This course is intended to provide a broad and in-depth exposure to substantive, theoretical and methodological issues in the study of human fertility. The emphasis will be on attempts to explain the dramatic declines in fertility that have taken place in the last three decades in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, Spain, Italy, and the countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as the relative stability of fertility in the countries of Northern Europe and the United States. It will also address the policy issues that are now at the forefront of national and international debates regarding reproductive health and population, as well as the likely course of fertility in various settings. Participants interested in an empirical exercise will have the opportunity to analyze a fertility and contraceptive prevalence survey recently conducted in a country of their choosing, participate in the analysis of census data from either Brazil or Mexico, or in the analysis of a prospective survey of oral contraceptive use along the US-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas.

There is no prerequisite for this seminar. Participants without previous training in, or exposure to demographic measurement or techniques will, however, need to spend some time on their own gaining familiarity with basic measures such as the Total Fertility Rate. Evaluation will be based on several empirical exercises (10 percent), a preliminary bibliographic paper due about half way through the semester—probably October 12 (30 percent), a presentation/discussion leadership related to one of the course topics (20 percent), and a final “paper” that builds on the preliminary paper and could add to it either an empirical application or a proposal for future research (40 percent). More details on these assignments will be forthcoming as the semester proceeds.

Everyone will be expected to have read the assigned papers before class, and to participate in the discussion. Often, but not always, some questions related to the readings will be distributed in advance.
Reading List

1. Fertility Transition September 3

General Statements and Overviews


2. Measures, Indices, and Proximate Determinants September 10


3. Fertility Intentions (Joint with ANT 391) September 17


4. Unmet Need for Contraception and the Estimation of Unwanted Fertility September 24

5. **The Politics of Reproduction**


6. **Explaining Fertility Transitions: Development vs. Diffusion**


7. Adolescent Pregnancy


8. Contraceptive Methods (JOINT WITH ANTHRO 391)


9. Second Demographic Transition


10. Red States and Blue States, and the Second Demographic Transition  November 5  (JOINT WITH ANTRHO 391)


See also Lesthaeghe’s SDT site:  
[http://sdt.psc.isr.umich.edu/](http://sdt.psc.isr.umich.edu/)


11. Birth Experiences in the US and Brazil  (WITH ANTHRO 391)  November 12


Davis-Floyd R. 2003. Birth as an American Rite of Passage. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selected pages) or article in Int J Obs & Gyn

Dundes L, ed. 2003. The Manner Born: Birth Rites in Cross-Cultural Perspective. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. (Selected pages)


