BUS 1 – 06)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the *Code of Student Behavior* (<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/>) and avoid any behavior which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence (see *University Calendar*, pages 777-798). Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. For Further information on cheating and plagiarism see:

“Don’t Do It”: <http://uofa.ualberta.ca/arts/-/media/arts/student-services/documents/dont-do-it-enclosure-2014-1.pdf>

“Don’t Cheat”: <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx>

Other Important Matters

- Posting of Grades: Grades will be posted on E-class
- Classes Begin: Tuesday, Sept 1, 2015
- Course Drop and Add: Tuesday, Sept 15, 2015
- Course Withdrawal: Friday, October 2, 2015 (*with 50% fee refund*)
- Thanksgiving Day: Monday, October 12, 2015 (university closed)
- Fall term Reading Week: November 9 - 13, 2015 (no classes)
- Final Course Withdrawal: Monday, November 30, 2015
- Classes End: Monday, December 7, 2015
- Fall Final Examinations: December 10 - 22, 2015

SOCIOLOGY 451/557:A1
Required Readings

Fall, 2015

Week 1. Introduction: Basic Concepts

Livi-Bacci, Massimo. 2012. "The space and strategy of demographic growth." Pp.1-31 in his *A Concise History of World Population* (5th edn). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Week 2. Social Biological Dimensions of Human Fertility

Bongaarts, John. 1978. A Framework for analyzing the proximate determinants of fertility." *Population and Development Review* 4 (1): 105-132.

Davis, Kingsley and Judith Blake. 1956. "Social structure and fertility: An analytic framework." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 4(4): 211-235.

Eaton, Joseph W. and Albert J. Mayer. 1953. "The social biology of very high fertility among the Hutterites: the demography of a unique population." *Human Biology* 25: 206-264.

Henry, Louis. 1961. "Some data on natural fertility." *Eugenics Quarterly* 8(2): 81-91.

Week 3. Seasonal and Environmental Factors in Human Fertility

Lam, David A. and Jeffrey A. Miron. 1991. "Seasonality of births in human populations." *Social Biology* 38 (1-2): 51-78.

Week 4. Evolutionary Perspectives of Human Fertility

Davis, Kingsley. 1986. "Low Fertility in Evolutionary Perspective." Pp. 48-65 in K. Davis and Rita Ricardo-Campbell (eds.), *Below-Replacement Fertility in Industrial Societies: Causes, Consequences, Policies* Supplement to Vol. 12 *Population and Development Review*. New York: The Population Council.

Udry, Richard J. 1996. "Biosocial models of low-fertility societies." *Population and Development Review* 22: 325-336.

Week 5: Nuptiality and Fertility Transitions

Hajnal, John. 1965. "European marriage patterns in perspective." Pp. 101-143 in D.V.Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History*. London: Arnold.

Davis, Kingsley. 1963. "The theory of change and response in modern demographic history." *Population Index* 29 (4): 345-366.

Coale, Ansley J. 1986. "The decline of fertility in Europe since the eighteenth century as a chapter in human demographic history." Pp. 1-30 in Coale and Watkins (eds.), *The Decline of Fertility in Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 6. Thanksgiving - no classes

Week 7. Economic Theory of Fertility, Part 1

Becker, Gary S. 1960. "An economic analysis of fertility." Pp. 209-240 in *Demographic and Economic Change in Developed Countries*. A Conference of the Universities, National Bureau Committee for Economic Research, Special Conference Series 11. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 8. Economic Theory of Fertility, Part 2

Easterlin, Richard A. 1975. "An economic framework for fertility analysis." *Studies in Family Planning* 6 (March): 54-63.

Caldwell, John C. 2005. "On net intergenerational wealth flows: an update." *Population and Development Review* 31 (4): 721-740.

Week 9. Social Psychological Theory of Fertility

Day, Lincoln H. 1985. "Illustrating behavioral principles with examples from demography: the causal analysis of differences in fertility." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 15(2): 189-201.

Fishbein, Martin. 1972. "Toward an understanding of family planning behaviors." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 2: 214-227.

Week 10. Fall break: No classes

Week 11. Religion, Ethnicity and Fertility: Theory and Research

Day, Lincoln H. 1968. "Natality and ethnocentrism: some relationships suggested by an analysis of Catholic-Protestant differentials." *Population Studies* 22:27-50.

Goldscheider, Calvin and Peter Uhlenberg. 1969. "Minority group status and fertility." *American Journal of Sociology* 74: 361-372.

Week 12. Low and High Fertility Settings: Theory and Research

Lesthaeghe, Ron. 2010. "The Unfolding story of the second demographic transition." *Population and Development Review* 36 (2): 211-251.

Caldwell, John C. and Pat Caldwell. 1987. "The cultural context of high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa." *Population and Development Review* 13 (3): 409-437.

Cai, Yong. 2010. "China's below-replacement fertility: government policy or socioeconomic development?" *Population and Development Review* 36 (3): 419-440.

Week 13. Student Presentations of Term Papers

Example: Student Summary of an Assigned Reading for Presentation to the Class

Date of Presentation _____

Name of Student _____

Full Reference of Assigned Reading

Johnson-Hanks, Jennifer. 2007. "Natural intentions: fertility decline in the African Demographic and Health Surveys." *American Journal of Sociology* 112 (4): 1008-1043

Background: Formal models of fertility, take specific childbearing distributions to indicate "natural fertility" where couples take no intentional action to manage their reproduction. The author argues that this traditional approach can only be valid when the cultural repertoires that mediate between intentions and actions are well-established, rather than making assumptions about a particular culture and misrepresenting them demographically. On a broader scope, she argues that there are flaws associated with inferring meaning from aggregate behavior.

Objective: To show how formal models of fertility do not consider the intentions and actions of individuals being studied and consequently, discrepancies result. The author uses data from 18 African countries and compares women's self-reported intentions to those attributed to them, under standard demographic models to see if any incongruities exist.

Data: This article relies on data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in the late 1990's in 18 sub-Saharan African countries, representing a wide range of economic, political, and social situations, and all regions of the sub-continent. The surveys are nationally representative samples of women aged 15-49. Sample sizes range from 5,501 to 15,367. This data come from women's individual recode files, particularly the birth registers. The author interviewed women 40-44 years old who were ever married or currently married. Women who still wanted more children were considered to have natural fertility and those who did not want any more and were already using contraception were classified as having controlled fertility (2 groups of women).

Main Findings: In all 18 African countries, these 2 groups of women have nearly identical age-specific marital fertility rates indexed to marital fertility 20-24. The intention to stop bearing children in women in their 40's indexes a history of particularly prolific childbearing.

Thus intentional fertility limitation could be inferred not from levels of marital fertility, but from its shape over age.

Parity-specific birth intervals exhibited in 17th-19th century European populations does not appear in Africa – no difference between 2 groups of women. The interval between marriage and the first birth throughout sub-Saharan Africa is far longer than would be predicted by any model of natural fertility based on European and North American cases.

Conclusion: The social organization of reproduction in Africa requires us to rethink basic assumptions about what is natural about marriage, marital sexuality, and procreation. The assumed indexical relationship between specific patterns of birth rates and the intentional states and forms of reproductive action called natural fertility does not hold in contemporary Africa. Women who have sought to limit the number of children that they bear are largely indistinguishable from their natural fertility co-nationals on the measures designed to detect fertility control. This means that the cultural repertoires through which they organized their action, their schemas of action, differ so much from those built into the quantitative models that the models misattribute their intentions.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the limitations of traditional fertility studies?
2. What other methods of information gathering would give more insight into intentions and actions?
3. What is 'natural' about natural fertility?