

# MA in Social Sciences (IC3JM)

## Socio-Demography 2025–2026

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Tuesday, 10:00–13:00, Room XXX

### COURSE OVERVIEW

This course covers the interconnections between key demographic processes, macro-social transformations, and life outcomes at the individual level. The syllabus is structured around 11 interrelated topics, covering family formation and dissolution, the labour-fertility dilemmas, health outcomes, migration, and birth circumstances. Selected readings reflect major theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, empirical findings, and, where applicable, cross-national comparisons. The selection of readings tries to maximize gender-balanced authorship and geographical diversity.

### COURSE ORGANIZATION

**Session structure:** With the exception of Sessions 1 and 12, each class will consist of:

- A short lecture by the instructor introducing the session's topic.
- A longer presentation by the student addressing the key issues identified in the readings, followed by co-moderation of the class discussion with the instructor.

**Student presentations:** Presentations should go beyond summarizing the readings. Students are expected to identify gaps in the literature, highlight conflicting findings or theoretical inconsistencies, point out methodological limitations, and explore interdisciplinary connections and future research directions. Presenters should have a strong command of the mandatory readings, along with some of the recommended materials. Recommended readings include a variety of topics to cater to personal interests as much as possible. Presenting students are also encouraged to incorporate facts and theories beyond the syllabus, when relevant. The presenting student is responsible for co-moderating the discussion, including preparing questions to stimulate active and engaging debate.

Topic/sessions will be assigned during the first class. Ideally, presentations should be individual. The content and structure of the presentation and discussion should be agreed upon in advance with the instructor. The use of AI is discouraged, as the course aims to foster critical thinking and independent argumentation.

**Participation:** Active class participation is a core component of the course. All students are expected to complete the two required readings in advance and come prepared to discuss them and raise questions. The use of AI to prepare the sessions is discouraged, in order to support the development of analytical and communication skills.

**Final paper:** Students will write a final paper on a topic of their choice, ideally one covered in the syllabus. The paper should resemble an academic article in the social sciences, including a concise critical review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, a well-defined research question that ideally addresses a gap in current knowledge, hypotheses, and original empirical material. The paper should not exceed 4,000 words, including references. Supplementary materials may be included in an appendix. Papers must be completed individually. Students are discouraged from using AI to produce and write their final papers, beyond English language revision. In the final session, students will present their research projects. Peers and the instructor will read the papers in advance and provide feedback. Deadlines for submission of the final papers will be set during the first session of the course.

**Grading:**

- Presentation and co-moderation of one session: 30%
- Participation in all other sessions: 30%
- Final paper: 40%

## **SYLLABUS**

### **1. THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION**

After historical declines in both mortality and fertility since the 18<sup>th</sup> century in certain European populations, the “second demographic transition” describes demographic trends starting in the 1970s that include the baby bust, the systematic postponement of marriage and parenthood, below-replacement fertility, the rise of alternative forms of partnerships, and parenthood outside marriage. The potential and limitations of the “second demographic transition” concept are discussed in this session.

#### **Required readings**

Lesthaeghe, R. (2014). The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(51), 18112-18115.

Bernhardt, E. (2004). Is the Second Demographic Transition a useful concept for demography?. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 2, 25-28.

#### **Additional readings**

McLanahan, S. (2004). Diverging destinies: How children are faring under the second demographic transition. *Demography*, 41(4), 607-627.

Esping-Andersen, G., & Billari, F. C. (2015). Re-theorizing family demographics. *Population and Development Review*, 41(1), 1-31.

## 2. ASSORTATIVE MATING: PREFERENCES, RESTRICTIONS, OUTCOMES

This session analyses patterns of assortative mating, examining how individual preferences and structural constraints shape partner selection across dimensions such as education, income, ethnicity, and gender. We will discuss recent trends, including the rise of online dating, shifts in educational dynamics, and implications for social inequality and heterogeneous life outcomes.

