

PhD in Social and Political Science, Bocconi University  
Academic Year 2025-26

# 41023 Demography (24 hours)

Professor Letizia Mencarini

**DRAFT**

Link to the share doc: [41023 Demography\\_draft13nov25.docx](#)

The course is designed to introduce students to basic concepts of demographic measurement and modelling used to study changes in population size and composition. The course covers basic measures of mortality, fertility and migration; life table construction; stable populations; population projections; and age patterns of vital events. It will also introduce the main demographic theories to explain past trends and current demographic change.

It will be privileged the macro/aggregate perspective.

## Possible general textbook:

Lutz (2021) Advanced introduction to demography, Elgar. [\(on line in the Library\)](#)

## Possible methodological demographic textbooks:

Preston (2000), Demography, Blackwell [methods]

Wachter (2014) Essential Demographic Methods, Harvard University Press [\(on line in the Library\)](#)

Weeks (2021) Population. An introduction to Concepts and Issues, 13<sup>TH</sup> edition, Cengage.

## Readings

Various published papers indicated in the detailed syllabus. Each student will briefly present in class two papers and a critical and discussion stimulating way

## Assessment:

1/2 in class short presentations,

1/2 prospective paper

### Provisional detailed schedule and syllabus

#	Date	Time	Title	Specific topics	Readings – papers to be presented and discussed in class (there are all in Bb)	Name of presenters (you need to be in 2 lectures)
1	11 Nov25	14:45 – 16:15	Introduction:	Demography and/or population studies; from macro to micro to macro; Population change	[Basics] Chapter 1 Lutz, Demography	N/A
2	11 Nov 25	16:30 – 18:00	World population growth and decline, environment and global sustainability	Brief history Slow and fast growing Global variation and redistribution The Malthusian and Marxian perspectives	[Basics]	
3	13 Nov 25	14:45 – 16:15	Mortality	The theory of the demographic and mortality transition.	[Basics] Lee R. (The Demographic Transition: Three Centuries of Fundamental Change	N/A
4	18 Nov 25	14:45 – 16:15		Past, current and future trends in mortality and survival. Heterogeneity	Papers #1 <u>1. Mortality/survival trend &amp; theories:</u> - 1.1.: Oeppen & Vaupel (2002) Broken Limits to Life Expectancy, Science -1.2: Dong et al (2016) Evidence for a limit to human lifespan, Nature -1.3.: Barbi (2018) The plateau of human mortality: Demography of longevity pioneers, Science  <u>2. Mortality/survival differentials</u> - 2.1. Crimmins at al (2019) Differences between Men and Women in Mortality and the Health Dimensions of the Morbidity Process, Clin Chem. - 2.2.: Feraldi&Zarulli (2022) Patterns in age and cause of death contribution to the sex gap in life expectancy: a comparison among ten countries, Genus	Francesco, Mariadolores
5	18 Nov 25	16:30 – 18:00	Fertility	Measuring mortality: crude rates and life–tables (cohort and period)	[Basics]	-
6	20 Nov 25	14:45 – 16:15		Measurement of fertility	[Basics] - Lee R. (The Demographic Transition: Three Centuries of Fundamental Change - Lutz (2022) Cognition-driven demographic transition, N-IUSSP and Advanced	Mariadolores

					<p>introduction to demography (in biblio on-line)</p> <p><u>3. 2nd Demographic transition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lesthaeghe (2014) The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development, PNAS</li> </ul> <p><u>4. Macro relationship between fertility and development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paper in Nature (2009) by Myrskylä et al on "Advances in development reverse fertility declines"</li> <li>- (2021) by Gaddy on "A decade of TFR declines suggests no relationship between development and sub-replacement fertility rebounds"</li> </ul>	
7	25 Nov 25	14:45 – 16:15		<p>Past and current trends in fertility</p> <p>Fertility transition theory</p> <p>Proximate determinants of fertility</p>		
8	25 Nov 25	16:30 – 18:00	Population structure	Determinants of low and high fertility	<p><u>5. High fertility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kebede et al (2018) Stalls in Africa's fertility decline partly result from disruptions in female education, PNAS</li> <li>- Church et al. (2023) Traditional supports and contemporary disrupters of high fertility desires in sub-Saharan Africa: a scoping review</li> <li>- <a href="https://www.niussp.org/fertility-and-reproduction/accelerating-fertility-decline-through-education-and-family-planning">https://www.niussp.org/fertility-and-reproduction/accelerating-fertility-decline-through-education-and-family-planning</a></li> <li>- <a href="https://www.niussp.org/fertility-and-reproduction/accelerating-fertility-decline-through-education-and-family-planning">accélérer la baisse de la fécondité grâce à l'éducation et la planification familiale/</a></li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p><u>6. Current very low fertility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lutz, Wolfgang. "Fertility Will Be Determined by the Changing Ideal Family Size and the Empowerment to Reach These Targets." Vienna Yearbook of</li> <li>- Kearney &amp; Levine (2022) The Causes and Consequences of Declining US Fertility</li> <li>- <a href="https://theconversation.com/fears-that-falling-birth-rates-in-us-could-lead-to-population-collapse-are-based-on-faulty-assumptions-261031">https://theconversation.com/fears-that-falling-birth-rates-in-us-could-lead-to-population-collapse-are-based-on-faulty-assumptions-261031</a></li> </ul>	Sofia, Alberto

9	27 Nov 25	14:45 – 16:15		Measurement, modelling, pop projections, momentum Age transition and stratification Re-measuring aging, Role of migration	Papers #4	-
10	2 Dec	16:30 – 18:00		Demographic dividend theory	Papers #5	Francesco, Alberto
11	4 Dec	14:45 – 16:15		Still on ageing	Papers #6	Sofia
12	10 Dec	?	PRESENTATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE PAPERS			

#### *High fertility*

- Aisha Dasgupta et al. (2022) Contraceptive use and fertility transitions: The distinctive experience of sub-Saharan Africa, *Demographic Research*, 46, (97-130).
- Bongaarts J, Casterline J (2013). Fertility transition: Is sub-Saharan Africa different? *Popul Dev Rev* 38, 153–168.
- Kebede et al (2018) Stalls in Africa's fertility decline partly result from disruptions in female education, *PNAS*
- Liu & Raftery (2020) How Do Education and Family Planning Accelerate Fertility Decline?, *PDR*

#### *(8) Very low fertility*

- Kohler et al. The Emergence of Lowest-Low Fertility in Europe During the 1990s, *PDR*, 2002 (only first part, until page 652)
- Myrskylä et al. (2013), New Cohort Fertility Forecasts for the Developed World: Rises, Falls, and Reversals, *PDR*, 2013.
- Sobotka (2021) World's Highest Childlessness Levels in East Asia, *Population & Societies*
- Lutz, Wolfgang. "Fertility Will Be Determined by the Changing Ideal Family Size and the Empowerment to Reach These Targets." *Vienna Yearbook of*