

## **Writing 100: America by the Numbers: An Introduction to Demography**

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**PPHAC 315**

**Office Hours:**

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### **Writing**

Since this is a writing course, I want you to become very comfortable with college-level writing which actually has many different components. I will argue that the primary character of college-level writing is clarity and control. You should think of the social science academic writing process as one in which you are leading your reader along an academic argument. You will identify a topic for discussion about which you think people should be thinking, and then you lead them on the journey. This means that you will practice controlling the logical progression of the argument. This will involve some careful consideration of the logical progression of any argument—think of yourself as the tour guide. Through controlled writing, you will define the path the reader takes—you do not want them side-tracking, stepping off the path that you define (where they might start to challenge your argument!). While maintaining control, you also do not want to “insult the intelligence” of your reader. You do not want to try to convince them of your argument by suggesting that if they do not agree with you, that they are somehow “stupid.” We will learn how to avoid phrasing that basically serves this purpose.

In addition to the writing handbook that you have been given, I will distribute general rules for writing which are basically rules for social scientists. One aspect of college-level writing is learning how to adapt to the particular set of rules associated with different academic disciplines. So, for example, while physical scientists often write in passive voice, social scientists tend to write in active voice. A grammatical construction that might be expected in one discipline would be incorrect to use in another discipline.

From the college's perspective, Writing Courses should meet the following criteria:

**This course, in multiple sections or seminars, will provide and involve the following: 1) experience in writing-to-learn and instruction in writing skills; 2) library and online research; 3) correct use of citation of sources; 4) appropriate technology (word-processing programs, etc.); 5) reading assignments in line with the instructor's chosen topic(s) or theme(s), designed to foster critical thinking and awareness of rhetorical strategies; and 6) introduction to oral communication skills to accompany the writing to learn experience.**

**The components of a writing-to-learn course include: 1) an introduction to writing as process: invention and prewriting, drafting, and revising; 2) ungraded writing (in the form of practice exercises, warm-ups, journal entries etc.) that allows students to think in writing about what they are reading; 3) writing experience, graded and ungraded, that affords engagement with rhetorical skills (working with a variety of audiences, voices and styles); 4) peer editing and collaboration through in-class group work and/or online resources and Writing Center tutors; 5) teacher conferences with each student.**

**Instruction in writing skills includes: 1) focus on rhetorical skills and guided practice; 2) providing for students the experience of writing for varied audiences and in varied styles; 3) the use of a shared writing handbook (to be selected by a committee of first-year instructors and English Dept. members) for instruction in specific conventions of standard written English; 4) increased/enhanced role for Writing Center tutors ; 5) uniform minimum writing requirement (in terms of number of pages/semester, number of papers/semester, or number of words/semester.)**

**As an outcome, students should be better able to assess writing projects so as to choose appropriate rhetorical and research strategies and employ them effectively. In addition, students should be adept in technologies used to conduct research and to write.**

**Abstract:**

Demography is the statistical study of human populations and of the effects of population composition. It encompasses the study of the size, structure, and distribution of populations in response to birth, migration, aging and death. How, for example, do the different relative proportions of old people and young people, of workers and dependents, of men and women, affect the human experience and the structure and function of a society? Why are societies interested in tracking the fertility behavior of their population and what preparations do they have to make for a growing population? Why are some European countries now failing to reproduce themselves and how will this impact the survival of these societies and of their cultures? Why is the United States currently “at replacement” and how does it continue to avoid the fertility decline pitfalls of their European cousins? We will explore these concepts and more in the context of this class, with a special focus on the demographic composition of the US population.

Although demography departments are often housed in sociology departments at academic institutions, the study of population composition extends beyond the field of sociology. It is a vital component of the social sciences in general (including psychology, political science and economics). It is also a vital component of other fields, including education, public health/healthcare and epidemiology, and business/marketing. So students in many different majors can benefit from learning demographic concepts.

