

SYLLABUS

SOC 212: Comparative Sociology and Demography of the Family

Prof. Joe Swingle (PNE 332)

Phone: 3841

Office hours: Tues 2:40-4:30; Thurs 1:00-3:00

Term: Fall 2008

Room: PNE 339

Time: Tue, Fri 11:10-12:20

This course is not your conventional “Introduction to Demography” methods course. Its emphasis will be on theories that try to come to terms with the underlying mechanisms that shape events of interest to demographers, sociologists, and increasingly economists—events like choosing a spouse, getting married, having children, and getting divorced. We will wrestle with social science’s understanding of the structural forces and human motivations that underlie marriage trends, fertility trends, and divorce trends. The majority of our readings will be American-focused so the comparative adjective may be a bit misleading if you take it to mean comparisons with other non-American societies. We will draw upon cross-cultural comparisons but they will be strategically interspersed throughout the course. More often, we will be making comparisons across gender and, to a lesser degree, across different ethnic and racial groups within the U.S. As for the demography part of the title, demography is the study of population structure and change. Demographers study human societies by collecting, processing, and analyzing demographic data. This course does not teach you the mathematical methods used by demographers – those mathematics are beyond the scope of this course. Rather, this course aims to provide you with a sociological and demographic lens for examining fundamental human behavior and institutions like marriage, the family, childbearing, fertility control, and living arrangements.

Required Texts:

Title	Author	New Price (Amazon 8/27/08)	Used Price (Amazon 8/27/08)
<i>Modern Babylon?: Prostituting Children in Thailand</i>	Heather Montgomery (2001)	\$27.95	\$9.98
<i>Marriage in Men’s Lives</i>	Steven Nock (1998)	\$42.00	\$11.98
<i>Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage</i>	Andrew Cherlin (1992)	\$22.05	\$1.99
<i>Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life</i> *	Annette Lareau (2003)	\$14.93	\$13.00
<i>Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail-Order" Marriages</i> *	Nicole Constable (2003)	\$20.65	\$12.58

* Electronic book available through the Wellesley College Library

Course Requirements:

- Class participation 20%
- Midterm exam 20%
- Two papers (5-7 pages) + presentation 30%
- Final exam 30%

Meaning of symbols:

FC	First Class folder
ER	E-Reserves
JS	JSTOR (or other on-line archive available via the Wellesley College Library)
RT	Required text

Sept 2	Introduction
Sept 5, 9	The family decline controversy – trends and explanations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: “Let’s Get Married” - PBS Frontline (60 mins; Clapp HQ536 L47 2002) • Andrew Cherlin (1992), <i>Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage</i>. Chaps 1-2 (RT) • David Popenoe 1993. “American Family Decline, 1960-1990: A Review and Appraisal.” <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 55, Aug: 527-542. (JS) • Stephanie Coontz (1992), "The Way We Wish We Were: Defining the Family Crisis", pp. 8-22 • Murray, Charles. 2001. “Prole Models: America’s elites take their cues from the underclass” (FC)
Sept 12	NO CLASS
Sept 16	The family decline controversy - consequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. 1993. “Dan Quayle was Right.” <i>The Atlantic</i> 271, n. 4, April, 47-84. (FC) • Cherlin, “Going to Extremes: Family Structure, Children’s Well-Being, and Social Science,” <i>Demography</i>, November 1999, 36(4), 421-428. (JS) • Andrew Cherlin (1992), <i>Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage</i>. Chaps 3 (RT) • Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. 1994. "How Father Absence Lowers Children's Well-Being" in <i>Growing Up With a Single Parent</i>, p. 19-38. Cambridge: Harvard (ER)
Sept 19, 23, 26	Family, poverty, and the debate over the African American family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: “The Vanishing Family: Crisis in Black America” • Cherlin (1992), <i>Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage</i>. Chap 4 (RT) • Daniel Moynihan, <i>The Negro Family: The Case for National Action</i> (FC) - excerpts • Chapter 3 in William Julius Wilson, 1987. <i>The Truly Disadvantaged</i>. (ER) • Ruggles, Steven. 1994. “The origins of African-American family structure.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 59 (February: 136-151) (JS) • Murray, Charles 1993. “The Coming White Underclass” <i>Wall Street Journal</i>, 29 October 1993 (FC)
Sept 30, Oct 3	Class and family life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lareau, Annette (2003). <i>Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life</i> (RT) • Brooks, David. 2001. “The Organization Kid” in <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>, April 2001. (FC)
Oct 7, 10	Marriage and non-marriage: the female perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edin, Kathryn 2000. “Few Good Men,” <i>American Prospect</i>, January (v11, no4) (FC) • Susan J. Ferguson. 2000. “Challenging Traditional Marriage: Never Married Chinese American and Japanese American Women.” <i>Gender and Society</i> 14(1): 136-159. (JS) • Sara Lee. 2004. “Marriage Dilemmas: Partner Choices and Constraints for Korean Americans in New York City.” (ER) • “Rethinking Marriage After 40” (www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13007828/site/newsweek/) • Stone, Tony. 2001. “The Bridget Jones Economy.” <i>The Economist</i> December 20th, 2001 (FC) • Louise Story (Sept 20, 2005) "Many Women at Elite Colleges Set Career Path to Motherhood" <i>New York Times</i> (FC)
Oct 17, 21	Marriage and non-marriage: the male perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nock, Steven. <i>Marriage in Men’s Lives</i> (RT) • Akerlof, George. 1998. “Men without children.” <i>Economic Journal</i> 108: pp. 287-309 (JS) • Kathleen Gerson, "Dilemmas of Involved Fatherhood" in <i>Shifting the Center</i>, pp. 324-338 (ER)
Oct 24	Midterm exam (in-class)

