SOSC1860: Population and Society

Instructor: Stuart Gietel-Basten

Enrolment requirements

No course pre-requisite. Basic spreadsheet skills required.

Course objectives

To give students:

- an appreciation of the role of population issues in contemporary society
- the ability to find and evaluate demographic information
- an understanding of the main measurements of population
- an appreciation of how we consider future changes in population
- the opportunity to develop their skills in basic quantitative analysis, presentation and team-work

Intended learning outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will be able to

- Explain how and why population issues drive, and are driven by, changes in society, politics and the economy
- Find and evaluate pertinent data relating to population
- Perform, and evaluate, basic calculations to produce core demographic measures relating to mortality, fertility and migration
- Project populations into the future; and interpret these findings
- Demonstrate a higher degree of competence in spreadsheet skills, presenting data, and working in a team.

Teaching and learning activities

The course will be taught in a regular lecture format but with interactive components. Students should come to class with either a Smartphone (with the SOCRATIVE STUDENT app installed) or an internet-enabled tablet/laptop. In some classes you will need a laptop, however you will be told when this is required! However, in order to supplement learning, videos of the lectures will be provided. Having said this, attendance at lectures is mandatory.

Assessment

Exercises (40%)

The written assessment mode of the course will be a series of two exercises. These will be on the topics of (a) population growth/data/age structure; and (b) measuring and interpreting. The exercises will be around answering guided questions and will combine simple quantitative analysis with interpretation of these figures. Each exercise is worth 20 marks.

Attendance, participation (60%)

In each class (after add-drop period) we will take attendance in Socrative, but also examine your participation in class using the app. There are no penalties for incorrect answers, but your participation will be weighted by the extent to which you interact with the exercises.

Office hours

Office hours can be booked on appointment through the TAs.

Week	Monday class	Wednesday class	Notes
1 (w/c 29/1)		Introduction to the course; What is demography? Big issues in demography	
2 (w/c 5/2)	Finding and evaluating population data (1)	Finding and evaluating population data (2)	
3 (w/c 12/2)	HOLIDAY!	Population growth and decline (1)	End add/drop
4 (w/c 19/2)	Population growth and decline (2)	Population distribution and density	
5 (w/c 26/2)	Changing age structures; introduction to Assignment 1	*NO CLASS. Online exercise: how to draw population pyramids*	
6 (w/c 4/3)	Interpreting age structures	Fertility basics and first measures	
7 (w/c 11/3)	Fancier measures of fertility	Thinking about low and high fertility rates, and policies	Submit exercise 1 (Monday 11/3)
8 (w/c 18/3)	Measures of health and the epidemiological transition	Mortality basics and first measures	
9a (w/c 25/c)	Fancier measures in mortality	Even fancier measures of mortality: Life tables: how to calculate and interpret them (No class: online video to watch)	
9b (w/c 1/4)	MID-TERM BREAK	MID-TERM BREAK	

10 (w/c 8/4)	Introducing migration: concepts, patterns and trends	Causes and themes in migration	
11 (w/c 15/4)	Introducing projections and forecasts; Managing uncertainty in projections and forecasts	Online videos: Scenarios in projections and forecasts	
12 (w/c 22/4)	Population ageing	Population and climate change	
13 (w/c 29/4)	Introduction to final assignment	HOLIDAY	
14 (w/c 6/5)	Time to work on final assignment (with appointments with teaching team)	Wrap-up	Submit exercise 2 (10/5)