In this co-taught graduate seminar, we will read, discuss, and evaluate recent work on a range of substantive issues central to the social demography of fertility, families, and households. We will place particular emphasis on developing a solid understanding of trends and associated explanations and critically assessing data, measurement, and methods. Because the “demography of fertility, families, and households” encompasses a body of research that is far too vast to be covered completely in a single semester, we will not be able to read deeply on any one subject but will summarize the broader literature while reading representative work on a wide range of topics. In the process of writing a research paper, you will have the opportunity to read more deeply on a particular area of interest.

The readings focus mostly on the contemporary U.S. with some attention to industrialized countries more generally. This is not for lack of interest in other places but simply the need to cover a wide range of topics in a single semester and, therefore, the inability to consider the notable variation across country contexts in great detail. We encourage you to contribute insights from your own knowledge, research or readings about other countries in class.

Requirements

Requirements are: (1) come to class prepared to discuss the required readings; (2) submit questions about the readings each week to class discussion leaders; (3) work with classmates to collaboratively prepare presentations and lead discussions a number of times over the course of the semester (see below for details); (4) write and present a research paper (in stages); (5) provide written feedback on a colleague’s research paper.

This course has two main overall objectives: the first is for everyone to develop a broad understanding of the recent research in the field of family demography. The second is to write the first draft of an empirical research paper that, with revision, could be submitted to a professional journal such as *Journal of Marriage and Family* or *Demography*.

Grades will be based on class participation, leadership, and collaboration (30%), the preliminary stages of your research paper (20%), your peer review of a colleague’s paper (10%), and your final research paper (40%).
Class Organization

We’ve found that students get the most out of this graduate seminar when they are actively engaged with each other in the coordination, presentation, and discussion of class material. Therefore, we expect students to sign up for a number of classes (depending on class size) over the course of the semester in which they will work with their fellow students to present the key content and guide discussion of the central issues for each topic. This will likely involve developing a powerpoint presentation, collating and organizing questions about the readings from classmates, and generating overarching questions for the group to discuss (though we are open to other formats that you might wish to propose).

Presentations will be given in the first hour of class (including some time for questions and discussion along the way). The focus of the presentations will necessarily vary by topic, but for most topics, the presentations will provide overviews of: a) recent trends and differentials in the family behavior(s) of interest that week, b) the ‘big’ questions and related theories, and c) key issues related to data, measurement, and methods. These presentations should emphasize content rather than form. Students are expected to consult additional sources as needed to complete their assignment (e.g., Census or survey data for trends, supplementary research articles for ideas about theory and data/measurement).

After a short break, we will reconvene for a discussion of the assigned readings during the second hour of class. Discussion questions should address important substantive, theoretical, data, and methodological issues about the topic for that week. Each question can be on a single reading or can address broader issues across multiple readings; you should work with your fellow students assigned for that week to organize input from your classmates and develop a comprehensive but succinct list of questions for the group. We will use the final 10-15 minutes of class for Kelly and Marcy to summarize and address issues that were not already covered.

Research Papers

The research paper is an important aspect of the course and allows you to delve more deeply into a topic of interest to you—and develop a paper that will ultimately (we hope) be published. As in most graduate seminars, the standard for papers is that they will eventually be submittable for review at a professional journal such as Journal of Marriage and Family or Demography.

Because this is no easy task, we recommend that you get started on your papers as soon as possible. Many of you may already be engaged in work or have ideas that could form the basis of this paper. It does not need to be something entirely new. It can be a write-up of preliminary results of research that you are currently involved doing (perhaps something you will be presenting at the Population Association of America annual meetings?). It can also be a substantially improved version of a paper that you have submitted for a previous class.

Regardless, we would like to meet with everyone (if useful to you) sometime during the first few weeks of the semester to discuss what you would like to work on for your research paper.

Toward the end of the semester, you will provide a peer review on another classmate’s paper (and receive one on your paper). We will spend the final class session—and an extra session on
Wednesday, May 6th—presenting and discussing your research papers. We would like you to submit the paper in stages:

1. Submit a 1-2-paragraph summary of your proposed topic by February 5.
2. Submit a 2-4-page research proposal (including background, research question/hypothesis, proposed data and methods) by March 4.
3. Submit a summary of preliminary results by March 18 (Cornell) or March 25 (UW).
4. Submit a draft of full paper to assigned reviewer by April 15.
5. Submit reviews to author and to professors on April 22.
6. Present papers in class April 29 and May 6 and submit final version by May 6.

