



HIST*4450 Life, Death and Migrations

Winter 2025
Section(s): C01

Department of History
Credit Weight: 1.00

Calendar Description

This seminar uses quantitative sources and methods to explore such themes as social inequality and demographic experience since 1800. It examines the value of such data for policy purposes, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which surveys are developed and undertaken. Students develop presentational and analytical skills through research projects.

Pre-Requisites: 10.00 credits including HIST*2450, and at least 1.00 credits in History at the 3000 level or above.

Restrictions: Restricted to students in the B.A. Honours program with a minimum of 70% average in all History course attempts

Course Description

This seminar uses quantitative sources and methods to explore demographic experience and social inequality. It examines the value of such data for policy purposes, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which demographic and other quantitative evidence is generated and collected. Students acquire skills for employment and graduate school by improving their capacity for quantitative description and analysis. During the first half of the semester we survey the historical experience of demographic change, review simple statistical concepts, and acquire direct 'hands-on' experience with databases. In the second half of the semester, students develop and report on independent research projects using quantitative evidence.

Timetable: [REDACTED]

Final Exam: There is no final exam

Instructor: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Phone: +1-519-824-4120 [REDACTED]
Office: [REDACTED]
Office hours: [REDACTED]

Required Resources

- Pat Hudson and Mina Ishizu, *History By Numbers: An Introduction to Quantitative Approaches* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) (Textbook - other editions are acceptable. A paper copy is on Library reserve 3 day loan.) Current price from Amazon.ca \$53.
- Massimo Livi-Bacci, *A Concise History of World Population* (Wiley-Blackwell, 5th edition 2012) (Textbook - other editions are acceptable. A digital copy and also a paper copy is available through the UG Library) Current price from Amazon.ca \$14-\$63.

Additional Resources

- Jane E. Miller, *12345, The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) (Textbook)
- Derek Rowntree's *Statistics Without Tears: A Primer for Non-Mathematicians* (any edition). (Textbook)
- Gary J. Kornblith, Making Sense of Numbers (website) <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/numbers> an on-line module within the 'History Matters' page, American Social History Project at the City University of New York and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge of demographic experience and social inequality
- critical appreciation of the role of quantitative evidence
- ability to communicate using both quantitative and qualitative evidence
- capacity for independent research
- understanding of quantitative methods

Assessment

News article commentaries	5%
Database creation, report & analysis	20%
Test	10%
Presentation and discussion of research proposals	5%
Research presentations	10%
Independent research essay	40%
Discussion (inc your feedback on other student presentations)	10%

News commentaries (5%)

In the early part of the course you will prepare for each class a written commentary between 200 and 500 words on a recent news report using quantitative evidence. The commentaries, which are submitted by email *before* the beginning of each class, comment on what quantitative evidence is being used, why it is (or is not) relevant to the public issue that occasioned the news report, and if you find this use of data to be effective. We will devote a few minutes of class time to discussion of the news articles.

Writing effectively with quantitative evidence draws upon the same principles as any writing: clarity, careful organization to direct the reader's attention to what is most important, concise and readable expression, and so on. Students are encouraged to consult Jane E. Miller's *12345, The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers* and chapter three in *History by Numbers*. The theme of effective communication runs through the course and is the principal motivation for the newspaper assignment. Each news commentary is graded pass or fail for 5% of the final grade. Reports unavailable to the instructor at the beginning of the class will not be graded.

Database creation and report (20%)

The class will create a database from records of people who appear in an historical source. You will be given page images from the source. The class will develop a data entry template and rules for transferring the information into a structured database. I will consolidate everyone's records and give you a spreadsheet from which you prepare a report describing the source, assumptions made in creating the database and analysing some aspect of the data. The penalty for late submission of data or report is 10% per day of the grade that otherwise would be obtained.