### Required readings

Esteve, A., García-Román, J., & Permanyer, I. (2012). The gender-gap reversal in education and its effect on union formation: the end of hypergamy?. *Population and Development Review*, 38(3), 535-546.

Boertien, D., & Bouchet-Valat, M. (2022). Are increasing earnings associations between partners of concern for inequality? A comparative study of 21 countries. *Social Forces*, 101(2), 639-664.

### Additional readings

#### Trends:

Schwartz, C. R. (2013). Trends and variation in assortative mating: Causes and consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39(1), 451-470.

#### Online dating:

Thomas, R. J. (2020). Online exogamy reconsidered: Estimating the Internet's effects on racial, educational, religious, political and age assortative mating. *Social Forces*, 98(3), 1257-1286.

Potarca, G. (2021). Online dating is shifting educational inequalities in marriage formation in Germany. *Demography*, 58(5), 1977-2007.

#### Migrant populations:

Mood, C., & Jonsson, J. O. (2025). Persistent boundaries. Partnership patterns among children of immigrants and natives in Sweden. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-29.

González-Ferrer, A. (2006). Who do immigrants marry? Partner choice among single immigrants in Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 22(2), 171-185.

#### Same-sex couples:

Ciscato, E., Galichon, A., & Goussé, M. (2020). Like attract like? A structural comparison of homogamy across same-sex and different-sex households. *Journal of Political Economy*, 128(2), 740-781.

### First vs. later marriages:

Qian, Z., & Lichter, D. T. (2018). Marriage markets and intermarriage: Exchange in first marriages and remarriages. *Demography*, 55(3), 849-875.

### Outcomes:

Kapelle, N., & Lersch, P. M. (2020). The accumulation of wealth in marriage: Over-time change and within-couple inequalities. *European Sociological Review*, 36(4), 580-593.

Breen, R., & Salazar, L. (2011). Educational assortative mating and earnings inequality in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(3), 808-843.

Choi, S., Chung, I., & Breen, R. (2020). How marriage matters for the intergenerational mobility of family income: Heterogeneity by gender, life course, and birth cohort. *American Sociological Review*, 85(3), 353-380.

Potarca, G., & Rossier, C. (2022). Are women in hypogamous unions more depressed? A cross-national comparison among the highly educated. *European Sociological Review*, 38(1), 103-123.

## **3. COUPLE INSTABILITY AND DISSOLUTION**

This session examines the drivers and consequences of relationship instability and separation, with a focus on how shifting gender norms, labour market dynamics, and socioeconomic shocks affect couple outcomes. We will explore cross-national and life-course perspectives on marital dissolution, as well as the broader implications for adult and child wellbeing.

### **Required readings**

Gonalons-Pons, P., & Gangl, M. (2021). Marriage and masculinity: Male-breadwinner culture, unemployment, and separation risk in 29 countries. *American Sociological Review*, 86(3), 465-502.

Schwartz, C. R., & Han, H. (2014). The reversal of the gender gap in education and trends in marital dissolution. *American Sociological Review*, 79(4), 605-629.

### **Additional readings**

Cavanagh, S. E., & Fomby, P. (2019). Family instability in the lives of American children. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45(1), 493-513.

Özcan, B., & Breen, R. (2012). Marital instability and female labor supply. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38(1), 463-481.

Boertien, D. (2012). Jackpot? Gender differences in the effects of lottery wins on separation. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74(5), 1038-1053.

Lau, C. Q. (2012). The stability of same-sex cohabitation, different-sex cohabitation, and marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74(5), 973-988.

Kravdal, Ø., & Wörn, J. (2023). Mental and physical health trajectories of Norwegian parents and children before and after union dissolution. *Population and Development Review*, 49(1), 71-103.

#### **4. FERTILITY AND LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES**

This session investigates the interplay between fertility and women's labour market trajectories, focusing on how employment conditions, policy environments, and technological advancements shape reproductive choices and career paths. Drawing on historical and cross-national evidence, we will examine how fertility decisions both reflect and reproduce gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work.

