In this seminar, we will read, discuss, and evaluate recent work on a range of substantive issues central to the social demography of fertility, families, and households. We will place particular emphasis on developing a solid understanding of trends and associated explanations as well as individual-level correlates of a range of family behaviors. Because the “demography of fertility, families, and households” encompasses a body of research that is far too vast to be covered completely in a single semester, we will not be able to read deeply on any one subject but will summarize the broader literature while reading representative work on a wide range of topics. In the process of writing a research paper, you will have the opportunity to read more deeply on a particular area of interest. A weekly schedule for the semester is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview (including Recent Social and Economic Trends)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>Theoretical Perspectives on Family Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Marriage and Cohabitation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>Divorce, Remarriage and Stepfamilies</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>Family Structure and Child Wellbeing **9-11am</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>February 22</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Same-Sex Couples and Parents</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Fertility in Industrialized Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Nonmarital Childbearing (including Teen Childbearing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Family Complexity</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Work and Family</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Inequality in U.S. Family Life</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Families in Cross-National Perspective</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>Public Policies Related to Families and Children</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Presentation of Student Papers **9am-12pm</td>
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The readings focus mostly on the contemporary U.S. with a few readings about industrialized countries more generally. This is not for lack of interest in other places but simply the need to cover a wide range of topics in a single semester and, therefore, the inability to consider the notable variation across country contexts. I encourage you to contribute insights from your own knowledge, research or readings about other countries in class. Also, we will not focus explicitly on
methodological issues or techniques, much of which is covered in the demographic techniques sequence and advanced statistics courses.

Requirements

This class will keep you busy! Requirements are: (1) come to class prepared to discuss the required readings; (2) send discussion questions by Monday 9am before the class sessions where we will have guided discussions; (3) work with a classmate to collaboratively prepare brief presentations and lead discussion (see below for details); (4) write and present a research paper; (5) provide written feedback on a colleague’s research paper.

This course has two main overall objectives: the first is for everyone to develop a high level of comfort with recent research in the broad field of family demography. The second is to write the first draft of an empirical research paper that, with revision, could be submitted to a professional journal such as *Journal of Marriage and Family* or *Demography*.

Class time will take two formats (not necessarily alternating each week):

1) **Guided Discussion (abbreviated as ‘GD’ below).** Each GD week, every class member is (of course) expected to read the assigned readings carefully and then to send 3 thoughtful discussion questions to the class. Discussion questions should address important substantive, theoretical, data, and methodological issues about the topic for that week. Each question can be on a single reading or can address broader issues across multiple readings. Students should email their discussion questions to the class via the course email list (soc971-1-s17@lists.wisc.edu) or post on the course website **no later than 9am on the Monday before class** (earlier if possible). **Two students for each GD class** will be responsible for combining and organizing the questions by topic/theme into one document and bringing paper copies to class. These two students will also be responsible for facilitating class discussion during class, drawing on (but certainly not limited to) the questions they distributed.

2) **Presentations and Discussion (abbreviated as ‘P+D’ below).**

Each P+D week, the first hour of class will be comprised of three presentations of roughly 20 minutes each. The first will provide an overview of trends and differentials in the family behavior(s) of interest that week (e.g., marriage and cohabitation). The second will provide an overview of the big questions and related theories (covering both the classic works and more recent developments). The third will provide an overview of key issues related to data, measurement, and methods. For each segment, 15 minutes will be devoted to the presentation and 5 minutes to Q&A/discussion. These presentations should, of course, emphasize content rather than form. Students are expected to consult additional information about their assignment as needed (e.g., Census data for trends, other research articles for ideas about theory and data/measurement). After a short break, we will reconvene for a discussion of the assigned readings that, again, everyone will have read carefully. I will use the final 10-15 minutes of class to summarize and address issues that were not covered.

**Two students (or some weeks 4 students)** will be responsible for preparing the presentations and leading discussion. All presentations should have accompanying handouts or Powerpoint slides. I will be available throughout the week to meet or discuss via email how to prepare these
presentations. If you are one of the students who are presenting in a given class session, you do not need to submit discussion questions for that session. All other participants should submit questions as usual.

