

Population Change Geo 305

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Gender, environment and justice: topics in the study of population control

The study of population is concerned with three main areas: fertility, mortality and migration. This course is designed to cover two key themes within the area of fertility after a brief introduction to population data sources and issues. The first theme confronts the idea of overpopulation. Overpopulation is often cited as a cause of environmental degradation, war, hunger and poverty. Is it the scourge we have been led to believe it is? Would lowering population rates mean less hunger? The class will explore this idea through theoretical considerations and by using the research of those who address the relationship between population and environment, war and hunger.

The second theme concerns reproductive politics. The focus follows from the previous sections' discussion of population control as the means to deal with 'the population problem'. Critical to this section is the concept of interlocking relations of race, class and gender. Who is the focus of population control? What are the underlying reasons for the emphasis on poor women of color in eugenic and population control policies in both the US and Asia, Africa and Latin America? How can we relate this history to present day reproductive politics concerning drug use and pregnancy, surrogacy and motherhood? How might reproductive technologies and the politics around them reinforce or challenge gender/race/class stereotypes?

The course requires participation, 2 exams and a research paper.

Reader: Available at the Electronic Publishing Center 001 **Sims Hall**, 130 College Place. Close to the main bus stop near architecture, engineering and campus police.

Purpose of the course

Geography 305 is designed to:

- Develop themes within the topic of population change;
- Improve your writing skills;
- Develop your capacity to think critically.

Themes in the course

- Population and environment
- Reproductive rights and new reproductive technologies
- Relationship of class, race, gender and population control policies
- Population change, race, space and gender
- Migration, race and class—making places

Course structure

- Lectures will contain material not in the reader;
- Exams will include reader and lecture material.

Grading:

I do not give extra credit.

Participation (class discussion, attendance): **20%**

Research Paper: **30%**

Midterm: **25%**

Final: **25%**

Reading: The reading associated with each lecture/topic should be done before the class for which it is due. For instance, the article by Ruth Wilson Gilmore should be read by 1/16. You are expected to do all of the reading on time. If for some good reason, you cannot, make sure you know what the author **introduces** and what she/he **concludes**. Take notes on the readings as well as the lectures—there will be questions from both on the exams. These works are meant to be read for the *ideas* that make you think and for their case studies (if applicable). Read everything critically—determine what you agree with and disagree with, read for the interesting points, analyze for what is potentially useful and what is possibly nonsense.

Note taking: Anything in the lectures and the readings might be on the exams and will be part of discussion. Unless you have a photographic memory or prefer to write notes after class, please take notes on both the lectures and the readings. Be sure you are clear on the example(s) each reading provides, the big picture of the article, its possible connections to other readings and the ideas I highlight as important.

DO NOT SIMPLY COPY THE POWERPOINT SLIDE. IT IS ONLY AN OUTLINE.

Participation: If you prefer the written medium to the oral, I will accept several paragraphs of thoughts and questions on the reading in lieu of an oral contribution in class. These paragraphs should be sent to me via email prior to the class. Being able to demonstrate in oral or written form that you have done the reading *and thought about it* is essential. It is not necessary to understand all concepts nor remember every detail; I do not expect this in oral or written form. However, the big picture and the interesting ideas in the article should be noted.

Attendance: You are expected to attend class. I will take note of any unexplained absence. Documentation is required for medical absence. Absence from more than three classes is grounds for a grade adjustment.

Communication: The first week of class, please send me an email address that you check regularly. I expect students to check their email as I may send changes to the syllabus or questions to consider via email. In addition, I expect students who are having difficulty with the material or experiencing uncertainty about continuing with the class to contact me in person or by email. If you disappear and do not respond to email queries and then show up later, your grade will reflect that absence.

Paper format: Double-spaced, page numbers, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, use spell check, include bibliography. Bibliography must be alphabetical and use the following format:

Last name, First name. Date. *Title of book*. Place:publisher

Last name, First name. Date. Title of article in *Title of book*, Name of editors (eds.). Place: Publisher.

Last name, first name. Date. Title of article. *Journal title*. volume(issue):pages

If you access the New York Times online, put all of the above details (title, author etc.), and then the web page.