##### **Required readings**

Behrman, J., & Gonalons-Pons, P. (2020). Women's employment and fertility in a global perspective (1960–2015). *Demographic Research*, 43, 707.

Goldin, C., & Katz, L. F. (2002). The power of the pill: Oral contraceptives and women's career and marriage decisions. *Journal of Political Economy*, 110(4), 730-770.

##### **Additional readings**

Prize lecture: Claudia Goldin, Economic Sciences Nobel Prize 2023 (video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lcyCG-olg>

Arpino, B., Esping-Andersen, G., & Pessin, L. (2015). How do changes in gender role attitudes towards female employment influence fertility? A macro-level analysis. *European Sociological Review*, 31(3), 370-382.

Brewster, K. L., & Rindfuss, R. R. (2000). Fertility and women's employment in industrialized nations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 271-296.

Kleven, H., Landais, C., & Søgaaard, J. E. (2019). Children and gender inequality: Evidence from Denmark. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 11(4), 181-209.

Alderotti, G., Vignoli, D., Baccini, M., & Matysiak, A. (2021). Employment instability and fertility in Europe: A meta-analysis. *Demography*, 58(3), 871-900.

Matysiak, A., Sobotka, T., & Vignoli, D. (2021). The Great Recession and fertility in Europe: A sub-national analysis. *European Journal of Population*, 37(1), 29-64.

Guetto, R., Alderotti, G., & Vignoli, D. (2025). Can Family Policies Enhance Fertility? An Ex Ante Evaluation Through Factorial Survey Experiments. *Demography*, 11775048.

#### **5. DELAYED CHILDBEARING AND FERTILITY DECLINE**

This session explores the causes and consequences of delayed fertility and declining birth rates, focusing on tempo and quantum effects, overall and for specific subgroups of women, changing life-course expectations, and access to reproductive technologies.

### **Required readings**

Bongaarts, J., & Feeney, G. (1998). On the quantum and tempo of fertility. *Population and Development Review*, 271-291.

Chanfreau, J., Goisis, A., & Kravdal, Ø. (2025). Conceptualizing and Measuring the Contribution of Assisted Reproductive Technologies to Fertility Rates. *Population and Development Review*, 51(2), 828-857.

### **Additional readings**

Beaujouan, É., Reimondos, A., Gray, E., Evans, A., & Sobotka, T. (2019). Declining realisation of reproductive intentions with age. *Human Reproduction*, 34(10), 1906-1914.

Ní Bhrolcháin, M., & Beaujouan, É. (2012). Fertility postponement is largely due to rising educational enrolment. *Population Studies*, 66(3), 311-327.

Adhikari, S., Lutz, W., & Kebede, E. (2024). Forecasting Africa's fertility decline by female education groups. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(46), e2320247121.

Lazzari, E., Compans, M. C., & Beaujouan, E. (2025). Change in the perceived reproductive age window and delayed fertility in Europe. *Population Studies*, 79(1), 81-101.

Goisis, A., & Sigle-Rushton, W. (2014). Childbearing postponement and child well-being: a complex and varied relationship?. *Demography*, 51, 1821-1841.

Mussino, E., Wilson, B., & Andersson, G. (2021). The fertility of immigrants from low-fertility settings: Adaptation in the quantum and tempo of childbearing?. *Demography*, 58(6), 2169-2191.

## **6. SEX PREFERENCES FOR CHILDREN AND SEX RATIOS AT BIRTH**

This session addresses how cultural norms and parental preferences for children's sex shape reproductive behaviour, fertility decisions, and demographic outcomes, including skewed sex ratios at birth. We will explore historical and contemporary evidence of son preference, and the broader implications for gender inequality and child wellbeing.

### **Required readings**

Maralani, V., & Pinar, C. (2024). Spousal Agreement on Sex Preferences for Children and Gender Gaps in Children's Education. *Population and Development Review*, 50(3), 825-863.

Echavarri, R., & Beltrán Tapia, F. (2025). Prenatal Care, Son Preference, and the Sex Ratio at Birth. *Demography*, 11798263.

