

SOC 330 Population Problems: Dating, Marriage, and Fertility
University of Michigan, Fall 2020

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1 COVID-19 Teaching Plans

Given the size of our class, Soc 330 in Fall 2020 is entirely virtual, and we adopt the **asynchronous online** format to ensure full participation of all students. This means:

- **Lecture:** Pre-recorded lectures will be posted to the course website each week on **Tuesday morning**. You have the rest of that week to watch the video.
- **Grading:** To motivate everyone to stay on track with the weekly lectures and readings, we will mainly use **frequent short response papers** as our assessment. To ensure equity in grading, we follow LSA’s COVID-19 grading guidelines: A-C grades are maintained, D or E grades appear as “No Record Covid (NRC)”. More details in the *Requirements and Assessments* section below.
- **Staying Connected:** Although COVID-19 has made meeting in person impossible, it is still important for us to stay connected with one another—perhaps even more so during this challenging time. In place of synchronous class discussions, as part of your participation grade, you are invited to **at least two short office hour check-ins** with me throughout the semester. More details in the *Requirements and Assessments* section below.
- **Peer Learning:** Being able to connect with and learn from your peers in class is central to a successful and joyful educational experience. In this spirit, we will use Canvas discussion board as our “message board.” Postings are ungraded: You can reflect on readings, raise questions, discuss a relevant news event, or just check in with one another (to name a few ideas). Feel free to post as much (or little) as you are comfortable with—but always be respectful to others in class.

2 Course Description

Who marries whom in contemporary societies, and how have patterns of cohabitation and marriage changed? How do individuals choose partners, and make decisions about childbearing? Why are some countries experiencing extremely low fertility rates? Why is

low fertility considered a “problem,” and for whom? What are the consequences of various policies that seek to govern individuals’ reproductive behavior?...

In this course, we explore the different factors that shape contemporary population sizes, distributions, and characteristics, paying specific attention to union formation and marriage, reproduction and fertility, and family-related policies. The course is organized in two thematic parts. In the first half, we explore the union formation and dissolution processes. In the second half, we focus on fertility and reproduction. This course will introduce you to how sociologists and demographers study dating, marriage, family, parenthood, reproduction—topics that may seem personal—scientifically.

Throughout this course, we draw the link between micro individual-level behavior and decision-making, and macro societal-level patterns and trends. We situate the issues of dating, marriage, and fertility in relation to other important socioeconomic and demographic problems, such as income and wealth inequality and health disparity. We adopt a global perspective, focusing on the United States and a range of countries both in the Global North and the Global South.

3 Learning Objectives

- This course is intended for a wide range of students who might be interested in learning about social demography, gender and family systems, and population policies. There are no prerequisites for this course.
- The readings consist of both theoretical and empirical pieces. Through this course, you are expected to develop a reasonable grasp of the major theories, concepts, and facts (e.g., what is the second demographic transition? What is homogamy, hypergamy, and hypogamy? What is a low vs. high birth rate?).
- We will read works that have used a variety of methodological approaches. You are expected to develop the ability to interpret data (quantitative and qualitative) in order to build and critique arguments.
- The course will also provide resources and some methodological training that prepare you to write a research paper in the future.

4 Course Material

All required readings are electronically available through either the course site, or the UM library. A supplemental reading list is attached at the end of the syllabus.

5 Requirements and Assessments

5.1 Short reading response (80%)

One frequently expressed challenge in online learning is how to stay motivated and keep up with weekly lectures and readings. Because of this, we rely on frequent short reading response to make sure everyone stay on track throughout this semester.

Starting the second week (Sept 8), at the end of the Tuesday lecture video, you will receive a prompt that helps you think more about the material covered and write that week's response. You are free to choose **any eight weeks** to write a response, which should be submitted to the course Canvas site by **the following Wednesday 11:59pm**.

Your reading response should be **1-2 pages in length, using double space and 12-pt font**. You are evaluated on the thoughtfulness of your response: A thoughtful response is not simply summarizing/recapping the readings and lectures, but reflect on them (e.g., asking questions, connecting them with world events or other readings).

Because there is flexibility built in already (i.e., you can choose which weeks that you want to write the response), **no extension** will be granted. In extenuating circumstances (e.g., sickness, caring for a sick loved one, etc.) that you are unable to turn in responses for multiple weeks, please reach out to me to discuss alterative plans.

5.2 Office hour check-in (20%)

Office hours offer a great space to build intellectual connections and get support, whether you have questions about the course or simply want to chat. In place of synchronous class discussions, I invite everybody to **at least two** brief office hour check-ins.

