

# Population and Society

## (SOC 331)

Spring Quarter, 2025

### Class Schedule

**Lecture:** Monday & Wednesday 10:30 AM - 12:20 PM  
**Location:** SMI 205  
**URL:** <https://canvas.uw.edu/>

**Quiz Section AA:** Thursday 8:30 AM - 9:20 PM  
**Location:** BNS 117

**Quiz Section AB:** Thursday 9:30 AM - 10:20 PM  
**Location:** CHL 015

### Professor

**Name:** Zack W. Almquist  
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**Office Hours:** TBD  
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### Teaching Assistant

**Name:** Brian Serafini  
**Office:** Savery 272  
**Office Hours:** M & W 12:30 - 1:30 PM & by appointment  
**Email:** [valgaav@uw.edu](mailto:valgaav@uw.edu)

### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to demography, the scientific study of human populations. Using *Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography* by Dudley L. Poston and Leon Bouvier as our primary text, we will explore key demographic concepts, theories, and methods. Topics include population growth, fertility, mortality, migration, population aging, and the relationship between population dynamics and social, economic, and environmental issues.

We will examine how demographic processes shape societies across time and space, with a focus on both historical trends and contemporary population challenges. The course will also introduce students to basic demographic data sources and analytical techniques used to study population change. Through lectures, discussions, and hands-on exercises, students will develop a deeper understanding of how population dynamics influence policy, health, urbanization, and global development. This course is designed for students interested in sociology, geography, public health, economics, and related fields. No prior knowledge of demography is required.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand Core Demographic Concepts – Define and explain key demographic processes, including fertility, mortality, and migration, and how they shape population change.
2. Analyze Population Trends – Examine historical and contemporary population trends at local, national, and global scales, and understand their social, economic, and environmental implications.
3. Interpret Demographic Data – Identify key demographic data sources (e.g., censuses, surveys, vital statistics) and develop basic skills in interpreting and analyzing population data.
4. Apply Demographic Theories – Describe major demographic theories and models, such as the demographic transition theory, Malthusian and neo-Malthusian perspectives, and theories of migration.
5. Evaluate Population Policies – Assess how governments and institutions respond to population challenges, including policies on family planning, aging, urbanization, and immigration.
6. Explore the Intersections of Population and Society – Discuss how population dynamics interact with social structures, including issues related to gender, race, health, and economic development.
7. Develop Critical Thinking Skills – Critically evaluate demographic research and media representations of population issues using evidence-based reasoning.
8. Communicate Demographic Findings – Effectively present demographic information through written, visual, and verbal formats, applying demographic concepts to real-world issues.

## Prerequisites

None.

# Course Requirements

## Quiz Section

Quiz section is not mandatory. It will be used to review material for in class Quizzes, and help on activities in lecture and Homework.

## Software requirements

### Google Documents

We will make extensive use of Google Drive and Google Documents.

**How to create your UW Gmail account:** Log into your UW Gmail account to access it. If you still need to set it up, I recommend going ([Getting Started with UW G Suite | IT Connect](#)). If you have it set up, you must use the NETID SSO <http://gmail.uw.edu>.

### Jupyter Notebooks

JupyterHub is run by UW IT. You can log into JupyterHub via the following link:

- [General HUB link] <https://jupyter.rttl.uw.edu/2025-spring-soc-331-a>
- [RStudio] <https://jupyter.rttl.uw.edu/2025-spring-soc-331-a/user-redirect/rstudio>
- All material for the labs is pre-installed on <https://github.com/zalmquist/soc331>.

We will use Jupyter notebook for daily extra credit. If you have extra time you can modify the google sheets assignments to solve them in R using RStudio through JupyterHub.

### Canvas

Canvas is the official learning management system of the UW. It simplifies course management tasks, such as publishing course materials, grading, communicating with students, and more. Students can use Canvas to access course content, submit assignments anytime, anywhere, and collaborate with peers and instructors. Canvas is FERPA-compliant and has no service fee for eligible users.

More information about UW Canvas is available on [IT Connect](#).

