Instructor: Dr. Sarah Brauner-Otto  
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Office: 728 Leacock Building  
Office hours: Fridays 3-5pm and by appointment

Description: The course will cover the major theories and findings from the social scientific study of fertility behavior. Readings and discussion will focus on the causal linkages between social change and transitions in fertility behavior. We will examine contemporary fertility behavior in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the United States, along with historical change in Europe.

Format: We meet once a week for 2 hours. I have selected a series of topics and chosen background readings for each of those topics. Class periods will be devoted to discussion of these topics and students will take responsibility for facilitating these discussions on a rotating basis. Additional topics may be added as warranted by participants’ interests.

Grade:

1. Regular class participation (15%). All students are expected to be active participants in class. This includes arriving to class with the assigned readings in hand (electronically or in hard copy), having read the assigned readings, having identified questions or comments you may have on the readings. You must speak in class and offer constructive thoughtful comments to receive full credit for participation.

   Note: If students are not participating I will change this to require written reading summaries at each class period. I will then likely increase the contribution of class participation to the overall grade and decrease the contribution of the final paper.

2. Discussion leader (15%). Once during weeks 6-13 (11 October-29 November) each student must sign up to be a discussion leader. There will be more than 1 student for each week and you must work together to make sure you can lead a thoughtful, interesting, and engaging discussion that day. There are no specific requirements other than competent mastery of the material, but efforts to enhance the class (e.g. audio/visual aids such as video clips, graphs) will be appreciated by your peers and likely improve your grade. A sign-up sheet will be made available after the add/drop period.

3. Contemporary theory presentation (20%). For weeks 4 and 5 (27 Sept and 4 Oct) we will be discussing contemporary theories of fertility decline. All students must be familiar with all readings, but you will sign up to be the expert of 1 reading. You must come to class prepared to answer questions about “your” theory and be prepared to discuss how it
compares and contrasts with classical theories of fertility change and other contemporary
theories of fertility. You will need to submit a brief summary of your theory (~1 page).

4. Group project on high fertility (20%). For week 9 (1 Nov) we will have group presentations.
The class will divide into at most 4 equal groups (the exact size and number of groups will be
determined once the add/drop period has ended). Each group will then pick a topic related to high fertility to present to the class. The nature of the presentation and specific topic are open and you will be graded on the content and the presentation itself.

5. Final research paper (30%: proposal 5%, paper 25%). All students will submit a final research paper on a topic related to fertility. Papers are due 3 December but no late penalty will be applied until 13 December. Proposals are due by November 8 in class.

Graduate students must write either an empirical study or a proposal for an empirical study. Papers will likely be roughly 7000 words long.

Undergraduate students may write a simpler theoretical research paper without tying explicitly to data. Paper should be roughly 3000 words and must include at least ten (10) scholarly sources from within the past 20 years. Undergraduates may elect to write an empirical study or a proposal for an empirical study. Students writing a thesis or planning on attending graduate school may prefer this option.

Written Work
All written work must be typed using Times New Roman 12 or Arial 10 font with 2.54 cm/1 inch margins on all sides. Evaluation will include the substance of the paper and the quality of the writing (including grammar and spelling as well as the clarity of presentation).

Late assignment policy
All assignments are due at the start of class on the day they are due. Assignments turned in late will be marked down 1 full letter grade for each 24 hour period late. That is, an assignment due on February 26th is due at 11:35am that day. If it is turned in after the start of class but before 1:35pm on February 27th the highest grade it can receive is a B. If it is turned in between 1:35pm on February 27th and 1:35pm on February 28th the highest grade it can receive is a C.

Disability and illness policies
Individuals with university recognised disabilities will be afforded special considerations in the setting of examination times and venues and depending on the type of disability may be given extra time to complete the required work. Assignments and/or projects that are late due to illness will not be accepted without an authoritative third party excuse and explanation.

Academic Integrity
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).
Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Email: There are two key points regarding email for this class.
- To communicate with you I will most likely use the email tool on the course website on myCourses. It is your responsibility to check this email account (or have it forwarded to an account you use more regularly). It is also your responsibility to ensure that I receive any messages from you. I recommend sending messages through the course website to ensure your messages to me from a non-McGill account are not mistaken as SPAM.
- Email is a written document and should be treated as a permanent record of communication. Each email should be addressed specifically (e.g. “Professor Brauner-Otto,” or Dear Prof. Otto) and include your name as a closing. Do not use texting shortcuts or incomplete sentences. Emails to me should be more formal than emails to your friends or family. If it is too cumbersome to properly compose an email from your phone then you should wait until you have access to a computer. I will not respond to emails that do not follow these guidelines.

Tardiness. Tardiness, arriving late to class, will not be tolerated. Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class will not be allowed to attend that day. Students repeatedly arriving late to class will be asked to withdraw from the course. If the time of this class is too difficult for you to accommodate then you need to find another class.

Leaving early. Leaving class early will not be tolerated. If you have other commitments that prevent you from being in class the entire time then you need to find another class. Students repeatedly leaving early will be asked to withdraw from the course.

Cell phones and other electronic devices. The use of cell phones and similar electronic devices is not allowed in class. Use includes texting, checking Facebook, and other similar activities. If a cell phone “goes off” (e.g. rings, buzzes, beeps, vibrates) in any manner the student will be asked to leave the class immediately. Any student who uses a phone or similar devise in class may be asked to leave class immediately. Re-admittance into the class at a later date is at the professor’s discretion. Students who repeatedly use unapproved electron devices will be asked to withdraw from the course. Laptops will be permitted but if I find their presence distracts from the learning environment of the class I will ban them.
Course outline  
Subject to change  
Readings can be found either as PDFs on myCourses or via the university library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part I--Introduction and ways of thinking about fertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>06-Sep</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Demographic Transition Theory and Conceptual Tools Developed to Study Fertility</td>
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</tbody>
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Supplemental readings:

3 20-Sep Classical Theories of Fertility Change

Supplemental:

4 27-Sep Contemporary Theories of Fertility Change I

5 04-Oct Contemporary Theories of Fertility Change II

Supplemental:


Part II--Empirical evidence

6 11-Oct Value of Children and Fertility

Status of Women and Fertility

7 18-Oct Family Planning/Development Programs and Fertility
Supplemental readings

8 25-Oct Education and Fertility

Diffusion of Ideas and Fertility

9 01-Nov group presentations on high fertility settings

10 08-Nov Low Fertility Trends and Issues


Supplemental readings:


11 15-Nov no class

12 22-Nov Policies, values, ideas, attitudes


Supplemental readings:


13 29-Nov Unintended childbearing


Read Schalet 2010 before reading Schalet 2011


Also skim Chapters 4 (Adversarial and Interdependent Individualism, pages 77-106) and 6 (At least They Know Where I am/Control through Connection, pages 131-154)


Other topics and suggested readings (eg ideas for papers or group projects)

Consequences of unintended childbearing


Fertility intentions

Work and fertility

Childlessness

Inequality/heterogeneity (eg race and class differences)

Non-marital fertility