### **Additional readings**

Pollard, M. S., & Morgan, S. P. (2002). Emerging parental gender indifference? Sex composition of children and the third birth. *American Sociological Review*, 67(4), 600-613.

Dubuc, S., & Coleman, D. (2007). An increase in the sex ratio of births to India-born mothers in England and Wales: evidence for sex-selective abortion. *Population and Development Review*, 33(2), 383-400.

Gulczyński, M. (2023). Migration and Skewed Subnational Sex Ratios among Young Adults. *Population and Development Review*, 49(3), 681-706.

Marco-Gracia, F. J., & Beltrán Tapia, F. J. (2021). Son preference, gender discrimination, and missing girls in rural Spain, 1750–1950. *Population and Development Review*, 47(3), 665-689.

Morgan, S. P., Lye, D. N., & Condran, G. A. (1988). Sons, daughters, and the risk of marital disruption. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(1), 110-129.

## **7. FAMILY SIZE, POSITION IN SIBSHIP AND LIFE OUTCOMES**

In this session we ask how family size and sibling configuration might influence individuals' life outcomes across different social and historical contexts. Readings examine the impact of sibship size on educational attainment and cognitive ability, the validity of the resource dilution hypothesis, and how the position in the family shapes behaviours and valued outcomes beyond education.

### **Required readings**

Präg, P., Choi, S., & Monden, C. (2020). The sibsize revolution in an international context. *Demographic Research*, 43, 461-500.

Kalmijn, M., & van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2016). Sibship size and gendered resource dilution in different societal contexts. *PloS one*, 11(8), e0160953.

### **Additional readings**

Steelman, L. C., Powell, B., Werum, R., & Carter, S. (2002). Reconsidering the effects of sibling configuration: Recent advances and challenges. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28(1), 243-269.

Goisis, A., Chanfreau, J., Moulton, V., & Ploubidis, G. B. (2023). Only children and cognitive ability in childhood: a cross-cohort analysis over 50 years in the United Kingdom. *Population and Development Review*, 49(2), 319-349.

Lu, Y., & Treiman, D. J. (2008). The effect of sibship size on educational attainment in China: Period variations. *American Sociological Review*, 73(5), 813-834.

Downey, D. B. (1995). When bigger is not better: Family size, parental resources, and children's educational performance. *American Sociological Review*, 746-761.

Requena, M. (2024). Early school leaving, number of siblings and birth order in Spain. *Oxford Review of Education*, 50(5), 676-693.

Donrovich, R., Puschmann, P., & Matthijs, K. (2014). Rivalry, solidarity, and longevity among siblings: A life course approach to the impact of sibship composition and birth order on later life mortality risk, Antwerp (1846–1920). *Demographic Research*, 31, 1167-1198.

Somit, A., Peterson, S. A., & Arwine, A. (1993). Birth Order and Political Behavior: Clearing the Underbrush. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), 149-160.

Stradford, L., van Poppel, F., & Lumey, L. H. (2017). Can resource dilution explain differences in height by birth order and family size? A study of 389,287 male recruits in twentieth-century Netherlands. *The History of the Family*, 22(2-3), 214-235.

Uchikoshi, F., Raymo, J. M., & Yoda, S. (2023). Family norms and declining first-marriage rates: the role of sibship position in the Japanese marriage market. *Demography*, 60(3), 939-963.

## **8. DRIVERS OF MIGRATION**

This session maps the key factors influencing international migration, including economic opportunities, social networks, and cultural motivations. It also examines how migrants' characteristics differ from non-migrants in origin countries. The session also addresses migration policies and their potential effects.

### **Required readings**

De Haas, H., Czaika, M., Flahaux, M. L., Mahendra, E., Natter, K., Vezzoli, S., & Villares-Varela, M. (2019). International migration: Trends, determinants, and policy effects. *Population and Development Review*, 45(4), 885-922.