Citations in text: (Author's last name date) or for a quote (Author's last name date:page).

See below

Quotes. If longer than one line, you must indent one tab stop on each side of the quote and single space the quote itself. Cite at the end. For example see below. Do not rely heavily on quotes—they are obviously a way to extend a paper and they often indicate you don't know what they mean. You must make reference to the quote in your argument either before or after it.

To be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve labor force; seen less as workers than as servers; subjected to time arrangements on and off the paid job that make a mockery of a limited work day; leading an existence that always borders on being obscene, out of place and reducible to sex (Haraway 1991:166)

I do not accept late work unless you have an extremely good excuse.

Paper topic: Paper topics must be approved. They should cover an aspect of population that the class has not dealt with or cover a subject in more depth than the class does. If appropriate, you should make it clear in your paper that you have understood and can apply ideas discussed in class. For instance, if your paper deals with eugenics, you should cite relevant ideas from class lectures and readings. If your paper could make use of these concepts and you do not do so, it indicates a failure to engage with class material and you will be marked down.

Papers must present an argument, provide a evidence for that argument in a structured manner and summarize/conclude that argument. Papers must make an argument as opposed to providing a description. Making an argument means taking a position and backing it up, not merely giving me your opinion. In other words, do not begin sentences "I believe". I expect the papers to be well written. This means making each sentence count or, avoiding 'throw away' sentences. If your paper could be read and understood without a sentence or a paragraph, those sentences are superfluous. Get rid of them. Avoid long-winded, bland and obvious introductions; they insult the reader. Pay attention to flow so that the end of one paragraph ties into the thesis sentence of the next. Be creative. Be succinct. Make it obvious that you have gone over at least one draft. Papers will be marked lower for poor writing.

Paper topics due Feb. 11

Outline of paper due March 4
Bibliography due March 18
Paper due April 22

Papers should be about 10 pages in length. You may use one web page source (e.g. the web page of the population council); other sources should be from books, refereed journal articles and newspaper articles. The number of references you use, aside from class readings, should be about 10 sources. Cite any time an idea is not yours. Cite if the material is not common knowledge. Cite if the research and ideas are not yours (i.e. almost all of it). When in doubt, cite.

Academic honesty

Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism and cheating, will not be tolerated. Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University guidelines. Please refer to: http://www-hl.syr.edu/advising/AS_Resource_Guide/Default.htm for guidance on academic honesty.

Learning disability

Please inform me at the beginning of the semester if you have a learning disability. Please provide documentation and discuss your needs with me well before an exam.

This syllabus will change.

Introduction to population change--history, theories and data

The section covers differences between fertility rates and birth rates. It looks at how projections are made. It focuses on census data, difficulties and controversies over that data and how that data has been used to make statements about, for instance, lead levels in children's blood. The section also looks at theoretical approaches to the study of population change. Gathering data on population fertility, mortality and migration (the three main areas of the study of population) can be used to reveal important information on the relationship between lead poisoning and housing stock. However, regardless of the conservative or progressive uses such data are put to, gathering this data is part of state efforts to control people. Population data are inseparable from the larger political, economic and social context, which varies by time and space, in which they are gathered. Theories of over population and solutions to this problem, the way the data are gathered and the way statistics are used are marked by our racist, classist and sexist society.

January 14 Notes on the dismal science

January 16 Fatal couplings of power and difference

Relationships among race, gender, control, poverty and the focus on population

What do the concepts in this article have to do with a class on population change? Take careful notes. We will refer back to this article later in the class.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2002. Fatal couplings of power and difference: notes on racism and

geography. *The Professional Geographer* 54(1):15-24.

January 21 and 23 Data issues 1; Census Issues

Weeks, John R. 2000. *Population: an introduction to concepts and issues* 7th edition. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing. Chapter 2

Diagram the arguments in one of these articles. What is the question they examine? What types of data do they use? What data difficulties did they have? What conclusions do they draw?

Griffith, Daniel et al. 1998. A tale of two swaths: urban childhood blood-lead levels across Syracuse, New York. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88(4):640-665.

Or

Bailey, Adrian et al. 1998. A tale of two counties: childhood lead poisoning, industrialization and abatement in New England. *Economic Geography* Special Issue for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers March 25-29: 96-111.

