

**ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**  
**Written Communication and Empirical & Quantitative Skills**  
**Due by December 06, 2024 (Friday) at 11:59pm**  
**Percent of final grade: 10%**

**Instructor information**

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**Submission**

This assignment should be submitted through Turnitin within Canvas. Turnitin is an online database system designed to help instructors **detect plagiarism**, track citations, facilitate peer reviews, and provide paperless grading markup in written assignments. Students should develop this assignment **individually**.

**Purpose**

This assignment aims to evaluate your ability to apply written communication, as well as empirical and quantitative skills through analysis and commentary on a variety of demographic topics. Drawing from scientific theories and data-driven insights, your annotations should reflect a comprehensive understanding of each topic and engage with relevant quantitative frameworks where applicable. Students should use scientific theoretical frameworks discussed in the classroom to support their analysis and not rely on preconceptions and perceptions we might have about specific demographic subjects.

**General information**

By completing this assignment, you will demonstrate proficiency in written communication and the application of empirical data to support arguments. These skills are essential in analyzing complex demographic phenomena within the scope of population studies.

For each of the 9 sections listed below, discuss the topics explained in each of them. Focus on clarifying concepts, presenting analyses, and interpreting quantitative results. Utilize the specific references provided in each section for comprehensive insights.

The document should be on US Letter paper size, one-inch margins, Arial font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing, and **between 250 and 500 words for each one of the 9 sections**.

### 1. Population growth

A consistent discussion in demographic literature is related to how rapid population growth could potentially impact natural resources, climate change, and poverty in developing countries. Some researchers emphasize the need for more improvements in agricultural production and increased concern with the environmental limitations facing a growing population. They argue that there are too many people on Earth and we would all be better off if there were fewer people on the planet. Other researchers indicate that we've overcome these challenges through a reduction in poverty, educational improvements, and the provision of food to large populations.

Based on course material, are there too many people in the world nowadays? Why? Discuss these different concerns related to population growth, transition, and evolution for current societies.

Why population composition (e.g., by age, sex, race/ethnicity, marital status, and socioeconomic status) and population changes over time are important topics for demographers?

Analyze the possible implications of global population growth on natural resources and climate change. Discuss the significance of demographic factors (e.g., age, sex, socioeconomic status) in understanding population dynamics.

#### – Reference

Rosling, Hans. 2013. **Don't Panic: Hans Rosling Showing The Facts About Population**. Stockholm: Gapminder. (<https://vimeo.com/79878808>)

### 2. Theories of demography

Discuss how various demographic theories explain trends in mortality, fertility, and migration. Provide examples to illustrate these theories.

#### – References

Hauer, Matt. 2021. **Theories of Demography: Objection!** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqFsRJhgQg4>)

Poston, Dudley L.; Bouvier, Leon F. 2017. **Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography**. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2nd edition. Chapter 2 (pp. 17–34).

### 3. Fertility decline

Graham (2021) aims to analyze the state of theory and explanation in contemporary demography. He focused the analysis on studies dealing with low fertility in Europe.

Discuss how the author argues that different demography conceptions and concepts to deal with fertility lead to different research approaches. How do critical theories challenge demographers to think in new ways?

Why is it important for demographers to engage with theoretical frameworks and the philosophy of social sciences? How would that approach improve explaining and understanding the demographic subject, instead of simply quantifying and describing?

#### – Reference

Graham E. 2021. "Theory and explanation in demography: The case of low fertility in Europe." **Population Studies: A Journal of Demography**, 75(1): 133–155. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2021.1971742>)

#### 4. Fertility and COVID-19

Based on the course material and discussions during our lectures, what do you expect will be the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on fertility trends and levels in the next few years?

You should utilize frameworks of predicting fertility and proximate determinants of fertility (available in lecture slides from Bongaarts 1978, 1982) to support your analysis. You can discuss the effects of the pandemic on different fertility indicators, such as age-specific fertility rates and total fertility rate.

##### – Reference

Adelman, Sarah; Charifson, Mia; Seok, Eunsil; Mehta-Lee, Shilpi S.; Brubaker, Sara G.; Liu, Mengling; Kahn, Linda G. 2023. **State-specific fertility rate changes across the USA following the first two waves of COVID-19**. *Human Reproduction*, 38(6): 1202–1212. (<https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dead055>)

#### 5. Mortality and COVID-19

Based on the course material and discussions during our lectures, what do you expect will be the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on mortality trends and levels in the next few years?

You should also discuss possible effects of the pandemic on life expectancy, including contextual and broader socioeconomic and cultural effects, as well as more immediate factors.

##### – Reference

Schöley J., Aburto J.M., Kashnitsky I., Kniffka M.S., Zhang L., Jaadla H., Dowd J.B., Kashyap R. 2022. “Life expectancy changes since COVID-19.” *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6: 1649–1659. (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01450-3>)

#### 6. Internal migration and COVID-19

Discuss how COVID-19 might influence internal migration trends within the United States over the next few years.

##### – References

Frey, William H. 2023. **Americans’ local migration reached a historic low in 2022, but long-distance moves picked up**. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. (<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/americans-local-migration-reached-a-historic-low-in-2022-but-long-distance-moves-picked-up/>)

Rogers, Luke; Perry, Marc; Spell, Lindsay. 2023. **Domestic outmigration from some urban counties slowed, smaller gains in rural counties**. Washington, DC: Census Bureau. (<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/03/domestic-migration-trends-shifted.html>)

### 7. International migration and labor markets

Based on the course material, what are the major effects of immigration of low skilled workers on the U.S. labor market?

Explain whether previous public policies intended to deal with undocumented immigrants in the U.S. were based on scientific studies or general perceptions about immigration.

How previous public policies affected migration patterns and composition of the population by race/ethnicity and nativity in the United States?

Do differences between immigrants and the U.S.-born population in terms of educational attainment, labor market skills, health outcomes, crime rates, as well as other socioeconomic and demographic outcomes justify negative perception about immigrants? Why?

#### – References

Amaral, Ernesto F.L. 2024. **Lecture on International Migration.**  
(<https://www.ernestoamaral.com/docs/soci312-24spring/Lecture09.pdf>)

Yale School of Management. 2017. **Prof. Mushfiq Mobarak: Does Immigration Create Jobs?**  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-o3xQ0B0ZMo>)

### 8. International migration model

Discuss Figure 1 of the proposal "Development of a Computer Model of International Migration to the U.S." This figure is a summary of a proposal developed by Professor Amaral to estimate models to explain international and internal migration in the United States.

#### – Reference

Amaral, Ernesto F.L. 2024. **Development of a Computer Model of International Migration to the U.S.** College Station: Texas A&M University.

### 9. Population Distribution

Population is not equally distributed around the world. Spatial distribution of the population has been changing over time. This assignment helps you understand how the inhabitants of the world are distributed, as well as how most of us have become urban residents rather than rural residents.

Why is spatial distribution an essential topic to understand human populations? What are some of the consequences of population distribution? Describe some of the main ways that rural areas differ from urban areas around the world and in the U.S.

Explain the differences between population explosion and population implosion. Give examples of how these two processes are occurring simultaneously.

#### – Reference

Poston, Dudley L.; Bouvier, Leon F. 2017. **Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography.** New York: Cambridge University Press. 2nd edition. Chapter 14 (pp. 365–385).