## Assignments

All assignments are due on the specified due date, as they are closely linked to scheduled guest speakers. Late submissions cannot be accepted. However, I will drop your two lowest scores from the Weekly Speaker Questions, Speaker Reflections, and Weekly Reflections categories.

## Quizzes

There will be three quizzes over the course content. **Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.** These will take the form of multiple choice and short answer questions.

## Weekly Activities

For every lecture we will do one group activity centered around learning basic demographic methods in *Google Sheets* and *R in Jupyter Notebooks*. The second activity will be a short writing assignment on policy relevant demographic activity at the end of lecture followed by group discussion and share out. **Your lowest two grades in both categories will be dropped.**

## Policy Report

For this assignment, you will write a **two-page, double-spaced policy report** on a population-related issue of your choice. Your report should identify a key demographic challenge (e.g., aging populations, migration, fertility decline, or urbanization), explain its societal implications, and propose evidence-based policy recommendations. Use clear and concise language suitable for policymakers. Your report should include a **brief introduction**, a **discussion of the issue with relevant data**, and **concrete policy suggestions**. Cite at least **three academic or government sources** in APA format. Submit your report as a **Word document** by the deadline.

## Project

Every student is expected to make a video project to present in the last week of class. Videos are expected to be 4-5 minutes long and we will play all the videos over the last two days of class.

- This should take the form of an academic talk, slides with presentation. Your face should be included, zoom-style is fine.

The project is broken down into three pieces:

- Pick an academic article:
  - Sign up here: [Sign up For Article](#)
- Write one page summary of your article
- Submit Slide Deck
- Submit Video
  - Tutorials for video editing: [Online Tutorials - UW-IT](#)

## Textbook

- [DPLB] Dudley L. Poston, Jr, Leon F. Bouvier (2017. "Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography." 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. ISBN 1107042674, 9781107042674.
  - PDF of 1st edition is available here: [Population and Society demography](#) (this may be fine, but will not perfectly align with the instruction of the course, so be warned! For example, Chapter 2: Theories of Demography is Chapter 9: World Population Change over Time in the first edition, you will need to make the mapping from 1st edition to 2nd if you choose to go this route).

## Weekly Reading/Videos or other Multimedia Assignments

- **Week 1: Introduction to Demography and Population Studies** – Overview of demography as a field, its key concepts, methods, and relevance to understanding social change.
  - DPLB – Chapter 1: An introduction to demography
- **Week 2: Theories of Population Change** – Examination of demographic transition theory, Malthusian perspectives, and contemporary debates on population growth.
  - DPLB – Chapter 2: Theories of Demography
- **Week 3: Demographic Data** – Introduction to census data, surveys, vital statistics, and basic demographic measures used to analyze populations.
  - DPLB - Chapter 3: The sources of demographic information
- **Week 4: Fertility and Reproductive Behavior** – Patterns and determinants of fertility, family planning policies, and the social and economic consequences of changing birth rates.
  - DPLB – Chapter 4: Fertility
  - [Not required] DPLB – Chapters 5 & 6
- **Week 5: Mortality, Health, and Aging** – Trends in life expectancy, causes of death, epidemiological transitions, and challenges associated with population aging.
  - DPLB – Chapter 7: Mortality
- **Week 6: Migration and Urbanization** – Drivers and consequences of migration, global migration trends, refugee movements, and the impact of urbanization on societies.
  - DPBL – Chapter 8: Internal Migration
  - [Not required] DPBL– Chapter 9: International Migration
  - [Not required] DPBL– Chapter 14: Population distribution
- **Week 7: Population Forecasting** – Models and Methods for Predicting Human Population Dynamics.
  - DPBL–Chapter 12: World Population Change over Time
  - [Not required] DPBL–Chapter 13: Population change in the United States
- **Week 8: Population and the Environment & Population Policies and Global Challenges** – The relationship between population dynamics, resource use, climate

change, and sustainability. Examination of government policies related to fertility, immigration, aging populations, and emerging demographic challenges in different regions.

