COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course will provide a foundation in the demography of aging for the doctoral student in Aging Studies. The premise underlying this course is that population aging will be the major demographic phenomenon affecting the nation’s health and social institutions over the next half-century. The major issue addressed is the importance of demographic and epidemiological trends for the total welfare of society. Students will develop a broader understanding of the consequences of aging and what the effects are likely to be in the United States and other countries in the 21st Century.

The course is designed to provide students with exposure to the trends, projections, and scenarios that may unfold as society ages. The emphasis will be on the interaction of demographic, health, social, and economic processes. Relationships will be examined primarily but not exclusively at the macro-society level.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Class Participation: -- 25%

Because this course has a small number of highly qualified students, it will be organized as a seminar rather than a lecture. Each individual will be expected to have thoroughly read all the required material before the class date and to be involved in the class discussion at each session. During each class, the Instructor will lead the discussion on the Required Readings; students will be Assigned Readings and lead the discussion on them. You are responsible for all of the readings; however, it is expected that your reading of the materials assigned to your peers will be somewhat
cursory, and that you will concentrate on your own assigned reading. As part of your class participation grade, you will also be required to produce an abstract of your assigned readings (an example will be given out at the first class); please take this seriously and be sure to make enough copies for me and your colleagues (13 minimum – should be enough).

**The format of each abstract will be:**

2. Single-spaced
3. Organization:
   a. Complete APA citation.
   b. Article in a nutshell: no more than 3 sentences describing what the article is about.
   c. 1-2 paragraphs about research questions, methods, and results
   d. CRITIQUE: --- this is critical (pun intended). Part of your job in this course is to learn how to be skeptical readers of research. Just because an article has made it into print doesn’t mean it is without flaw.

**Exams: 25% each**

In addition, there will be two tests: an in-class midterm and an online, non-cumulative final - each of these will test mastery of the topics discussed over the semester, and each will be worth 25% of your grade. Both exams will be essay type and the final exam will be posted on Blackboard; students may take the final as soon as it is posted through Safe Assignment (Dec 6th), but it **must be completed by the 11th of December.**

**Term Paper: 25%**

Finally, students are required to produce a term paper, also worth 25% of the grade, which is due by the 6th of December. The objective of the paper will be to expose the student to the classical literature in the demography of aging. A list of several topics, from which you may choose your preferred topic, and instructions for the paper are included at the bottom of this syllabus. You may choose your own topic but be sure to clear it with me.

**Deadlines on the paper will be:**

- Topic Determined: October 4
- First Draft Due: (opt.) Nov. 8
- Final Paper Due: Dec. 6

**GRADING:**

Grades will be assigned, therefore, as follows:

- Class participation/abstracts 25%
- Midterm 25%
- Final 25%
- Paper 25%
**READINGS:**

All of the articles and book chapters listed below are posted on Blackboard under their respective Learning Modules in the Course Document folder. The required readings are listed in Red Font; assigned readings are in black.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Reading Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Pass Out Sample Abstract</td>
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<td>Course Requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introductory Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>The Life Table and Summary Measures of Population Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Have a basic understanding of the utility of population health indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Understand where Life Expectancy comes from</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murray Chapters, Sections 1.1, 2.1, 2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Assigned Readings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Economic Consequences and the Concept of Cohort in Social Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Understand the impact of cohort differences in population studies</td>
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<td>2) Appreciate the iterative relationship between the economy, demographic decisions, and prospects for elderly cohorts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macunovich, Birthquake Chapter and Case</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned Readings:</td>
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9/20  Mortality and Life Expectancy

**Objectives:**

1) Understand the impact of mortality and its antecedents on the age structure of the population

**Required Readings:**


**Assigned Readings:**


Objective:
1) Examine issues of extreme longevity – the centenarians
2) Understand the implications of the fertility and migration on the age structure of the population

Required Readings:

Assigned Readings:
Trends in Health and Compression of Morbidity

Objectives:
1) Understand the issues behind the age-old question: are we living longer and better or worse?
2) Appreciate methodological implications of Time Trend analysis – timing, measurement, etc.