Palloni, A., Massey, D. S., Ceballos, M., Espinosa, K., & Spittel, M. (2001). Social capital and international migration: A test using information on family networks. *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(5), 1262-1298.

### **Additional readings**

Arango, J. (2000). Explaining migration: a critical view. *International Social Science Journal*, 52(165), 283-296.

Thornton, A., Williams, N. E., Bhandari, P., Young-DeMarco, L., Sun, C., Swindle, J., ... & Xie, Y. (2019). Influences of material aspirations on migration. *Demography*, 56, 75-102.



Polavieja, J. G., Fernández-Reino, M., & Ramos, M. (2018). Are migrants selected on motivational orientations? Selectivity patterns amongst international migrants in Europe. *European Sociological Review*, 34(5), 570-588.

Feliciano, C. (2005). Educational selectivity in US immigration: How do immigrants compare to those left behind?. *Demography*, 42(1), 131-152.

Beauchemin, C., Nappa, J., Schoumaker, B., Baizan, P., González-Ferrer, A., Caarls, K., & Mazzucato, V. (2015). Reunifying versus living apart together across borders: A comparative analysis of sub-Saharan migration to Europe. *International Migration Review*, 49(1), 173-199.

Coimbra Vieira, C., Lohmann, S., & Zagheni, E. (2024). The value of cultural similarity for predicting migration: Evidence from food and drink interests in digital trace data. *Population and Development Review*, 50(1), 149-176.

## **9. THE “HEALTHY IMMIGRANT” PARADOX**

This session explores the observation that immigrants often exhibit better health outcomes than native populations, despite socioeconomic disadvantages. It examines patterns in morbidity and mortality, how these patterns vary by context, duration of residence, and ethnic group, and the validity of potential explanations, especially migrant positive self-selection.

### **Required readings**

Zheng, H., & Yu, W. H. (2025). Paradox Between Immigrant Advantages in Morbidity and Mortality: Dynamic Patterns and Tentative Explanations. *Demography*, 62(2), 707-736.

Ichou, M., & Wallace, M. (2019). The healthy immigrant effect. *Demographic Research*, 40, 61-94.

### **Additional readings**

Palloni, A., & Arias, E. (2004). Paradox lost: explaining the Hispanic adult mortality advantage. *Demography*, 41(3), 385-415.

Abraido-Lanza, A. F., Dohrenwend, B. P., Ng-Mak, D. S., & Turner, J. B. (1999). The Latino mortality paradox: a test of the "salmon bias" and healthy migrant hypotheses. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(10), 1543-1548.

Cebolla-Boado, H., & Salazar, L. (2016). Differences in perinatal health between immigrant and native-origin children: evidence from differentials in birth weight in Spain. *Demographic Research*, 35, 167-200.

Juárez, S. P., Drefahl, S., Dunlavy, A., & Rostila, M. (2018). All-cause mortality, age at arrival, and duration of residence among adult migrants in Sweden: a population-based longitudinal study. *SSM-Population Health*, 6, 16-25.

Baluran, D. A., & Patterson, E. J. (2021). Examining ethnic variation in life expectancy among Asians in the United States, 2012–2016. *Demography*, 58(5), 1631-1654.

Escamilla-Guerrero, D., & López-Alonso, M. (2023). Migrant self-selection and random shocks: evidence from the Panic of 1907. *The Journal of Economic History*, 83(1), 45-85.

## **10. CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY-LIFE EXPOSURES**

This session explores how early-life exposures, including war, famine, pollution, and life habits, shape long-term health, cognitive development, and socioeconomic attainment. It emphasizes the timing and accumulation of these exposures. Some of the readings discuss heterogeneity in exposure, as well as mitigation and adaptation strategies across socioeconomic resources of the family. Evidence spans from historical events to modern environmental inequalities.

### **Required readings**

Ramirez, D., & Haas, S. A. (2021). The long arm of conflict: How timing shapes the impact of childhood exposure to war. *Demography*, 58(3), 951-974.