January 28 and 30 Theories of Population Change

Weeks, John R. 2000. *Population: an introduction to concepts and issues* 7th edition. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing. Chapter 3

Hartmann, B. 1995. *Reproductive rights and wrongs*. Boston: South End Press. Pp. xv-12.

Hartmann, B. 1995. *Reproductive rights and wrongs*. Boston: South End Press. Pp. 13-40.

Population control

How has the idea of overpopulation been constructed? How have we responded over the decades to 'overpopulation'? Who has been targeted and by what agencies with what sort of agendas? What have been the methods used and what are the means that people have been offered to control fertility? This section covers the history of population control beginning with its roots in eugenics and racism.

February 4-6 Population Control

Hartmann pp. 93-112

skim 113-130

Hartmann pp. 131-155

2/6 Population control: contraceptive choices?

Hartmann pp. 173-219

February 11-13 Contraceptive choices

Hartmann pp. 289-303

Population, environment and development

How many people can the earth support? This is the name of a recent (1996) text but its question and the answer—that the earth cannot support many more people—are familiar themes in most popular and some academic accounts of the relationship between population, food, environmental degradation and violence. The question proceeds from certain assumptions underlying it: that food insecurity is caused by too many mouths, that the fertility rates of certain people are too high, and that environmental degradation is caused by too high densities of people. This approach in which population figures as the driving force in various forms of disaster has been critiqued for its assumptions and its lack of time/place specificity. The familiar view of the earth weighted down by hordes of people in Africa and Asia mostly obscures another view—that of unequal access to, control of and distribution of resources from the global scale of neoliberal free trade policies down to the level of patriarchal households. It fails to recognize the part that inequitable access, control and distribution play in fertility rates, food insecurity, poverty and damage to the environment.

February 18 population and environment: scarcity

Make sure you have read Hartmann, 13-40.

February 20 Population and environment: ecoviolence

Hartmann, Betsy. 2001. Will the circle be unbroken? in *Violent Environments*, Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts (eds.). Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 39-62

Kaplan, Robert. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy" *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Richards, Paul. 2001. Are 'forest' wars in Africa resource conflicts? The case of Sierra Leone in *Violent Environments*, Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts (eds.). Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 65-82

2/27 Mid term exam

Poverty, new reproductive technologies and population control

This section concerns some new technologies for making children other than the standard approach. It will address the rights of women, children and what society gains and loses from these technologies. Technologies are not only the new drug, procedure or tool; they are inseparable from the societal discourses that enable them. We will consider such technologies as in vitro fertilization and multiple births, surrogate mothers, removing children from 'bad' welfare mothers, workfare, adoption of children from other countries and stem cell research.

3/4 Video

Outline of paper due in class

3/6 Class, race, new reproductive technologies and population control

Reread Ruth Wilson Gilmore (first reading)

3/9-3/16 Spring Break

3/18 New reproductive technologies intro cont.

Bibliography due in class

March 20 Biology as destiny

March 25 - 27 Families and mothers

Richie, Beth. The social construction of the 'immoral' black mother in *Revisioning women, health and healing: feminist, cultural and technoscience perspectives*. Adele E. Clarke and Virginia L. Olesen (eds.). New York: Routledge. 283-299.

April 1 -8 Fairy tales, possibilities and test tube babies

Hartouni, Valerie. 1997. *Cultural conceptions*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pages 11-25, 68-98

April 15-17 Consumer eugenics

(Rose and Rapp articles--be able to compare the two and to understand the themes in common)

Rapp, Rayna. 1998. Refusing prenatal diagnosis: the meanings of bioscience in a multicultural world *Science, technology and human values* 23(1):45-71

Rose, Hillary. 1998. Moving on from both state and consumer eugenics? in *Remaking Reality*. Noel Castree and Bruce Braun (Eds.) London, Routledge. 84-99.

Squier, Susan. 1999. Negotiating boundaries: from assisted reproduction to assisted replication in *Playing dolly: technocultural formations, fantasies and fictions of assisted reproduction*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 101-115.

4/22 Review

Paper due

4/24 Final exam

4/29 Wrap up, papers, exams returned