Oct 31, Nov 4	Courtship, Marriage, and Power
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail-Order" Marriages</i> (RT) • Allan Johnson, Chapter 2 "Privilege, Oppression, and Difference" in <i>Privilege, Power, and Difference</i>, pp. 12-40 (ER)
Nov 7, 11	The elderly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan McArdle, "No Country for Young Men" Jan/Feb 2008 <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>. • Himes, Christine. 2002. "Elderly Americans" <i>Population Bulletin</i> 56(4): 3-40. (JS) • Bengston, Vern L. 2001. "Beyond the nuclear family: the increasing importance of multigenerational bonds." <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> 63: 1-16. (JS) • Uhlenberg, Peter. 1980. "Death and the Family" <i>Journal of Family History</i> 5(3):313-320. (JS) • Preston, Samuel H. 1984. "Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents" <i>Demography</i> 21(4): 435-457. (JS) • Ogawa, Naohiro and Robert D. Retherford. 1997. "Shifting costs of caring for the elderly back to families in Japan." <i>Population and Development Review</i> 23(1): 59-94. (JS) • Gawande, Atul. 2007. "The Way We Age Now." <i>The New Yorker</i> (30 April 2007). (JS)
Nov 14, 18	The meaning of childhood in cross-cultural perspective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: "Children for Sale" (45 minutes, <i>NBC Dateline</i>, 2001) • <i>Modern Babylon?: Prostituting Children in Thailand</i> (RT)
Nov 21, 25	Childbearing decisions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russell Shorto. "No babies?" <i>New York Times</i> 29 June 2008 (JS) • Scrimshaw, Susan C. 1978. "Infant mortality and behavior in the regulation of family size" <i>Population and Development Review</i> 4(3): 383-403. (JS) • Axinn, William G. and Jennifer S. Barber. 2001. "Mass Education and Fertility Transition." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 66(4): 481-505. (JS) • Luker, Kristin. 1991. "Dubious Conceptions: The Controversy Over Teen Pregnancy" <i>The American Prospect</i>. March v2, no5. (FC) • Geronimus, Arline T., Sanders Korenman, Marianne M. Hillemeier. 1994. "Does Young Maternal Age Adversely Affect Child Development? Evidence from Cousin Comparisons in the United States." <i>Population and Development Review</i> 20(3): 585-609. (JS)
Dec 2, 5	Son preference and other topics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Demand for Sons: Evidence from Divorce, Fertility, and Shotgun Marriage" by Gordon B. Dahl, and Enrico Moretti, NBER Working Paper No. 10281. (FC) http://www.nber.org/papers/w10281 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steven Landsburg. 2003. "Oh, No: It's a Girl" and "Maybe Parents Don't Like Boys Better." <i>Slate</i>. (FC) ○ Leonhardt, David. "It's a Girl! (Will the Economy Suffer?)" <i>New York Times</i> Oct 1993 (FC) • Zeng, Yi et al. 1993. "Causes and implications of the recent increase in the reported sex ratio at birth in China." <i>Population and Development Review</i> 19(2): 283-302. • J. Stacey and T. Biblarz. (2001) "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" <i>American Sociological Review</i> 66: 159-183. (JS) • Guang Guo and Leah VanWey. 1999. "Sibship Size and Intellectual Development." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 64(2): 169-187. (JS)
Dec 9	Students discuss their final papers