Course Readings

Most assigned readings are peer-reviewed journal articles, which are easily accessible through our on-line libraries or via Google Scholar. If there is a reading from a book that is not easily accessible, we will post it on the Canvas course website. Please note that the reading list is subject to change; any changes will be made in time for adequate preparation (i.e., 2-3 weeks in advance).

Departmental Learning Objectives

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content that we will cover in this course, we have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities for graduate student learning at our universities:

1. Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature.
2. Students will complete an original research project in one of the subfields of sociology.
3. Students will evaluate social science literature and employ most appropriate methods and practices in their own research.
4. Students will develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research question.
5. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.
6. Students will understand, recognize, and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct.

Institutional Expectations and Resources

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Course Policies. The professor adheres to all Department, College, and University policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, incompletes, plagiarism, and student evaluation of the course and its instruction.
Accommodations. Please send me an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: [http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu). Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s web page for details: [https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698](https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698).

Writing Center. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources and classes offered by the Writing Center (located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall) to help with organization, thesis statements, grammar, sentence structure, and appropriate citations. See: [www.writing.wisc.edu](http://www.writing.wisc.edu). Before submitting your short paper, you are expected to be familiar with the guidelines on the Writing Center website about “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” (see: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html)). See next section regarding ‘Academic Integrity.’

Academic integrity. As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards: [https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity). According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as, an individual:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students’ website (above). If you have questions about plagiarism specifically, you should consult the information on the Writing Center website regarding “Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources” ([http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html)). Knowledge of these rules is your
responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please do not hesitate to ask.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the Chair, Professor Christine Schwartz, 4462 Social Science (cschwart@ssc.wisc.edu).

Cornell University

Writing resources. Students are expected to be familiar with established practices for acknowledging the use of academic sources. A useful tutorial on recognizing and avoiding plagiarism is available at http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm. The library also offers a range of services to help students through the research process, including consultations with a librarian to answer questions about why, how, and when to document sources. You can review the library’s services on their main page, or follow this link to make an appointment with a librarian at Mann: https://mannlib.cornell.edu/help/research-support/disciplinary-research-support. The Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines has excellent resources designed to help students at all stages of their writing. Services include walk-in one-on-one consultations and peer mentoring, see: http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/walkin/resources.htm.

Academic integrity statement. Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student’s academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers. For further information regarding the Cornell Code of Academic Integrity see: http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm.

Unless you have the express permission of the instructor, you should not buy or sell course materials. Such unauthorized behavior constitutes academic dishonesty.

Turnitin.com acknowledgement. Students agree that by taking this course that all papers submitted for the course may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.
Disability accommodations. In compliance with section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities [https://sds.cornell.edu/](https://sds.cornell.edu/). Students with disabilities must provide the College with appropriate documentation of their disability before any accommodation can be made. Reasonable accommodation will be provided, on a case-by-case basis.

**Reading List by Week**

**Week 1 – 1/22: Introduction to Family Demography and Overview on Writing a Paper**


Supplemental:


**Week 2 – 1/29: Theoretical Perspectives on Families and Family Change**


Supplemental:


**Week 3 – 2/5: Family Change and Inequality**


Supplemental:


**Week 4 – 2/12: Union Formation, Dissolution, and Repartnering**


Supplemental:


Supplemental:


**Week 6 – 2/26: Same-Sex Couples and Parents**


**Supplemental:**


**Week 7 – 3/4: Fertility**


Supplemental:


**Week 8 – 3/11: Parental Involvement and Investments**


Supplemental:


**Week 9 – 3/18:** UW spring break – no class for UW students; Cornell project check-ins during class

**Week 10 – 3/25:** Work, Family, and Gendered Time; UW project check-ins another time during this week (individual meetings)


TBD: Marianne Bertrand 2020 American Economic Review Ely Address OR Patrick Ishizuka and Kelly Musick *Demography* R&R “Occupational Inflexibility and Women’s Employment During the Transition to Parenthood”

Supplemental:


**Week 11 – 4/1: Cornell spring break – NO class meeting for Cornell or UW**

**Week 12 – 4/8: Families in Cross-National Perspective**


**Supplemental:**


**Week 13 – 4/15: Public Policies Related to Families and Children**


Supplemental:


**Week 14 – 4/22: PAA annual meetings – No class meeting**

**Week 15 – 4/29: Presentations I**

**Week 16 – 5/6: Presentations II (additional class meeting for UW in lieu of no meeting April 1)**

*Revised 1/17/2020*