**The main goals of this course are to:**

- 1) Introduce students to the major conceptual frameworks of demographic analysis.
- 2) To have students see the interconnectedness of the social processes of birth, migration and death.
- 3) To explore both the biological and social components that affect population composition. For example, we know that there is an ideal window for childbearing, for both the female and for the male. But we are also in a society where more and more people are delaying childbearing in order to pursue higher education and employment. How do we recognize and reconcile these competing forces?
- 4) To have students become increasingly comfortable with interpreting and analyzing demographic data, to develop a “feel” for the structure of the world population, and to understand the United States population’s relationship to the global community.

5) To have students become acquainted/better acquainted with Power Point, and with presenting data/an academic argument to an audience of their peers.

Although advanced demographic analysis can require some very advanced mathematics, many of the basic analyses require only very basic (but important) mathematical concepts. In fact, one of the main demographic formulas reads as follows:  $\Delta P = B - D + IM - OM$

Where:  $\Delta P$  = change in population

B = births

D = deaths

IM = in-migration

OM = out-migration

So fundamental thinking about changing population compositions requires addition and subtraction! So even students who do not think of themselves as strong math students can enjoy demography and benefit from this analytical system.

We will spend a significant part of the course reviewing demographic data from such sources as the US Census, the United Nations, the C.I.A. and the World Health Organization. Students will get ample opportunities to explore different ways of presenting data (including population pyramids), and have multiple opportunities to “read” data, both in tabular and in graphical forms.

**Book:** Yaukey, Anderton and Lundquist, **Demography: The Study of Human Population** (2007 Waveland Press, Third Edition). There will also be a series of handouts that will either be posted on Blackboard and/or handed out in class. These readings/articles should be kept in a binder and organized by topic. They will be useful to use for class activities, assignments and for the final essay.

**Class attendance/participation is mandatory.** If you are going to miss a class, I expect that you will contact me prior to class to let me know, either by phone or email. Although I understand that people might occasionally miss class due to illness or personal emergencies, patterned absences will result in a lowering of your class attendance/participation grade and I will contact your advisor/the dean’s office. Regular attendance will yield a class attendance grade of a 3.0 (B). Participation will increase that grade upwards, and patterned absences will decrease that grade. Basically, everyone will start out with a B.

**Cheating/plagiarizing:** If any student is caught plagiarizing, you will automatically fail the class. If there are any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please review drafts of your assignments with me. Please also see Moravian College’s Academic Honesty policy (on the website and also posted on Blackboard) to review the institution’s definitions of cheating and plagiarism.

**Assignments:**

I expect **assignments to be handed in on time**, on the day that they are due. Late assignments will be docked one full grade for each day that they are late. So an “A-quality” assignment that was due on

Tuesday that is handed in on Wednesday will drop to a “B.” If handed in on Thursday, the grade will drop to a “C.” I know students occasionally run into computer/printer problems, and if you are in this situation, email me as soon as possible. If you are having a printer problem, you can send me your assignment as an attachment so that you can still get full credit for handing the assignment in on time. I do not have much sympathy for students who wait until a few minutes before class begins to print up their assignment and then discover that they are having trouble. So try to make it part of your schedule that you will finish and print up your assignments at least the night before the assignment is due. This way, you will have time to either solve your problem or contact me.

I also expect assignments to follow whatever **formatting and page instructions** given when the assignment is assigned. For example, if I assign an essay question that I suspect will take at least two pages to answer, I expect a full two pages of writing will constitute your response. This is two pages, word processed, double-space, one inch margins, Times New Roman, 12-point font, without additional spaces between your name and date at the top of the page, and between the title of your essay. Assignments that fall short of the page requirement will automatically lose points.

We will have a number of **in-class activities/quizzes** throughout the semester—this is another reason why regular class attendance is so important. These activities will help to solidify the concepts of the course. There will also be **sporadic short out-of-class activities**. These two kinds of assignments will constitute the short assignment/quizzes grade. I expect people to keep up with the readings for the class, otherwise you will not be able to successfully complete the in-class activities.

