

# **POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT (Geog 341)**

Fall 2017

T & Th 10:00-11:20  
McKenzie 240C

Prof. Shaul Cohen  
Condon 107G Tel. 6-4500  
Office Hours Wednesday 11:00-12:00, ABA  
[scohen@uoregon.edu](mailto:scohen@uoregon.edu)

GTFs  
Kate Shields [kfs@uoregon.edu](mailto:kfs@uoregon.edu)

## **Office Hours**

Zack Thill [Zackeryt@uoregon.edu](mailto:Zackeryt@uoregon.edu)

## **Office Hours**

This course will focus on the challenges that population growth presents to the world community, particularly in social and environmental terms. It will broach the issue of sustainability: Can the planet support our species given our current behaviors and structures? If so, at what cost to the quality of human and other life? If not, what might be done to rectify our current course?

Population Geography entails much more than these fundamental questions. We will ask why people chose to live where they live (if they have a choice). We will examine those environments in which people have thrived, and try to understand the elements of that success. We will look for common patterns, and the lessons taught by situations which depart from the norm. We will look at evidence of environmental degradation, and try to understand what impacts are caused by population and "over population."

In order to undertake these tasks we will need to learn about population geography, and for this we will use a monograph published by the Population Reference Bureau. It is available as a PDF file at <http://www.prb.org/pdf/PopulationLivelyIntro.pdf> You can also purchase this booklet from them online if you prefer to have it in your hands rather than read it on the web or print it out. We will also read and discuss a set of readings which will be available online. You must also read at least Section A of *The New York Times* on a daily basis (and the Science section on Tuesdays).

## **Requirements**

**This is an upper-division course, and I expect consistent attendance and reading of all assigned material. Readings will be on the course Canvas site as pdfs or on**

the web. We will have an ongoing electronic conversation on our class Facebook Group page, UO Pop Env Fall 2017, you are expected to be a contributing part of that discussion at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/254870488296115/> . Please remember that all of our written exchanges are for the class only, please do not share them with others!

### **Grading**

The course will be graded on four primary components: two "mid-term" tests, a final project, and three "pop" quizzes. The tests will account for 25 and 30 percent of the grade in turn, the quizzes are worth 5 percent each, and the final project will be worth 30 percent. **Please note that the final project is due Tuesday of finals week at noon.**

I am supportive of students with special learning needs. My support depends on a partnership between us, and if you have issues that we should discuss please contact me immediately. There are a range of accommodations possible, and you may find useful information through the Office of Disability Services.

### **Course Policy**

Please respect others in class. This includes your own conduct and commentary, spoken, written, and unspoken. Please keep side conversations to a minimum, if you don't I will certainly notice, as will those seated near you. If you have concerns or complaints, please communicate clearly, and in a timely fashion. If you have needs, desires, concerns, apprehension, etc., don't keep them a secret! Effective measures on my part require some initiative on your part. In this vein, be aware that I am firm on the dates given to you concerning tests, papers, and other assignments. There is a 20% penalty for material turned in one day late, and 10% additional penalty for each day thereafter. Without advance warning and sufficient cause I will not grant incompletes. Leaving town early, an abundance of exams, general stress and other such reasons will not qualify for an incomplete. I am glad to discuss grades with you, but you must notify me of your desire to do so within one week of receiving the grade (final course grades excepted.) Be careful to follow appropriate rules concerning citation, do not work together on essays or tests (group projects can be an exception, but please consult in advance with Zack, Kate, or me). A tip for the wise: the quality of your writing counts.

**Laptops may not be used in class unless you have a specific need to do so.** Here's why:

"We found that participants who multitasked on a laptop during a lecture scored lower on a test compared to those who did not multitask, and participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not. The results demonstrate that multitasking on a laptop poses a significant distraction to both users and fellow students and can be detrimental to comprehension of lecture content."

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254?np=y>

If you need to use a laptop please check with one of the GTFs or me before doing so.

**Reading Schedule** (subject to change...)

**Week 1** Is There a Population Problem?

Read Jonathan Swift's essay from 1729, "[A Modest Proposal For Preventing The Children of Poor People in Ireland From Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public.](#)"

Begin reading *Population: A Lively*

*Introduction*, <http://www.prb.org/pdf/PopulationLivelyIntro.pdf>, complete it by Thursday of week 2 and also the New York Times article *No Babies*

**Week 2** Population Growth & Change, Distribution etc. Read Saul Halfon's chapter "Overpopulating the World: Notes Toward a Discursive Reading" and Fawcett's *The right to a decent toilet* for Tuesday and Hardin's "Lifeboat Ethics" and Singer's "Famine, Affluence and Morality" for Thursday

**Week 3** "The Gift" by Zell Kravinsky and "[The Siege of Miami](#)".

**Week 4** Theories of Population Change and Fertility.

Read through the debate on population between Kenneth Hill and Ben Wattenberg from the archives of Slate Magazine. You can find it as a file in Canvas titled "Population Debates." Follow the exchange through the eight letters. One question on the mid-term will draw upon material in the letters that Hill and Wattenberg exchange, so take good notes and/or download the pages. Pay particular attention to their use of terms and concepts for the test.

