

SOC 170: Population Problems Section Syllabus

Teaching Assistant: Alexis Dennis

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Discussion Sections

DIS 306 : SOC SCI 6314, 12:05 PM - 12:55 PM, W
DIS 307 : SOC SCI 6314, 01:20 PM - 02:10 PM, W
DIS 318 : STERLING 1323, 08:50 AM - 09:40 AM, F
DIS 319 : STERLING 1323, 09:55 AM - 10:45 AM, F
DIS 320 : STERLING 1323, 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM, F

Purpose of Discussion Section

Welcome to Sociology 170! Discussion sections give you a chance to discuss each week's concepts, to make connections across the weekly themes, and to build critical thinking skills. To do this effectively, please come to section having completed all readings and listened carefully during lecture.

Discussion Section Requirements:

There are three major components to the course: 1) attendance and quality participation; and 2) written assignments, 3) exams.

(1) Attendance & Quality Participation: *Attendance* is mandatory, and I will take attendance each week. You may miss one discussion section, no questions asked. Further absences will lower your attendance and participation grade. It is your responsibility to make up all missed work; be sure to obtain any handouts distributed in class and borrow notes from classmates.

High quality participation will meet the civility guidelines below, will be grounded in the class readings, and will demonstrate a strong command of the course material. You are required to demonstrate that you have been mindful of the lectures and readings. You can do this by engaging in class discussion and helping each other to critically engage with the material in smaller group discussions. I recognize that due to background and personality, students have different abilities; some of you may be more vocal than others. You will not be penalized simply for being a quiet person. However, I encourage you to make an effort in contributing thoughtful, relevant comments at each section meeting. Attendance and quality participation together are 10% of your grade in this course.

Your Discussion participation will be measured as follows:

Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated with reference to the readings and empirical evidence, and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly. (Outstanding = 10/10)

Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished. (Good = 9/10)

Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat. (Adequate = 8/10)

Non-Participant: This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed. (Non-participant: 7/10)

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights, and never provide constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be improved. (Unsatisfactory: 5/10)

For all students: Participation scores will also be lowered at the TA's discretion for students who are an active distraction from the class discussion, including but not limited to off-topic multitasking, belittling the contribution of other students, and actions that create a hostile classroom environment.

(2) Written assignments: There will be two short writing assignments that will require you to connect class material to current events. The purpose of these assignments is for you to draw a clear connection between theoretical concepts and material reality. An additional handout will explain these assignments in more detail. The two written assignments will together make up 20% of your grade in the course.

(3) Exams: There will be three exams in the course. The first two will be non-cumulative. The third will comprise of material covered throughout the course. Taken together, material and handouts covered in discussion sections, lecture, and written assignments will aim to prepare you for the exams in this course. The exam grading is as follows:

Your exam grade in this course will be based on the following components:

- Exam 1: In class (20% of total grade, covers weeks 1-6)
- Exam 2: In class (20% of total grade, covers weeks 6-10)
- Final Exam: date/location TBD (30% of total grade, covers full semester)

Grades will be assigned in accordance with the UW undergraduate grade policy, using the following point distribution:

A: 93-100 AB: 87-92.99 B:83-86.99 BC: 77-82.99 C: 70-76.99 D: 60-69.99 F: 0-59.99

You may contest specific exam and assignment grades *up to two weeks* after the exams and assignments have been returned. Raise minor issues (e.g. computational errors in your score) with your TA. Any substantive concerns about the contents of your answer should be discussed with the professor. Requests to re-grade assignments after final grades are submitted will not be honored.

Civility

The broad topics of this course—fertility, mortality, migration, health, race/ethnicity, and poverty—are both personal and political. To learn most productively, we will build an atmosphere of mutual respect and engagement in which all of us feel comfortable participating. Please use these guidelines to help us to achieve a civil and comfortable classroom community:

- **Criticize the idea, not the person.** Especially when you disagree, remember to make the idea, opinion, or concept the object of your constructive critique, rather than the person who said it. Personal attacks, or blatant sexist, racist, homophobic, or antagonistic language will not be tolerated. Be provocative, and make us think—but don't insult each other or your TA.
- **Learn to distinguish between factual claims and opinions.** Factual claims can be checked against evidence. The following are both factual claims: "I had this particular experience," and "my experience is typical of everyone's experience." However, the former is true and should be respected when you report it, but the latter may or may not be true, and can be assessed with evidence from other people and from research.
- **Use your sociological imagination.** Remember that it is not just about you, but also about the structure of society. Reassess your place in the society. Contribute to discussions that emphasize the connections among history, social structure, and personal biography.
- **Be sensitive to minority/majority dynamics.** Be mindful of your own positionality. People who are members of racial/ethnic minorities or people who hold minority opinions can feel particularly vulnerable in some contexts. Let me know if you are worried about class dynamics.
- **Communicate with your TA.** Approach me after class, make an appointment, or send me an email about when you feel uncomfortable or very strongly about an event or discussion relevant to class.

