SOC/COD 585
Population and Environment
Summer I 2006

Guidelines: Current Issues in Demography Paper

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is for you to examine a current issue in demography from both a theoretical and a practical/applied perspective. In order to do this, you will first select a current issue related to a demographic topic (such as those we have discussed in class). Next, you will find and read articles from peer-reviewed journals and from newspapers on this topic. Finally, you will prepare a paper in which you discuss the demographic issue and use the current topic to analyze and illustrate the topic.

Articles

You should choose at least three journal articles and at least three newspaper articles. The journal articles should be from peer-reviewed sources, and should pertain to one important demographic concept or topic. The newspaper articles should address one current issue, related to the concept or topic of the journal articles.

Paper

Your paper should examine the current issue in the context of the demographic literature, represented by the journal articles you have selected. You should explain the current issue in some detail, highlighting the demographic concepts and topics. You should draw clear connections between the current issue on the broader demographic concepts and topics from the journal articles. You should clearly point out the theoretical implications or aspects of the issue in the news.

One effective strategy is to focus the paper on an important demographic concept or topic, use the journal articles to describe this topic, then use the newspaper articles as case studies to analyze and illustrate the topic. This is similar to writing a research paper, except that instead of collecting original data, you are using descriptions in the newspaper as your empirical evidence.

Presentation

On June 29 or 30, you will present your findings to the class. You will have 20 minutes for this presentation. Your presentation should cover the topic and issue of your paper, and should make it clear how we can apply demographic concepts to understand current issues in the news.