Overview

In 2011 the population of the world reached 7 billion people and, according to high end projections, it may reach 16.6 billion people by the year 2100. This course discusses the drivers of human population growth, and human population distribution, and examines the environmental implications of human population growth. Is the human race growing at an unsustainable rate, and therefore destroying the Earth’s environment or is environmental degradation a consequence of power relations in society and, therefore, unrelated to how many human beings are on the Earth? This is a debate that has persisted since the Eighteenth Century.

Course Structure

The material in this course will be presented in a series of lectures augmented by brief films shown in class. The lecture notes are based upon the textbook and they will be posted on Blackboard.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student should have a solid grasp of the principles of demography and the controversies prevailing therein.

Required Readings

For this course you will be required to read:


These books can be purchased or rented from the SDSU bookstore. Detailed notes for each lecture will also be posted on Blackboard along with supplementary readings.
Grade Assessment

Midterm Examinations

This course will have three (3) midterm examinations written in class, lasting 60 minutes in duration, each worth 30 percent, and one book review worth 10 percent. The first midterm will be written on October 12th and will be based on chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 of Weeks’ Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues. The second midterm will be written on November 16 and will be based on chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Weeks’ Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues. The third midterm will be written on December 7th and will be based on chapters 10, 11, and 12 of Weeks’ Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues. These midterm examinations will consist of short answer questions and they will emulate study questions that will be posted on Blackboard.

Book Review

The remaining 10 percent of your grade will be based upon a critical review of Harrison’s novel Make Room! Make Room! This novel vividly displays many concepts discussed in the nexus of population and environment. Students are to critically review this book using the concepts learned in this course and the review is due in class on December 7th. Guidelines for writing a critical book review can be found here: http://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/study/criticalbookreview/

The midterm and book review will be marked on a numerical (percentage) basis. The course grade is calculated by using the weights indicated above and then converted into a letter grade. As a guide to determining standing, these letter grade equivalences will generally apply:

A 90 to 100, A- 85 to 89, B+ 80 to 84, B 75 to 79, B- 70 to 74, C+ 65 to 69, C 60 to 64, C-55 to 59, D+ 50 to 54, D 45 to 49, F 0 to 44

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, at the instructor's discretion, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.

Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work cannot discuss their work with the Instructor within the first 48 hours after the grade has been made available and must discuss their work within 14 days after the grade has been made available. Unclaimed work will be available from the instructor during office hours.
Class Policies

Under no circumstances will deferred examinations be facilitated. Should an examination be missed due to an acceptable reason (such as a medically documented illness) the missed component of the course will be reweighted onto the remained of the course.

If you require special accommodations due to a religious holiday, university-sponsored sports event, or other documented reason, you must let me know me about this within the first two weeks of classes in order to make sure that I can make suitable arrangements. If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

While attendance is not required for this course, and will not be taken by the instructor, students are strenuously urged to attend class and to behave in a clam, orderly, and respectful manner while in class (ie do not talk in class).

As per university policy, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of zero on the assignment. Academic dishonesty cases will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Class Schedule

The course will commence on August 24th and, with the exception of the Labor Day Holiday on Monday September 7, we will have a class each week. The course will cover the following chapters, in the following order, of Weeks’ Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues.

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Demography

Chapter 2: Global Population Trends

Chapter 3: Demographic Perspectives

Chapter 5: The Health and Mortality Transition

Chapter 6: The Fertility Transition

Chapter 7: The Migration Transition

Chapter 8: The Age Transition

Chapter 9: The Urban Transition
Chapter 10: The Family and Household Transition

Chapter 11: Population and Sustainability

Chapter 12: What Lies Ahead?