Required Readings:

Assigned Readings:

TERM PAPER TOPIC DUE TODAY!
Disability, Frailty, and Active Life Expectancy

Objectives:
1) Understand the measurement issues in disability research
2) Appreciate the concept of Health Expectancy and its applications

Required Readings:

Assigned Readings:
Disability:

Frailty:

Active Life Expectancy:
Demography and Epidemiology

Objectives:
1) Understand the connections between demography and epidemiology
2) Learn basic Epi methodology

Required Readings:
Morton, Hebel and McCarter Chapters
Weinstein et al., Chapters 1 and 5

Epidemiology Literature: Chronic Conditions and Diseases

Objective:
1) Understanding basic issues addressed by the epidemiological literature
2) Receive exposure to the Epi literature on age-related conditions and diseases

Required Readings:

Assigned Readings:
BioDemography Literature

Objective:
1) Appreciate new field – biodemography – as a way to link demography and epidemiology

Required Readings:

Assigned Readings:

This is the last time to submit a draft of your Term paper!!!
If you’re not at that point, this is a good time to work on it!

NO CLASS – WE WILL BE AT GSA

Thanksgiving Day --- Anyone want to meet????
(me, neither!)
11/29 Health Disparities and the Social Gradient

Objectives:
1) Discuss another age-old question: just what IS the relationship between SES and health?
2) Appreciate complexity of researching racial/ethnic health differences

Required Readings:


Assigned Readings:


12/6 Global Research on Aging

Objectives:
1) Gain insight into issues of population aging around the world
2) Appreciate cross-national measurement issues

Required Readings:


Assigned Readings:


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Final Exam: Due by Dec. 11th; will be posted December 6th
Final Paper Due: December 6th
Instructions for Term Paper

POPULATION AGING

This paper should be approximately 30 pages (+/- 10%), double-spaced, and should be a review of literature on a topic of your choice, within the general topics suggested. If you would prefer a topic not listed as a choice, please clear it with me. Your topic choice is due to me on Oct. 4th; I strongly suggest that you adhere to this date, in case you need to change topics. However, if you become mortally interested in something else, please consult me.

The paper should review and critique the existing literature on the general topic; for techniques on writing a good lit review, see ProTips #3 and #4 on summarizing and critiquing articles, and preparing a good lit review. Most important when doing a lit review is that it is not a report on what’s been written. It is review and critique – basically the purpose is to lay out what is known about a particular topic; what is not known; and what needs to be discovered. In order to do this, you should organize your paper around issues that arise in your readings. Present the literature by discussing who has written what, what was good/bad about their methods, whether their findings make sense, and how do they compare to others who have addressed a similar topic. Finally, the essence of a lit review is to synthesize what you have read – what are the implications of the readings for the topic (this is where you’d summarize what we know, don’t know, and need to know).

The class reading list is meant to be a starting point, and I strongly urge you to read all of the articles/chapters listed. I will suggest some possible questions you may want to address under each topic. Please use these as a guide, but if you find other compelling issues in the readings, feel free to address other questions. If you are at all uncertain, please come talk to me!!

SUGGESTED TOPICS: (in no particular order)

Worldwide aging -- How and why is the aging experience similar or different in countries other than the US? What factors influence differential aging across the world? How is aging likely to change in the future for different countries/areas of the world?

Social Changes and Mortality – What will be the most important social and economic consequences of the aging of the population over the next 20-40 years? How will demographic decisions and/or policies impact family structure and functioning?

Trends in Health and the Compression of Morbidity – are older adults living longer and healthier? Or, are they living longer and less healthy? What are the likely answers to these questions for future older adults? SHOULD we be working on extending life to its absolute maximum possible? What would be the implications for our health care systems if we did?
Healthy Life Expectancy – What is the point of estimating healthy (active, disability-free) life expectancy? What prospects do various segments of the population have for healthy life expectancy? How are these prospects likely affected by socioeconomic status? What do studies on Healthy Life Expectancy imply for current and future medical/social services?

Health Inequality – What differences or similarities exist in the health of various segments of the US population? What factors impact the differences? Is it race, ethnicity, SES, willing to use health care services, or what? How do our policies attempt to prevent inequality in health? Have they been effective?

Fertility, Mortality, & Migration – What are the trends in each, in the US and elsewhere? What differential impact do fertility, mortality, and migration exert on the age structure of the population, and what does that mean for private and public ‘decision-making.’ Is this the same/different in other parts of the world?

Any other questions, come ask me!!!