



The University of Western Ontario

Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY 4441B-001

Living and Dying: Demographic Inequalities

Winter 2026

In-Person

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This is a DRAFT copy only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description: This course examines demographic inequalities in living and dying. Topics covered are births, deaths, migration, aging, and marriage. This course involves hands-on learning, where students learn to understand, read, and write about data regarding important trends in social inequality today, preparing them for a variety of labor market opportunities.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The main goal of this course is to understand how demographers interpret population change via the mechanisms of fertility, mortality, and migration. A core emphasis of the course is to understand how these mechanisms differ across sociological groups. As such, the purpose of this course is to

- Be able to describe and interpret differences in birth rates and death rates across sociological characteristics, with an emphasis on attributes to declining patterns across nations.
- Understand the relationship between demographic change and social change and how each influences the other across time.
- Gain insight into projected population trends and the policy implications of such trends.

By the end of this course students will be able to

- Interpret key demographic measures related to birth and death.
- Develop analytical skills necessary to ensure success in academic and labor-related activities related to demography.

Course Material:

There is no required textbook for this course, and all course materials will be provided on Brightspace or made available from the UWO library. You will need a stable internet connection and a computer to access Brightspace. Additionally, a simple calculator will be required for calculating basic demographic measures and can be purchased from the UWO bookstore (or other stores) for approximately \$15.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course [OWL Brightspace](#) site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students enrolled in the course.

Course Schedule and Readings:

The reading list and weekly schedule are available on the course Brightspace site.

For students looking for additional resources, useful demographic textbooks include:

- Rowland, Donald T. 2012. *Demographic Methods and Concepts*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Poston, Dudley L. and Leon F Bouvier. 2017. *Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [2nd edition].
- Wachter, KW. 2014. *Essential Demographic Methods*. Harvard University Press.
- Keyfitz N, Caswell H. 2005. *Applied Mathematical Demography*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Midterm: 35% - February 9. The midterm will be online, typed, and open book, but no AI use is permitted. Content is inclusive of all lectures and readings up to the midterm date. The midterm will be two hours in length, with an additional 30-minute submission grace period, and is comprised of five short answer questions. Questions will involve calculating and interpreting demographic measures, interpreting demographic figures, graphs, and tables, and writing about key concepts. No substantive questions will be addressed during the midterm – only procedural questions. Midterm submission will be via Brightspace; however, students should email the instructor in the situation where technological issues arise.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course, the midterm has been designated as the assessment requiring supporting documentation. Students who cannot take the exam at the designated time must provide valid supporting documentation to their home faculty's Academic Counselling Office. If a student misses the midterm with proper documentation, a make-up exam will be administered in-person during the departmental make-up exam date (Date, Time, and Location: TBA).

Demographic Profile: 30% - March 16, with 48-hour flexibility in submission with no academic penalty. Students will apply their understanding of course content with the creation of a demographic profile for a country of their choosing. You will select a country and describe key demographic features (age and sex structure, recent trends, projections, etc.). The expected length of the demographic profile is approximately 3 pages plus figures or tables and references. A full description of the demographic profile assignment, with marking rubric, will be provided on Brightspace. All demographic profiles will be submitted on Brightspace as a pdf.

Please note that because the submission deadline for the Demographic Profile already includes flexibility in the form of a 48-hour submission window, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility. Should students submit their assessment beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 25% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade.

Final Exam: 35% - TBA by the Registrar's Office during the final exam period. The final exam will be in-person, open book, but no AI use is permitted. Content is inclusive of all lectures and readings throughout the course, with a strong emphasis on content covered post-midterm. The final exam will be two hours in length and is comprised of five short answers, in a similar format to the midterm. Students who cannot take the exam at the designated time must provide valid supporting documentation to their home faculty's Academic Counselling Office. If a student misses the final exam with proper documentation, a make-up exam will be administered during the departmental make-up exam date (Date, Time, and Location: TBA).

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Electronic Devices:

Electronic devices are permitted during classes, open-book midterm, and the open-book final exam.

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf) – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is *always* required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf> or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf. Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Code of Student Conduct: It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf. Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

Student Responsibility: Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and

that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf and the Registration and Progression policy
https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf. Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program
https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf.

Support Services:

Office of the Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

[Faculty Academic Advising](#) - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters
https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html.

[USC services](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/> .

[Mental health](#) – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Health & Wellness Services](#) – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](#) provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

[Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#) – Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

[Western Libraries](#) – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](#) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>