Contacting Me and Office Hours

Please email me or talk to me after class to schedule an appointment. I am happy to talk to you about any sources of confusion, challenges you might be having, or to delve deeper into some of the issues we will discuss in this course. Office hours are the ideal time to get one-on-one attention and work out any issues you're having with the material from lecture or discussion section. If you have a question about course material, please come prepared with the necessary readings or notes. Office hours are actually preferable for questions about concepts and course material.

Feel free to email me short administrative questions or to set up meeting times. I try to respond to student emails in a timely manner (usually within 48 hours barring any unusual circumstances). Avoid sending last-minute messages, as I may not be able to respond to them in time. **This means that if you need to**

schedule an appointment outside of office hours, you need to give me at least 48 hours notice. You should also consult a classmate to double-check assignments and deadlines to make sure you are on track.

******Before emailing me about assignments, due dates, or other course material and requirements, please check your syllabi. I will not respond to questions that have been addressed in the lecture and/or section syllabus.******

Email Etiquette: In all of your emails, please include “SOC 170: Sec 1xx” in the subject line and include your full name in the body. I try to respond to all emails within two business days. Email is a professional communication tool, and you should use it as such. This website has helpful advice for emailing professors and TAs: www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor.

NOTE: Whether you have a detailed or obscure question, I’ll be better able to help you if you send an email prior to attending office hours. The email should briefly state when you plan to attend and what you would like to discuss.

Digital devices

Keep cell phones away during section, unless directed by the TA. You may use **laptops or tablets** during specified times in discussion section. So please bring your electronics with you each week to discussion section so that you may better participate in activities and other in-class assignments.

If you are using a laptop, it benefits you and everyone around you to save email/texts/social media posts until after class. A recent study found that multitasking students performed worse on a postclass test; critically, so did classmates who could see the computer [Sana, F., T. Weston, and N.J. Cepeda (2013). Laptop multitasking in the classroom hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers and Education* 62: 24-31]. Please be considerate of your classmates. I will intervene if multitasking becomes distracting.

Absolutely no devices (including phones, laptops, iPads, etc.) are allowed during exams, and you may not record any lectures or discussion sections without written consent from Dr. Grant or your TAs.

Accommodations

Please contact Dr. Grant or your TA **by the end of the second week of the course** if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week of class, so we must know all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/> for details.

Academic Integrity

In your exams and written assignments, you are expected to exercise academic honesty and integrity. According to UWS 14, academic misconduct occurs when a student:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of [...] academic performance
- Assists other students in any of these acts

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other breach of academic integrity on an assignment in this course will result in an automatic failing grade of 0 for the exam or assignment in question, and a submission of written reports to your college dean and the dean of students. Those administrators may (at their discretion) take further disciplinary action. Please note that lack of familiarity with policies will not excuse failure to comply with them.

The university's Writing Center has an excellent webpage about how to successfully quote and paraphrase texts: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>. See also these guidelines about avoiding plagiarism: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html. Please make every effort to avoid such issues in your section writing assignments.

Departmental notice of grievances and appeal rights

The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (jraymo@ssc.wisc.edu).

Detailed Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Key population concepts

Week 3: Environment and fertility

Week 4: Low fertility and contraception

Week 5: Population aging and longevity

Week 6: Epi transition/health reversals/exam review

Week 7: Social construction of race (Exam #1 – Oct 16)

Week 8: Racialized social systems in the US/Health in US (Writing Assignment #1 due)

Week 9: Health inequalities & residential segregation

Week 10: Neighborhoods, race, and health

Week 11: Mass incarceration, poverty, and stress/Exam review

Week 12: Life course and health (no section 11/23 & 11/24)

Week 13: Migration/immigration

Week 14: Borders and ethnic enclaves (last discussion section?) (Writing Assignment #2 due)

Dec 15: Final Exam, 12:25 – 2:25 pm, Location TBD