- DPBL–Chapter 16: The earth in the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries
- DPBL–Chapter 15: Population policy
- **Week 9: Student Project Presentations** – Students present their research projects, applying demographic concepts and methods to real-world population issues.
- **Week 10: Student Project Presentations** – Students present their research projects, applying demographic concepts and methods to real-world population issues.

## Grading

### Note about grading

Lectures, readings and review sessions are provided for each student’s benefit. It is the student's responsibility to take advantage of these opportunities to acquire and demonstrate mastery of course material and achieve his or her desired grade.

Assignment	Number of Assignments	Percent of Grade
Weekly Activities	10 Weeks of activities	20%
Quizzes	3	30%
Policy Report	1	20%
Project (pick article)	1	5%
Project (1-page summary)	1	5%
Project (slides)	1	5%
Project Video	1	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>=100%</b>

### Letter grade assignment

% Points Earned	Number grade	Letter Grade
100-97	4.0-3.9	A

96-90	3.8-3.5	A-
87-89	3.4-3.2	B+
86-84	3.1-2.9	B
83-80	2.8-2.5	B-
79-77	2.4-2.2	C+
76-74	2.1-1.9	C
73-70	1.8-1.5	C-
69-67	1.4-1.2	D+
66-64	1.1-0.9	D
63-60	0.8-0.7	D-
59-0	0	F

## Course Calendar

	DOW	Date	Holidays, Guest Lectures	Quizzes/ Policy Report	Project
Week 1	<b>Introduction to Demography and Population Studies</b>				
	Mon	3/31/2025			
	Wed	4/2/2025			
Week 2	<b>Theories of Population Change</b>				
	Mon	4/7/2025	TA Q/A - Lecture will be flipped with videos and activities provided.		
	Wed	4/9/2025			
Week 3	<b>Demographic Data</b>				
	Mon	4/14/2025	TA Q/A - Lecture will be flipped with videos and activities provided.		
	Wed	4/16/2025		Quiz 1	Sign up for article to present
Week 4	<b>Fertility and Reproductive Behavior</b>				
	Mon	4/21/2025			

Week 4

	Wed	4/23/2025			
	<b>Mortality, Health, and Aging</b>				
Week 5	Mon	4/28/2025			One page review
	Wed	4/30/2025		Quiz 2	
	<b>Migration and Urbanization</b>				
Week 6	Mon	5/5/2025			
	Wed	5/7/2025			
	<b>Population Forecasting</b>				
Week 7	Mon	5/12/2025			
	Wed	5/14/2025		Quiz 3	Slides
	<b>Population and the Environment, Population Policies and Global Challenges</b>				
Week 8	Mon	5/19/2025		Policy Report	
	Wed	5/21/2025			
	<b>Student Projects</b>				
Week 9	Mon	5/26/2025	Memorial Day - No class		Video Due
	Wed	5/28/2025		Student Videos	
	<b>Student Projects</b>				
Week 10	Mon	6/2/2025		Student Videos	
	Wed	6/4/2025		Student Videos	
	<b>Finals Week</b>				
Finals Week					

## Syllabus Change Policy

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus, including assignments, readings, grading criteria, and schedule, at any time during the course. Any changes will be communicated to students in a timely manner via email and Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to stay informed about updates.

## University of Washington Policies

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).

### **DISABILITY ACCESS & ACCOMMODATIONS:**

It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with DRS to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with DRS, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor (me) and DRS. DRS information can be found at: [Disability Resources for Students](#).

### **SOCIOLOGY DIVERSITY STATEMENT:**

The Department of Sociology at the University of Washington values [diversity, equality, and inclusivity](#) in our community. We realize these goals in our classrooms by questioning assumptions in our texts, discussions, and our own thinking, and by holding all members of our community to the highest standards of respectful and open communication, as laid out in the [UW Student Conduct Code](#).