**Mid-term:** There will also be a take home mid-term exam which will consist of short answers/essays. This exam will help me make sure that everyone is up-to-speed on the concepts of the class before we move ahead with the material in the second half of the semester. If I feel confident that everyone is working hard and regularly participating in class, I will cancel the mid-term exam and evenly distribute the weight of the mid-term grade in the other grade categories.

**Power Point Presentation:** Early in the semester, I will ask students to choose a demography topic of their choice to explore over the course of the semester in greater detail than we will cover collectively in class. You will then put together a Power Point presentation on this topic to share with the class. I want everyone to have fun with this project, and to learn about putting together presentations. The range of topics can be pretty broad and include everything from the changing fertility patterns in developed nations, Europe’s declining population, the lost boys in Japan, to the effect of the baby boomers on manufacturing trends in the US. We can talk about the possibility of students working in pairs on this project.

**Final Exam:** Within the first four weeks of the semester, you will be given the final exam. For your final exam, I will ask you to draft a population policy statement for the Obama administration. As we review the population projections for the next fifty years (fertility, mortality and immigration trends), what steps do you think the administration should take to either increase or decrease any of the factors as we think about the future? I think giving you the final so early in the semester helps students focus on the

major concepts of the course and helps you focus on the linkages between concepts over the course of the semester. The final exam is a take home final, but since you will have it at the beginning of the semester, you can work on it throughout the semester. I am also willing to review drafts of the final exam and provide feedback. I encourage everyone to complete the relevant section of the final at the end of each unit.

**Breakdown of grade:**

Class attendance and participation: 20%

Short assignments/quizzes: 20%

Mid-term exam: 20%

Take home final exam: 20%

Power point presentation: 20%

**Week 1**

Chapter 1: Introduction

- An introduction to the general principles of demographic research and why it is important.

**Week 2**

Chapter 2: Demographic Data

- Challenges associated with collecting data and why it is important

**Week 3**

Chapter 3: Population Growth

- The growth of the human population over time and the very important “Demographic Transition”
- Malthus versus Boserup –should we be worried about overpopulation?

**Week 4**

Chapter 4: Age and Sex Structure

- Why do we care about the sex ratio of a nation? What are some of the “obvious” reasons and maybe not quite so “obvious?”
- What about the proportions of young people and old people? This week we will look at the dependency ratio to help explore this question.

**Week 5**

Chapter 5: Mortality

- What is the interpretation of life expectancy and how do we measure it?
- Why is measuring infant mortality so important?
- The Epidemiological Transition/The Demographic Transition

## **Week 6**

### Chapter 6: Morbidity and Health

- Morbidity refers to the prevailing condition of disease in a population.
- Why do different societal structures produce different disease patterns?

## **Week 7**

### Chapter 7: Fertility

- What are the biological restrictions on human fertility?
- Who has children, how many and why? And what are the effects on the wider social system?

## **Week 8**

### Chapter 8: Marriage and Householding

- How has the definition of marriage changed across the space and time of human history and what impact do these changing definitions have on the socialization of new members in society, on the transfer of wealth, on the generation of a new workforce, etc.

## **Week 9**

### Chapter 9: Migration

- What is the definition of migration and what are the impacts on both the country the migrant leaves and on the country he/she joins?
- Why has the US maintained a somewhat lenient immigration policy compared to some of its European counterparts? What are the benefits and drawbacks of a constantly heterogeneous population composition?

## **Week 10**

### Chapter 10: Urbanization

- What has led to the growth of urban life across the globe? How has urbanization impacted the human experience?

## **Week 11**

### Chapter 11: Population Diversity

- What are some of the long-term impacts of the changing demographic composition of the US population? This week we will expand on the conversation we began during our Week 9 conversation of the immigration.

### **Week 12**

Student Presentations

### **Week 13**

Student Presentations

### **Week 14**

Student Presentations