Political Science 410/430: Capstone Seminar
The Demographic Foundations of American Politics and Policy

Fall 2011
793 SWKT
Mondays, 3:00-5:30 pm

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Note: the definitive version of this document at any point in time is on Blackboard

Focus

Demography is the study of population—why it changes (births, deaths, immigration) and how it is structured along socially important dimensions (age, gender, race, religion socioeconomic status, etc.). The forces that drive demographic change and the compositional aspects of a population are also intimately related to politics and to the creation and consequences of public policies. This course explores some of those connections.

Objectives

Here is basically what you will do in this class:

- Read some fascinating stuff
- Have some friendly, tantalizing conversations
- Do a few intriguing assignments
- Write a kickin’ paper on a topic of your choosing

Prerequisites:

- If you try to take this class without having had PLSC 200 then you are, in all likelihood, not a very good person. Do not let me find out, or I will surely develop contempt for you.
- It is a good idea to have had PLSC 328 and a theory class (300/310/330/350/370) before taking this class. That is what they call this a capstone—meaning it comes at or near the end of your career in the major—not just whenever the heck you want to take it.
- God has given you many talents and skills that will help you do well in this class. But, then, maybe he hasn’t. In either case, I cannot do anything about it but love you. Your mother will love you, too. But that doesn’t make life fair. Just don’t blame me. It is God’s plan, not mine.
Texts

There are four texts in this class. You should have received an email about them long ago. I put a considerable amount of effort into picking awesome texts that are also very, very economical (see above about how your professor loves you). If you like to pay more than you should and be treated poorly, by all means go to the Bookstore. However, please do not let me see you try to sell your textbooks back or sell them on Amazon. Books should be your friends. They, unlike your human friends, will never let you down. Book Buyback makes me cry inside. Really.

Anyway, here they are:


Other Readings

There will be some other assigned readings, though not too many. Some of them are listed at the end of this syllabus. Others I may add as it suits my fancy. Do not whine about this. There are actually people in the world who wish their problems consisted of too much assigned reading.

Course Requirements

Some professors like to say, “The syllabus is the contract we have between us.” Yeah, right. Here is what I like to say: “I have the power in this relationship, and don’t forget it.” But I am also very benevolent and shockingly easy to talk into stuff by students who are nice to me. Remember that.

I promise that I will not make disruptions to the schedule without giving you ample warning (at least I will try not to). Please don’t pretend that you are doing assigned readings weeks in advance and that if I change one little thing it will bring your world crashing down.

One of the goals of this class is to get you talking and, actually, to have you lead conversations. Thus, on some days, you will have the assignment of preparing a short
PowerPoint presentation on a particular question for the day. Other days you will be assigned to lead the conversation. Sometimes this will require a little bit of research, but mostly it will require doing the readings and thinking about them. Remember, thinking of interesting discussion questions takes the pressure off you because it gets other people talking. Also, talking is easier if you have actually done the readings. This class will be small. Faking it will be hard.

So, here is the basic breakdown of the class:

**Course Participation: 40%**

Includes doing (just a few) little assignments, preparing presentations, leading discussions, participating in discussions, helping your classmates with their papers, and bringing treats to class, as well as maintaining good hygiene and proper decorum, of course. You are entitled to your opinions, however strong, but we will observe the rule that no one, whether in the class or not, shall be compared to Hitler (you get the idea).

**Research Paper: 60%**  This is broken down into parts:

1. Brainstorming Exercise (2%)
2. Research proposal (5%)
3. Progress report (3%)
4. First Draft (10%)
5. Final Draft (30%)
6. Oral Presentation (10%)

Yes, yes, yes. I will give you more detail on what goes into each of these assignments and how you are to complete them. Due dates are on the daily schedule. If you hand stuff in late, I will assess penalties and my opinion of you will, sadly, fall a bit. That cannot be helped. I am very understanding and kind, but do not abuse my good will.