Office hours are not meant to be evaluative—meaning that you don't have to worry about "sounding smart" for your professor, and you receive the full 20% as long as you show up. If you feel more comfortable setting up the virtual meeting as a group (2-3 people), you are welcome to do so as well. In addition, you are welcome to set up any number of additional meetings beyond the first two check-ins.

To set up a meeting, use the link on our Canvas site and I will follow up with a Zoom invite. If none of the available time slots works for you, please reach out to me to discuss alterative plans.

6 Grade Composition and Conversion

Reading response $8 \times 10\% = 80\%$

Office hour check-in $2 \times 10\% = 20\%$

Letter grade conversion:

A+	95% and above	A	92-94%	A-	88-91%
B+	85-87%	B	81-84%	B-	78-80%
C+	75-77%	C	71-74%	C-	68-70%
NRC	67% and below				

7 Support, Resources, and Inclusive Learning

7.1 Writing support

I strongly encourage everyone to utilize the services provided by the Writing Center. You could meet with a writing consultant to improve your assignments.

7.2 Inclusive learning

The university and I are committed to fully include all students. Diverse perspectives are a valuable asset in the learning process—they strengthen our engagement with and understanding of the course material.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) can provide support services and academic accommodations to students with disabilities. Please inform me and contact SSD as soon as possible to request any accommodations.

If religious observances conflict with any course activities, please let me know early in the semester.

Additional resources on inclusive teaching can be found here:

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/home/campus-resources-2/>

Please reach out to me if you need support and resources, particularly in light of the pandemic.

7.3 Difficult and challenging topics

Some topics surrounding dating, marriage, fertility, and reproduction can feel especially challenging, contentious, or frustrating to engage with. These feelings and experiences are valid—and as a class and as a community, part of the learning process is finding our own path to and language for productive engagement with difficult topics. Again, please reach out to me if you need support and resources.

8 Course Schedule

PRELUDE

Week 1 Welcome to the Course

Lecture date: 9/1

No required readings

DATING & MARRIAGE

Week 2 Marriage and Family as a Changing Institution

What counts as a family, and who gets to decide? Who are included or excluded in the rights to marry, to parent, or to *not* parent? How do people find partners? Market is frequently invoked as a metaphor when discussing the mate search process. How do sociologists theorize marriage and mate preference? What role does marriage play in the reproduction of inequality?

Lecture date: 9/8

Readings:

- Cherlin, Andrew. 2004. "The deinstitutionalization of American marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4): 848-861.
- Meadow, Tey & Judith Stacey. 2006. "Families." *Contexts* 5(4): 55-57.
- Smock, Pamela & Christine R. Schwartz. 2020. "The demography of families: A review of patterns and change." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1): 9-34.
- Kalmijn, Matthijs. 1994. "Assortative mating by cultural and economic occupational status." *American Journal of Sociology* 100(2): 422-452. (Read pp. 422-427 closely, skim the rest.)

Week 3 Marriage, Boundary, and Inequality

Marriage often means the acceptance of an "outsider" into one of the most intimate institutions. What happens when marriages transcend some form of group boundary? What do cross-boundary marriages tell us about contemporary inequalities? This week we focus on marriages and three kinds of boundary: Education, race/ethnicity, and social class.

Lecture date: 9/15

Readings:

- Mare, Robert. 1991. "Five decades of educational assortative mating." *American Sociological Review* 56(1): 15-32. (Read pp. 15-17 closely, skim the rest.)
- Torche, Florencia. 2010. "Educational assortative mating and economic inequality." *Demography* 47(2): 481-502. (Skim.)
- Pew Research Center. 2017. "Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 years after Loving v. Virginia."
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/05/18/intermarriage-in-the-u-s-50-years-after-loving-v-virginia/>
- Qian, Zhenchao. 2005. "Breaking the last taboo: Interracial marriage in America." *Contexts* 4(4): 33-37.
- Streib, Jessi. 2015. "Explanations of how love crosses class lines: Cultural complements and the case of cross-class marriages." *Sociological Forum* 30(1): 18-39.
- Zhou, Yun. 2019. "Economic resources, cultural matching, and the rural-urban boundary in China's marriage market." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 81(3): 567-583.

Week 4 Beyond Marriage I: Late-marriage, Cohabitation, and Union Dissolution

So far, we have focused on how people choose spouses and enter into marriages. Why are some individuals—across societies—delaying getting married? Is there a gendered dimension to this trend? How have patterns of cohabitation and divorces changed? Do these trends correspond to other social transformations?