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

See [Student Conduct Code | Community Standards & Student Conduct](#) for crucial information regarding academic integrity. The library also has an extremely useful website with resources at [Library Guides: Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Prevention Resources: Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](#). You are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the University of Washington Student Code, and you will be held responsible for any such violations whether they were intentional or not. A clear list of rules and examples of violations can be found : [Student Academic Responsibility](#)

### **MANDATORY REPORTING STATEMENT**

\* CAUTION! Please note that we are mandatory reporters, which means that we may be required to report it to the University if you share with me experiences of past abuse or plans to harm yourself and others.

# UW Student Resources

## STUDENT RESEARCH RESOURCES:

- *Libraries:* [University of Washington Libraries](#)
- *Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS):* [Home | Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences](#)
- *Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR):* [The Center for Social Science Computation and Research](#)
- *Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE):* [Computing](#)

## UW WRITING CENTERS

- *Sociology Writing Center* (open to all students enrolled in this course): SAV 203; [Sociology Writing Center](#) 206.221.0972  
Students who want to make an appointment should email [writesoc@uw.edu](mailto:writesoc@uw.edu).  
Students may also make appointments by calling or visiting the Advising Office.
- *Odegaard Writing and Research Center* (open to all students) : [Odegaard Undergraduate Library — UW Libraries](#). Phone 206.221.0972 and 206.543.5396.
- *Center for Undergraduate Learning and Education (CLUE):* email [clue@uw.edu](mailto:clue@uw.edu)  
[This Week at CLUE: UW Academic Support Programs](#).

## Other student support services

### Dispute Resolution and Bias Reporting Supports

- *Office of the Ombud:* [Office of the Ombud](#) 206-543-6028
- *Bias Report* (for incidents of bias in any form): [Report Bias](#)
- *Community Standards & Student Conduct:* [Making a report | Community Standards & Student Conduct](#)
- *Title IX/ADA Coordinator* if complaint is related to disability accommodation, sex/gender discrimination, or sexual harassment (Title IX): (scroll down to bottom of page to “Grievance Procedures & Barrier Reporting”) [Policy, law and reporting | Compliance](#)

### Financial Assistance

- *Emergency Aid:* [Seattle | Emergency Aid](#)
- *Office of Student Financial Aid:* [Contact us | Student Financial Aid](#)
- *Short Term Emergency Loans:* [Short-term loans | Student Financial Aid](#)
- *Campus Food Pantry:* [Get-Food](#)
- *Housing Assistance:* [Other assistance | Student Financial Aid](#)

### Mental Health Supports

- *Health and Wellness office:* [LiveWell Center for Student Advocacy, Training, and Education](#) 206.543.6085
- *Hall Health:* <http://depts.washington.edu/hhpccweb/>
- *Hall Health Mental Health:* [Hall Health](#)

- *Counseling Center:* [About the Counseling Center | Counseling Center](#)
- *Resources Re: Sexual / Relationship Trauma:\** [Sexual Assault Resources](#)

#### Building Community

- *Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity:* [Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity](#)
- *Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center:* [Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural](#)
- *Q Center (for Queer community, including Questioning):*  
[Q Center](#)
- *Intellectual House (for Indigenous community):*  
[wəłəbʔaltx<sup>w</sup> – Intellectual House | Diversity at the UW](#)
- *International Student Center:* [International Student Services - International Student Services](#)
- *Deaf and Disability Cultural Center (D Center):* HUB 327 [D Center at the University of Washington](#)
- *Undocumented Student Resources:*  
[Undocumented student resources | Admissions](#)

#### Technology Supports (and remote learning related supports)

- *IT Connect* (tech support services for students): [Teaching and Learning Tools](#)
- *Internet connection and free wifi hotspots* (enabled during COVID-19 outbreak)  
[Internet connectivity for learning, teaching and working remotely](#)
- *Laptop Loans* Remember that through the technology fees that you pay you can reserve a laptop if you need to! [Laptops for takeout or delivery: Student technology program readies for spring quarter](#)
- *Online Academic Success Coaching:* [Success Coaching: UW Academic Support Programs](#)
- *Online Study Skills Resources:* (e.g. time management) [Study Skills: UW Academic Support Programs](#)
- Video on preparing for online learning: <https://vimeo.com/4012001600>