There are currently 7 students enrolled in the class. The GD weeks involve 2 students leading discussion, and the P+D weeks involve 2-4 students. There are a total of 28 ‘slots’ over the 12 weeks of the course (not including the first and last classes and the two dates we won’t meet). Each student should sign up to lead in one of these capacities 4 times over the semester.

We will spend the final class session presenting and discussing your research papers. As in most graduate seminars, the standard for papers is that they will eventually be submittable for review at a professional journal such as Demography or Journal of Marriage and Family. Because this is no easy task, I recommend that you get started on your papers as soon as possible. Hopefully, most of you are already engaged in work that could form the basis of this paper. This paper does not need to be something entirely new. It can be a write-up of preliminary results of research that you are currently involved doing (perhaps something you will be presenting at the Population Association of America annual meetings?). It can also be a substantially improved version of a paper that you have submitted for a previous class. Regardless, I would like to meet with everyone (if useful to you) sometime during the first few weeks of the semester to discuss what you would like to work on for your research paper.

I would like you to submit the paper in stages:

1. Submit a 1-2-paragraph summary of your proposed topic by February 8.
2. Submit a 2-4-page research proposal (including background, research question/hypothesis, proposed data and methods) by March 1.
4. Submit draft of full paper to assigned reviewer by April 12.
5. Submit reviews to author and to me on April 26.
6. Present papers in class and submit final version on May 3.

If you haven’t seen it, I encourage you to read a very good article by Lynn White about how to write an empirical journal article:


I am hoping that we can run the presentation of papers during the last class like a (very efficient!) conference. (We will need to start the class earlier and/or end later, and we will discuss timing.) We can allot 20 minutes per person—12-15 minutes to present the paper and 5-8 minutes for Q&A and constructive feedback.
**Course Readings**

Most assigned readings are journal articles (primarily from *Journal of Marriage and Family, Demography, Population Studies, and Population and Development Review*), as well as a few book chapters. I will post them all on the course website. You could also easily find the articles via Google Scholar. Please note that the reading list is subject to change if I find new/better readings to add or exchange. Any changes I do make will leave time for adequate preparation (i.e., 2-3 weeks in advance).

**Departmental Learning Objectives**

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content that we will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities for graduate student learning by the Department of Sociology:

1. Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature.
2. Students will complete an original research project in one of the subfields of sociology.
3. Students will evaluate social science literature and employ most appropriate methods and practices in their own research.
4. Students will develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research question.
5. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.
6. Students will understand, recognize, and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.

**Expectations and Information**

**Course Policies.** The professor adheres to all Department, College, and University policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, incompletes, plagiarism, and student evaluation of the course and its instruction.

**Writing Center.** Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources and classes offered by the Writing Center (located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall). See: [www.writing.wisc.edu](http://www.writing.wisc.edu).

**Academic integrity.** As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students: [https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity](https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity). According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as, an individual:

- 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 a student's academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.
For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students’ website (above). If you have questions about plagiarism specifically, you should consult the information on the Writing Center website regarding “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html). Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please do not hesitate to ask.

Reading List by Week

Week 1, January 18: Introduction and Overview (including Recent Social and Economic Trends)


Week 2, January 25: Theoretical Perspectives on Family Life (GD)


Week 3, February 1: Marriage and Cohabitation (P+D)


**Week 4, February 8: Divorce, Remarriage and Stepfamilies (P+D)**


**Week 5, February 15: Family Structure and Child Wellbeing (GD)** **Meet 9:00-11:00am**


**Week 6, February 22 – NO CLASS**

**Week 7, March 1: Same-Sex Couples and Parents (P+D)**


**Week 8, March 8: Fertility in Industrialized Countries (P+D)**


**Week 9, March 15: Nonmarital Childbearing (including Teen Childbearing) (P+D)**


**Week 10, March 22: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**
Week 11, March 29: Family Complexity (P+D)


Week 12, April 5: Work and Family (GD)


Week 13, April 12: Inequality in U.S. Family Life (P+D)


AND


**Week 14, April 19: Families in Cross-National Perspective (P+D)**


**Week 15, April 26: Public Policies Related to Families and Children (GD)**


**Week 16, May 3: Presentation of student papers **Meet 9:00-12:00pm**

Revised: February 1, 2017