

SOCIOLOGY 224E: DEMOGRAPHY OF AGING

Fall 2002: MW 3:55-5:10p.m. Soc/Psy Building, Room 331.

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SYLLABUS

Description and Objectives. This seminar will survey the research literature in three areas of the demography of aging:

- biodemography,
- medical demography, and
- social demography.

In each area, the objectives are for students to obtain an understanding of key concepts, theories, methods, and research findings so that they can read, understand, and begin contributing to current research in the area.

Class Meetings and Organization of the Course. Seminar instructors and students will meet on Monday of each week at the assigned hour. On Mondays, only seminar participants will attend. The second meeting of the seminar participants each week will be on a day and time to be agreed upon by seminar participants in conjunction with participants in the Demography, Life Course, and Aging Workshop.

The Workshop meets weekly during the academic year. It is organized jointly by the Department of Sociology and the Center for Demographic Studies for all individuals at Duke interested in this topic (faculty members, research scientists, post-doctoral students, demography of aging trainees, and other graduate students). The Workshop has presentations of current research by speakers (either local or visiting) when possible; otherwise, it will focus on the study of recent contributions to the research literature in the demography, life course, and aging areas – which complements the work of the seminar.

Readings will be assigned for the seminar meeting each week. Sometimes the readings will come entirely from the course textbooks described below. At other times, additional research articles may be assigned. Seminar instructors and/or students will be assigned the task of summarizing the readings each week and leading a discussion/study thereof.

Course Materials. Three books, listed below, will comprise core readings for the seminar. The contents of all three books (plus additional documents) are available on a CD-ROM in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, entitled *Books on Aging and Health by the U.S. National Academies* from the National Institute on Aging. A copy of this CD will be given to each student enrolled in the seminar.

In addition, selected articles from the research journals will be assigned from time to time. Copies of these will be made available to seminar participants when they are assigned.

- (1) Martin, Linda G. and Samuel H. Preston (eds.)
1994 *Demography of Aging*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- (2) Martin, Linda G. and Beth J. Soldo (eds.)
1997 *Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Health of Older Americans*.
Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- (3) Wachter, Kenneth W. and Caleb E. Finch (eds.)
1997 *Between Zeus and the Salmon: The Biodemography of Longevity*.
Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Requirements and Grading. Students are required to attend all seminar meetings unless specifically excused. For the assignment of grades, there will be two take-home examinations during the seminar: one just before Fall Break and one during Final Examination Week.

Seminar Schedule. Topics covered will proceed more or less according to the following schedule, although some deviations may occur as the semester progresses.

Week of:

August 26, 28

- Introduction to the seminar.
- What is the demography of aging?
Chapter 1 of (1) plus additional readings

PART I. The Biodemography of Aging

September 2, 4

September 9, 11

September 16, 18

September 23, 25

September 30, October 2

- During each of these weeks, two chapters from (3) will be assigned as readings on the biodemography of aging around which to focus seminar discussions. Additional readings from recent journal articles also will be assigned.

PART II. The Medical Demography of Aging

October 7, 9

TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION I DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11th, 2002

Fall Break – Friday, October 11th through Tuesday, October 15th

October 16

October 21, 23

October 28, 30

- Initial discussions of the medical demography of aging will commence with Chapter 7 of (1). This will be followed by the study of several additional articles from the research journal literature.

PART III. The Social Demography of Aging

November 4, 6

November 11,13

November 18, 20

November 25

- Discussions of the social demography of aging will focus on Chapters 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 from (1) and several chapters from (2). These may be supplemented by additional readings from the research journal literature.

Thanksgiving Break – Wednesday, November 27th through Sunday, December 1st

**TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION II DUE DURING FINAL EXAM WEEK,
DECEMBER 9th to DECEMBER 14th**