**Week 5** Mortality and Epidemiology

Read "The (Un?)Certainty of Death and Disease," from *Six Billion Plus: World Population the Twenty-first Century* available on Canvas **Test 1 Tuesday in class. This test will assess your ability to use the terms we covered in Population, A Lively Introduction, and your familiarity with the main theory and theoreticians that we have introduced. The format will be a blend of identification and short answer. Blue books required.**

For Thursday read "[Through the Looking Glass](#)" and "Where are the Children?" from the New Yorker magazine

**Week 6** Food Read Simon and "Head Count"

**Week 7** Read McKibben's "The Race to Solar Power in Africa" <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/26/the-race-to-solar-power-africa>

**Week 8** Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced People

Read Rachel Aviv's article "The Cost of Caring" available on Canvas

Film 4 **Paul Ehrlich and the Population Bomb** Issues of Urbanization and Land Use

**Week 9** Read Meadows available on Canvas

**Test 2 Take home Due in class on Tuesday** This test will assess your ability to deploy terminology and theory in your discussion of critical questions in population and environment. It will be graded on the sophistication of your arguments, use of course

materials, and ability to critical analyze classic and current discursive formations that we have encountered since the beginning of the term.

**Week 10** Power, Capital, and Population/Review  
**NY Times logs due Tuesday**

**FINAL PROJECTS DUE TUESDAY OF FINALS WEEK 12:00-1:00 LOCATION TBA....**

A note about the New York Times - This is the "newspaper of record" for the country, meaning that it has the most authoritative voice in print media. There are three nationally prominent newspapers in the United States. The Wall Street Journal focuses on economic and finances matters, and has a conservative tenor. The Washington Post is a company paper, the company being the United States government, which doesn't own it but is its most important reader, or at least that was the case until recently. It has a somewhat liberal bent, but is full of the gossip of government, so it talks about whoever is in power, or in scandal, or whatever. The New York Times talks about the world, the nation, and New York, in that order. The front page of the paper is a blend of things, but unlike other papers, its first substantive section is "International". That is uncommon, and it is to be celebrated. Monday through Friday you should read the New York Times, going cover-to-cover in section A, the news section. Look for anything related to the environment or population specifically. Your log should note the title of the article, what page it is on, what it is about, who wrote it, and so on. Also note whether it is a news story, a feature article, an editorial, or an op-ed piece. Pay attention to the trends - in what way(s) is the newspaper covering events, and in what way(s) is it conveying and shaping opinions? Are there differences in the way that these issues are discussed/presented in a U.S. context and foreign contexts? Are the issues local, national, regional, and/or global? We will talk more about this assignment in class, and we will pay attention to the newspaper and discuss it on a regular basis.

### ***WebSurfers Section***

For those of you scouring the net (ALL of you!) here are some sites that you will find interesting, and perhaps useful for your projects as well.

One of the best places to start, and the folks with the stats that I tend to trust is the [Population Reference Bureau](#). They also have links to most of what's below, and a lot more!

The United Nations has a population program and lots of data, see their predictions at <http://esa.un.org/unpp/>.

To mark the milestone of six billion, the [National Institute for the Environment](#) put together a collection of online resources, which is pretty impressive, drawing from the media, NGOs, and governmental organizations, worth a look. We're already past 7 billion, how time flies!

The Centers for Disease Control's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) is a good place to see what's ailing us.

There is also a wealth of information on disease and death, organized in interesting ways, if you follow the links of the [National Center for Health Statistics](#).

[The United States Census Bureau](#), plan to spend a good deal of time here, remember their international section.... [Dynamic population pyramids](#) are also worth taking a look at, there are fixed and dynamic pyramids available for almost all of the countries of the world.

For an environmental perspective visit [The National Resources Defense Council](#)

A very good measure of how bad things are is the U.N.'s [Human Development Report](#)

Basic information on any country, including demographic and economic data, can be found in the data base of the CIA (they can be trusted, for the most part, on this kind of stuff), in their [World Fact Book](#).

A starting point for some food related issues is [Oxfam](#), check out their links to other sites as well.

A general annotated bibliography (always useful) on "People, Numbers, and Impacts" is on the page of [Population Action International](#).

[The National Library for the Environment](#) has information on our issues, and links too, of course.

An NGO that provides commentary from a British perspective is the [Optimum Population Trust](#) which tries to define what a sustainable population would be, that can be fairly provocative.

A different sort of approach, one of the American ones, can be found at the [Federation for American Immigration Reform](#).

## **Campus Resources**

**Various issues and challenges can come up in the context of University life. Some resources that are available to you and that you are entitled to as a member of our community include:**

**-[University Teaching and Learning Center](#). In the basement of PLC, there are many services including drop-in writing and math labs, tutoring, test prep, and other things. They also have mini-courses on time management, computer software, and other things.**

**-[University Health Center](#). If you don't feel well, you may not do well (and vice versa). There are many services for your physical and psychological needs. Don't be shy; issues that you have are almost certainly more common than you might think.**

**-[Office of Student Life](#).** Support of all kinds can be found in the Office of Student Life, and they can help you navigate the resources available to you on campus (and elsewhere). Their job is help you, they have resources and knowledge about what's possible. Check there for information about such things as the Bias Response Team, Non-traditional Student support, Conflict Resolution Services, and many others, the list is long.

**-[ASUO](#).** It's yours, you pay for it, you vote for it. It has as its mission and goals: to represent and advocate for all students, through the protection and promotion of the physical, cultural and educational development of the University. The ASUO Executive works to protect, allocate, and manage the student incidental fees. Through this fee we provide services to students and student organizations, create a marketplace of ideas on campus, and act as liaison between students, administration, and the Eugene community.

There are many ways in which we form a community and provide support for one another. If you aren't finding what you need, ask around. If someone is in need, try to help!