



European Doctoral School of Demography (EDSD) 2015-2016

Course curriculum for EDSD Theories of demographic behaviour and change

1. General information

1. Name: Theories of demographic behaviour and change
2. Level: Doctoral level
3. ECTS Credit points: 7.5

2. Course placement within the educational system

1. Subject: Demography
2. This is a doctoral level course and is mandatory in the Master programme in Demography.
3. The course is offered in English.

3. Learning outcomes

On a general level the student shall acquire a thorough knowledge of the theories and trends behind the causes of various demographic outcomes. Specifically students will be able to:

- make use of theories to analyse changes in fertility, nuptiality, mortality and migration
- make use of theories to analyse changes in long-term relationships between population development and living conditions
- understand the precise mechanisms by which personal attributes, including the stage in the life course, and contextual factors, such as economic conditions and sociocultural system, affect fertility, nuptiality, mortality and migration
- understand the mechanisms by which events and conditions during one stage of life affect demographic events and behaviour later in life
- prove or disprove a theory using falsifiable hypotheses
- present a theoretically based analysis of the complex interplay between population change and economic and social development.

4. Course content

The aim of the course is to introduce students to macro-level theories of population change, micro-level theories of demographic behaviour and the micro-macro interactions. At the end of the course, students should comprehend the major theories that explain the level and timing of fertility, family formation and dissolution, the ageing of individuals and society, migration behaviour and migration systems. These theories are situated within the overarching framework of the human life course, embedded in institutional contexts that reflect economic, social, cultural and historical conditions. In addition, students should understand the demographic transition and the demographic response to situational changes such as technological change, economic development, food shortage and economic crisis. Therefore, theories explaining both the influence of population growth on economic, social, and environmental development and vice-versa are discussed. Students should be able to apply these theories to interpret data on levels and differentials in demographic change and the drivers: fertility, mortality and migration, to identify how long-term and short-term economic changes influence population behaviour as well as to understand the complex interrelationships between population and living standards by using information with details at individual and family, and household levels.

The course is divided into four modules:

- a. Theories of fertility and the family
 - Major trends in fertility and the family
 - Natural fertility and proximate determinants of fertility
 - Demographic strategies and demographic transitions around the globe



- The impact of values, norms and economics on fertility behaviour
 - The impact of gender policies, labour market policies and institutional arrangements (e.g. child care) on fertility behaviour
 - Theories of the family and family dynamics (including intergenerational transfers of values, norms and resources)
- b. Theories of mortality and morbidity
- Major trends in life expectancy, health expectancy, diseases and causes of death
 - The biodemography of aging (including evolutionary-demographic theories and biodemographic diversity of mortality patterns)
 - Late life legacy of very early life
 - Theories of the epidemiologic transition.
 - Compression and expansion of morbidity: impact of lifestyle, environmental, socioeconomic and cultural factors (including institutional factors, such as characteristics of the health care system).
- c. Migration
- Main theoretical approaches of migration and residential mobility, derived from various disciplines: demography, geography, economics, social psychology
 - The implications of the theories for empirical research.
- d. Historical demography
- Population and economy. The recent debate and its intellectual sources
 - Population and economy. Long term macro evidence.
 - The demographic transition theory revised: the mortality decline
 - The demographic transition theory revised: the fertility decline
 - Short-term economic stress. Macro evidence.
 - Population and living standards. From macro to micro.
 - The demographic transition and population ageing.

5. *Teaching and assessment*

The course is designed as a series of lectures, seminars, workshops and discussions on projects reports. Grading is based on individual performance, via written assignments, oral presentation as well as group activities.

The University views plagiarism very seriously, and will take disciplinary actions against students for any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. Plagiarism is considered to be a very serious academic offence. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other unfair practice in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University.

6. *Grading scale*

Grading on the programme is based upon the ECTS scale. This means that in order to pass a certain course or assignment a student has to get the mark A, B, C, D or E, where A is the highest possible mark. Students who fail an assignment will get the mark F. In very general terms, the different grades represent the following quality of work:

A	Excellent.	The achievement clearly distinguishes itself and is excellent with regards to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought
B	Very good	Very good. The work shows a very good ability of theoretical depth, practical application, analytical skill and independent thought.



C	Good	The achievement lives up to expectations and is of a good standard when considering theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought.
D	Satisfactory	The result is satisfactory on most levels, but has some weaknesses with regards to the above mentioned aspects.
E	Sufficient	The performance satisfies the minimum requirements, but not more.
F	Fail	The result is not satisfactory enough.

7. Prerequisites

General prerequisites for the European Master in Demography

8. Literature

It will be provided separately by instructors.