SOCL4701 Population
Spring 2015
Tuesday & Thursday 1:30-2:50pm
132 Prescott Hall

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Professor Brian Thiede
Office: 10B Stubbs Hall
Phone: 225-578-3748
Email: bthiede@lsu.edu
Office hours: Tues & Thus 3:00-4:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores the processes that influence the size and composition of human populations, as well as the causes and consequences of population change. It also seeks to develop your ability to analyze demographic data and understand published demographic research. While grounded in sociology, the course also draws upon material and methods from economics, geography, government, and other social science disciplines. Subject matter addresses population dynamics in the both the United States and internationally.

Specific course objectives include:
• Describe and evaluate theories of population change
• Analyze historic and contemporary demographic trends in the United States and other countries
• Develop skills for analyzing demographic data, communicating findings, and understanding published research

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Required texts

Attendance and participation (10% of final grade)
Attendance and participation in class meetings is encouraged and will account for 10% of your final grade. To assess attendance and participation, 4 brief quizzes will be assigned randomly and unannounced throughout the semester. Your attendance and participation grade will be reduced by 25% (i.e., 2.5% of your total grade) for each quiz that you miss because of an unexcused absence. To be excused from class, you must provide written documentation of a valid reason for absence within 1 week of the class you miss. Please see LSU Policy Statement 22 for a list of valid reasons for absence. Note that this policy includes absences from examinations, which, if unexcused, will result in a score of 0 for that exam.
**Empirical assignments (50% of final grade)**
You will be expected to complete 4 empirically grounded assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will involve such tasks as interpreting rates and other demographic indicators, analyzing demographic data, and writing briefs or developing policy recommendations based upon empirical evidence. These assignments will reinforce conceptual and methodological content from readings and lecture, and allow you to exercise important practical skills that may contribute to career development, among other outcomes. Each assignment will be worth 12.5% of your final grade. Further details and grading rubrics will be provided with each assignment. You are not prohibited from consulting with classmates while completing these empirical assignments, but all final calculations, interpretations, and writing must be completed individually. As described below, violations of academic integrity will not be permitted.

**Exams (20% of final grade each; combined 40% of final grade)**
There will be 2 exams in this course, each of which will be worth 20% of your final grade. Each exam will take place in our regular classroom unless otherwise noted. Exams will be held on the following dates:

- Exam date #1: Thus 5 Mar (regular class meeting time)
- Exam date #2: TBD

You absolutely must arrive to the exam site on time. No one will be permitted to begin an exam once the first completed exam has been turned in. Missing the exam due to such tardiness will result in a score of 0 for that exam. See “Attendance and participation” section above for policy regarding absences during exams.

**Grading**
Your final grade will be based upon 3 components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical assignments (4)</td>
<td>50% (12.5% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2)</td>
<td>40% (20% each)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to your combined scores in each of these components, a letter grade will be assigned using the following ranges:

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F 0-59

Grades will not be rounded and there will be no opportunities for extra credit for this course.
COURSE POLICIES

Assigned readings
Assigned readings should be completed before the class meeting for which they are listed in the outline below. You may benefit from reviewing or re-reading the material after lecture as well, but completing the readings before the class meeting will enhance learning and your ability to participate in class.

Office hours
My office hours will be held in my office (10B Stubbs Hall) each week on Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00-4:30pm, unless otherwise announced. I allocate this time each week to meet with students like you, so please utilize it. E-mail is not a substitute for attending office hours. Please come to my office during these periods (or by appointment) to ask substantive questions about the course rather than e-mailing them. I am here to help you learn.

No electronics in the classroom
Laptops, cell phones, and all other electronics are not permitted during class meetings. See the below article for some of the many reasons behind this policy:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/30/this-year-im-resolving-to-ban-laptops-from-my-classroom/

Failure to comply with this rule will, according to research, lower your (and your classmates’) learning comprehension. It will also result in a deduction of 2 percentage points from your final grade for each infraction. If you have a medical or other essential reason for using a laptop or other electronic device, please contact me for approval.

Academic integrity
All students are responsible for meeting standards of academic and personal integrity. The penalties for breaching these rules are severe, and lack of knowledge is not an acceptable excuse. Familiarize yourself with all university rules, regulations, and penalties regarding academic misconduct. All suspected cases of such violations will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Special needs
Students with special needs should register with the Office of Disability Services to ensure they receive the appropriate support and accommodation. Please contact me in person or via-email during the first 2 weeks of class if you will require any accommodations for this course, and I will gladly work with you put this in place.

Subject to change
This syllabus is subject to change, including those announced in class. If you miss a class meeting, please check that you did not miss any essential updates.
# COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

## Course introduction
- **Thus 15 Jan**  First day of class: no assigned reading

## Introduction to population studies
- **Tues 20 Jan**  Rowland, Chapter 1
  Iceland, Introduction

## Population growth, decline, and age-sex composition
- **Thurs 22 Jan**  Rowland, Chapter 2
- **Tues 27 Jan**  Iceland, Chapter 1
- **Thus 29 Jan**  Rowland, Chapter 3
- **Tues 3 Feb**  Rowland, Chapter 4

## Fertility/birth rates
- **Thus 5 Feb**  Rowland, Chapter 7
- **Tues 10 Feb**  Iceland, Chapter 2

## Empirical assignment #1 due
- **Thurs 12 Feb**  no assigned reading

## Mortality/death rates and population health
  Iceland, Chapter 8
- **Tues 24 Feb**  Rowland, Chapter 6

## Life tables
- **Thus 26 Feb**  Rowland, Chapter 8
Migration and immigration


Thus 5 Mar  **Midterm exam:** no assigned reading

Tues 10 Mar  Rowland, Chapter 11

Thus 12 Mar  Iceland, Chapter 5

*No office hours Thus 12 Mar*

Tues 17 Mar  **Empirical assignment #2 due:** no assigned reading

Population distribution

Thus 19 Mar  Rowland, Chapter 10

Iceland, Chapter 7


Population composition

Thus 26 Mar  Iceland, Chapter 4


Tues 31 Mar  Iceland, Chapter 6


Thus 2 Apr  **Empirical assignment #3 due:** no assigned reading

Tues 7 Apr  No class

Thus 9 Apr  No class
**Population and the environment**

**Tues 14 Apr**  
*Global Environmental Change* 18: 38-53.

**Thus 16 Apr**  
Fussell, Elizabeth, Lori M. Hunter, and Clark L. Gray.  
*Global Environmental Change* 28: 182-191

**Population and development**

**Tues 21 Apr**  

**Thus 23 Apr**  

**Tues 28 Apr**  
**Empirical assignment #4 due:** no assigned reading

**Political demography**

**Thus 30 Apr**  

**TBD**  
**Final exam**