Rüttenauer, T., Bader, F., Ehler, I., & Best, H. (2025). Breathing unequal air: environmental disadvantage and residential sorting of immigrant minorities in England and Germany. *Social Forces*, soaf032.

### **Additional readings**

Torche, F., & Nobles, J. (2024). Early-life exposures and social stratification. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 50.

Susser, E., Hoek, H. W., & Brown, A. (1998). Neurodevelopmental disorders after prenatal famine: the story of the Dutch Famine Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 147(3), 213-216.

St Clair, D., Xu, M., Wang, P., Yu, Y., Fang, Y., Zhang, F., ... & He, L. (2005). Rates of adult schizophrenia following prenatal exposure to the Chinese famine of 1959-1961. *Jama*, 294(5), 557-562.

O'Brien, R. L., Neman, T., Rudolph, K., Casey, J., & Venkataramani, A. (2018). Prenatal exposure to air pollution and intergenerational economic mobility: Evidence from US county birth cohorts. *Social Science & Medicine*, 217, 92-96.

Chaudhary, E., George, F., Saji, A., Dey, S., Ghosh, S., Thomas, T., ... & Mehta, U. (2023). Cumulative effect of PM<sub>2.5</sub> components is larger than the effect of PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass on child health in India. *Nature Communications*, 14(1), 6955.

Ramirez, D., Povedano, E., García, A., & Lund, M. (2025). Smoke's Enduring Legacy: Bridging Early-Life Smoking Exposures and Later-Life Epigenetic Age Acceleration. *Demography*, 11790645.

## **11. HEALTH OUTCOMES AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

This session explores how health and wellbeing are shaped by social inequalities and macro-level shocks such as economic crises, pandemics, and conflict. We will examine patterns in several outcomes across time and space, focusing on disparities by race, education, and socioeconomic status. The readings highlight the dynamic relationship between demographic change, health inequities, and public policy.

### **Required readings**

Permanyer, I., & Bramajo, O. (2023). The race between mortality and morbidity: implications for the global distribution of health. *Population and Development Review*, 49(4), 909-937.

Goodair, Benjamin, and Aaron Reeves. "The effect of health-care privatisation on the quality of care." *The Lancet Public Health* 9.3 (2024): e199-e206.

### **Additional readings**

Burgard, S. A., & Kalousova, L. (2015). Effects of the Great Recession: Health and well-being. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), 181-201.

Wrigley-Field, E. (2025). Three Ways of Looking at Black–White Mortality Differences in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 51.

Goisis, A., Fallesen, P., Seiz, M., Salazar, L., Eremenko, T., & Cozzani, M. (2024). Educational gradients in the prevalence of medically assisted reproduction births in a comparative perspective. *Fertility and Sterility*, 122(4), 648-657.

Amberg, F., Chansa, C., Niangaly, H., Sankoh, O., & De Allegri, M. (2023). Examining the relationship between armed conflict and coverage of maternal and child health services in 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa: a geospatial analysis. *The Lancet Global Health*, 11(6), e843-e853.

Di Nallo, A. (2025). Couples' Subjective Well-Being Around Live Birth and Pregnancy Loss. *Population and Development Review*.

Permanyer, I., & Vigezzi, S. (2024). Cause-of-death determinants of lifespan inequality. *Demography*, 61(2), 513-540.

Stelter, R., De la Croix, D., & Myrskylä, M. (2021). Leaders and laggards in life expectancy among European scholars from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. *Demography*, 58(1), 111-135.

Mize, T. D., & Kincaid, R. (2025). Role-Accumulation and Mental Health across the Life Course. *American Sociological Review*, 00031224241313394.

Correia, S., Luck, S., & Verner, E. (2022). Pandemics depress the economy, public health interventions do not: Evidence from the 1918 flu. *The Journal of Economic History*, 82(4), 917-957.

## **12. WRAP-UP AND MINI-WORKSHOP OF PAPER PROJECTS**

This session will be moderated by the instructor. The structure of the mini-workshop will be announced in advance.

Note: Session content and reading lists are subject to change based on the organizational needs of the course.
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