Lecture date: 9/22

Readings:

- England, Paula, & Jonathan Bearak. 2012. "Women's education and their likelihood of marriage: A historic reversal."
- Hong, Leta. 2012. "China's 'leftover' women." *NYT*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/opinion/global/chinas-leftover-women.html>
- Rich, Motoko. 2019. "Craving freedom, Japan's women opt out of marriage." *NYT*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/world/asia/japan-single-women-marriage.html>

- Smock, Pamela, et al. 2005. “Everything’s there except money: How money shapes decisions to marry among cohabitators.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67(3): 680-696.
- Manning, Wendy, et al. 2019. “Cohabitation and marital expectations among single millennials in the U.S.” *Population Research and Policy Review* 38: 327-346.
- Killewald, Alexandra. 2016. “Money, work, and marital stability: Assessing change in the gendered determinants of divorce.” *American Sociological Review* 81(4): 696-719.

Week 5 Beyond Marriage II: Queering Marriage

This week we consider the confluence of gender, sexualities, and union formation—coming back to the overarching theme of family and inequality. We move beyond heteronormative union formation, and consider same-sex unions and the path to marriage equality.

Lecture date: 9/29

Readings:

- Chauncey, George. 2005. *Why Marriage?*. Chapters 4.
- Pew Research Center. 2019. “Attitudes on same-sex marriage.” <https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>
- Stacey, Judith & Tey Meadow. 2009. “New slants on the slippery slope: The politics of polygamy and gay family rights in South Africa and the United States.” *Politics and Society* 37(2): 167-202.
- Umberson, Debra, et al. 2015. “Challenges and opportunities for research on same-sex relationships.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77(1): 96-111.
- Watson, Ryan, et al. 2017. “What we know and where we go from here: A review of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth hookup literature.” *Sex Roles* 77(11-12): 801-811. (Skim.)

Week 6 Modern Love: Sex, Dating, and the Internet

How does the rise of technology (think internet and apps) change the way of how people meet and find romantic partners? Is the internet a great equalizer in the marriage market? We now turn to the role of technology. We examine the decoupling of sex and marriage, with a focus on sex on the college campus.

Lecture date: 10/6

Readings:

- Rosenfeld, Michael, & Reuben Thomas. 2012. "Searching for a mate: The rise of the internet as a social intermediary." *American Sociological Review* 77(4): 523-547.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth, et al. 2010. "Is hooking up bad for young women?" *Contexts* 9(3): 22-27.
- England, Paula, et al. 2014. "Hooking up and forming romantic relationships on today's college campuses.." *The Gendered Society Reader*.

FERTILITY & REPRODUCTION

Week 7 Fertility: Key Concepts, Theories, and Facts

This week, we will start with some basic concepts, models, and facts about fertility and population—you will get a sense of how demographers study reproduction. Our readings and discussion will focus on one core question: Why does fertility change?

Lecture date: 10/13

Readings:

- McFalls, Joseph A. 2007. "Population: A lively introduction." Population Reference Bureau. (Read closely the fertility section, skim the rest)
- Mason, Karen Oppenheim. 1997. "Explaining fertility transitions." *Demography* 34(4): 443-454.
- McDonald, Peter. 2000. "Gender equity in theories of fertility transition." *Population and Development Review* 26(3): 427-439.
- United Nations, 2020, "World fertility and family planning report." (read pp. 9-11).

Week 8 Becoming Parents: Individual Behavior and Constraints

How do individuals make decisions about the transition into parenthood? What constraints do they face? How is the work-family incompatibility gendered? This week we continue our discussions of the link between gender equity and fertility, focusing on a broader range of societies.

Lecture date: 10/20

Readings:

- Brinton, Mary et al. 2018. “Postindustrial fertility ideals, intentions, and gender inequality: A comparative qualitative analysis.” *Population and Development Review* 44(2): 281-309. (Skim.)
- Goldscheider, Frances et al. 2015. “The gender revolution: A framework for understanding changing family and demographic behavior.” *Population and Development Review* 41(2): 207-239.
- Brinton, Mary C., & Eunsil Oh. 2019. “Babies, work, or both? Highly educated women’s employment and fertility in East Asia.” *American Journal of Sociology* 125(1): 105-140.

Week 9 Governing Reproduction: The “Problem” of Low/High Fertility

States often care about how many babies are born. Why? How is low/high fertility problematized—it is a problem for whom? This week we consider the policies that aim to encourage/reduce births, and the consequences.