Pay attention to this: Detailed standards for written work will be available on Blackboard, as will grading rubrics for each assignment as it is given to you.

**Grades**

After years of pedagogical experience, I have developed the following grading scheme. Don’t be deceived by the supposed objective grading scheme of other faculty. It is all about judgment. Fortunately, I have very sound judgment and am merciful (usually).

A:  Awesome
A-:  Pretty darn good
B+:  You are probably capable of more, but got behind
B:   OK
B-:  Hmmm, are you really trying?
C+ or lower: Are you trying to tick me off?

The median student usually gets a B or a B+.
If you want a conventional score with a conventional grade at the end of the course: (e.g., 87.62% gets you a B), I can give it to you, but I always curve up—meaning you will likely get a somewhat better grade than you deserve. Unless you want a lower grade, that is.

Also, in order to get a passing grade in this class, you must, (note the double emphasis of both a bold font and italics), submit a final paper worthy of at least a C-. This is Political Science Department policy and very official.

Grades for all assignments will be recorded on Blackboard. I encourage you to visit with me about how you are doing in the course before it is everlastingly too late.

Blackboard

Which brings us to our favorite class friend. The best, up-to-date information will be on Blackboard. Also, turn everything, by which I mean EVERYTHING, into the Digital Dropbox. Do not email me or hand me anything, or I will immediately shred it. Also, when you give PowerPoint presentations, you will need to put them in the Dropbox before class.

University Policies

I’m supposed to put in some of this official language in my syllabus so that I and the university don’t get sued. I think it is up to date. Oh, by the way, please don’t sue me.

Honor Code Standards

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2009-2010.ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php#HCOfficeInvolvement.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be
clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's *Writing Research Papers*.

**Discrimination**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

**Students with Disabilities**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.
Daily Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. An updated schedule will always be available on Blackboard.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1: The Demography of Modern America: An Overview</td>
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<td>29-Aug</td>
<td>Introduction: demography is destiny! YAL:1-2</td>
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<td>5-Sep</td>
<td>Labor Day: No class</td>
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<td>12-Sep</td>
<td>Population growth &amp; change YAL:3</td>
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<td>Brainstorm</td>
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<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>Population composition and diversity YAL:4; OC:1;</td>
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<td>Demographic Portrait</td>
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<td>Part 2: Politics, Policy &amp; Demographic Composition and Diversity</td>
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<td>26-Sep</td>
<td>Social and political stratification Ms:1,2; Chinni &amp; Gimpel</td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<td>3-Oct</td>
<td>Geographical variation OC:6; Tx:1,2</td>
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<td>10-Oct</td>
<td>Race &amp; ethnicity OC:2; Tx:3; Ms3 Preliminary Bibliography</td>
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<td>17-Oct</td>
<td>Gender OC:7</td>
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<td>24-Oct</td>
<td>Religion OC:4; Tx:4; Dionne</td>
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<td>31-Oct</td>
<td>Socioeconomic status OC:5; Ms:4,5 Progress Report</td>
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<td>Part 3: Politics, Policy &amp; The Components of Demographic Change</td>
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<td>7-Nov</td>
<td>Sexual relationships &amp; marriage YAL:8; OC:3; Tx:5;</td>
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<td>Hymowitz; Cherlin</td>
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<td>14-Nov</td>
<td>Fertility YAL:7; Wattenberg (1); Longman (1) 1st Draft (11/16, 5pm)</td>
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<td>21-Nov</td>
<td>Consultations</td>
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<td>28-Nov</td>
<td>Health and mortality Longman (2) Life table assignment</td>
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<td>5-Dec</td>
<td>Immigration YAL:9; Wattenberg (2) Final Paper Due</td>
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Oral presentations will occur during the regularly scheduled final exam time for this class: Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011

Key:

YAL: Yaukey, Anderton and Lundquist
OC: Olson and Green
Ms: Massey
Tx: Teixeira

Additional Readings