Lecture date: **10/27**

Readings:

- Morgan, Philip. 2003. “Is low fertility a twenty-first-century demographic crisis?” *Demography* 40(4): 589-603.
- Three short blog posts:
 - Brinton, Mary. 2019. “Burden-sharing: A remedy for falling birth rates in East Asia.” East Asia Forum. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/03/17/burden-sharing-a-remedy-for-falling-birth-rates-in-east-asia/>
 - McDonald, Peter. 2013. “Very low fertility: An East Asian dilemma.” East Asia Forum. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/04/23/very-low-fertility-an-east-asian-dilemma/>
 - Zhao, Zhongwei. 2019. “China’s fertility woes.” East Asia Forum. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/05/01/chinas-fertility-woes/>
- Wang, Feng, et al. 2013. “Population, policy, and politics: How will history judge China’s one-child policy?” *Population and Development Review* 38: 115-129.

Week 10 The Personal and the Political: Reproductive Rights and Justice

Who are included and excluded in the rights to parent, or not to parent? Whose needs are marginalized or privileged? Who are the stakeholders in the debate over reproduction—and what are at stake? How does the process of exclusion mirror broader social inequality patterns? This week we focus on the frameworks of reproductive rights and reproductive justice, and consider how we can approach contemporary debates through these lens.

Lecture date: 11/3

Readings:

- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2001. “Fresh Winds in Beijing: Chinese Feminists Speak Out on the One-Child Policy and Women’s Lives.” *Signs* 26(3): 847-886.
- Morgan, Lynn, & Elizabeth Roberts. 2012. “Reproductive governance in latin america.” *Anthropology & Medicine* 19(2): 241-254.
- Ross, Loretta, & Rickie Solinger. 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*, Chapter 4. (Please find the ebook through UM library)
- Viterna, Jocelyn, & Jose Santos Guardado Bautista. 2017. “Pregnancy and the 40-year prison sentence.” *Health & Human Rights* 19(1): 81-93.

Week 11 LRCCS Noon Talk

No lecture, attend the LRCCS Noon Talk on Nov 10 instead. More details to follow.

Week 12 The Biological and the Social: Reproduction and Health

In the previous weeks, we have considered reproduction at the nexus of the personal and the political. This week, we focus on reproduction at the juncture of the biological and the social. We examine maternal health disparity, and reflect on the biases in the medical institutions.

Lecture date: 11/17

Readings:

- Cottom, Tressie. 2019. “I was pregnant and in crisis. All the doctors and nurses saw was an incompetent black woman.” *Time Magazine*, <https://time.com/5494404/tressie-mcmillan-cottom-thick-pregnancy-competent/>
- Harrison, Eona & Ebonie Megibow. 2020 “Three Ways COVID-19 is Further Jeopardizing Black Maternal Health.” Urban Institute blog,

[https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/
three-ways-covid-19-further-jeopardizing-black-maternal-health](https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/three-ways-covid-19-further-jeopardizing-black-maternal-health)

- Ronsmans, Carine, et al. 2006. “Maternal mortality: Who, when, where, and why.” *The Lancet* 368(9542): 1189-1200.

Week 13 Reproducing Inequality

How does the family reproduce not just populations, but also social inequality? What shapes individuals’ parenting choices, and what are the implications of different parenting strategies for issues like equity and justice? We also turn our attention beyond heteronormal parenthood.

Lecture date: 12/1

Readings:

- Lareau, Annette. 2003. *Unequal Childhoods*. Chapters 1, & 12 (Please find the ebook through UM library)
- Goldberg, Abbie et al. 2020. “We don’t exactly fit in, but we can’t opt out”: Gay fathers’ experiences navigating parent communities in schools.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

CONCLUSION

Week 14 Where Do We Go From Here

Lecture date: 12/8

Readings:

- England, Paula. 2015. “Sometimes the social becomes personal: Gender, class, and sexualities.” *2015 ASA Presidential Address*.

9 Supplemental Reading List

Armstrong, Elizabeth, & Laura Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the Party*.

Blair-Loy, Mary. 2003. *Competing Devotions: Career and Family Among Women Executives*.

Edin, Kathryn, & Maria Kefalas. 2005. *Promises I Can Keep*.

- Halfmann, Drew. 2011. *Doctors and Demonstrators*.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1989. *The Second Shift*.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1997. *The Time Bind*.
- Mojola, Sanyu. 2014. *Love, Money, and HIV: Becoming a Modern African Woman in the Age of AIDS*.
- Stone, Pamela. 2007. *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*.
- Streib, Jessi. 2014. *The Power of the Past*.
- Wade, Lisa. 2017. *American Hookup*.