Research proposal (5%)

The purpose of the proposal is to enable the instructor and the class to offer constructive comments. Each proposal must include 6 elements: (i) identification of an interesting historical context and motivation of the specific historical question or hypothesis to be examined, (ii) the data or evidence of possible value to an investigation of the question, (iii) the kind of theory and empirical methodology that you might use, (iv) the significance of the results that you hope to obtain, (v) techniques for presentation that may be useful and (vi) a preliminary bibliography. Students must ensure that sufficient data and secondary sources are available for them to complete the final paper. The grading of the research proposal will reflect the 500-750 word document as well as in-class presentation and discussion.

Presentation of research project (10%)

In most cases, the project will not be completed at the time of presenting the research; however, it must be sufficiently advanced to be able to support a useful discussion. This requires a contextualization of the study in an historical literature, identification of the principal argument and relevant evidence, and findings based on your analysis to date. You will provide a 300-500 word summary to the class 48 hours before each presentation. The presentation will include a report of the data assembled (including the origin, scope and limitations of the source/s), the methodology the student has used to analyze it, preliminary results, and remaining work to be done. Everyone else in the class is responsible to contribute constructive comments to improve the final project report/essay. The research proposal and class discussion are graded.

Final paper (40%)

4000-5000 words (including notes but not bibliography). Grading of the final essay is similar to that of an essay for any other course with a 1.0 credit weighting. It will be useful for students to demonstrate that they have considered and incorporated the feedback and comments received on their presentation. Additional guidelines appended to the course outline give some idea of qualities of writing valued by this instructor. The essay is submitted via Courselink, and will be run through Turnitin. All assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 10 percentage points per day on the final grade unless the student has been granted additional time by the instructor.

Standards for Grading of an Essay

- (1) Has a thesis that falls within the framework of the course
- (2) Expresses its purpose clearly and persuasively
- (3) Begins and ends effectively
- (4) Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details
- (5) Is well-organized and unified
- (6) Uses appropriate, direct language
- (7) Correctly acknowledges and documents sources
- (8) Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format

A Maintains a level of excellence throughout, and shows originality and creativity in realizing (1) through (8)

B Realizes (1) through (8) fully and completely -- and demonstrates overall excellence -- but shows little or no originality or creativity.

C Realizes (1) through (8) adequately -- and demonstrates overall competence -- but contains a few, relatively minor errors or flaws. A "C" paper may show great creativity and originality, but those qualities don't make up for poor or careless writing. A "C" paper usually looks and reads like a next-to-final draft.

D Fails to realize some elements of (1) through (8) adequately -- and contains several, relatively serious errors or flaws, or many minor ones. A "D" paper often looks and reads like a first or second draft.

F Fails to realize several elements of (1) through (8) adequately -- and contains many serious errors or flaws, and usually many minor ones, as well. An "F" paper often looks and reads like a very preliminary draft.

Discussion in class (10%)

Seminars are dependent on good preparation and contributions as well as the fostering of a respectful learning environment by all. Students will be evaluated on the quality of their preparation and their contributions throughout the course with an emphasis on the discussion of other student research proposals and presentations).

Standards for Grading of Class Participation

A Excellent: always participates with valuable comments, frequently leads debate or offers original analysis and comment, uses assigned reading to back up arguments, clearly has done and understands virtually all reading, intelligently uses this understanding in discussion, encourages participation by others in the class and is supportive of them

B Good: almost always participates, thoughtful comments for the most part, a willing and able contributor, has done most reading, provides competent analysis of reading when prompted, does not respond to or encourage participation by others in the class

C Fair: Frequent contributor, has basic grasp of key concepts; arguments sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported, displays familiarity with most reading but tends not to analyze it or explore connections between different sources, comments and contributions may discourage participation by others

D Not Good: occasional participation, remarks in class marred by misunderstandings of key concepts, only occasionally offers comments or opinions, actual knowledge of material is outweighed by improvised comments and remarks, little or no apparent familiarity with assigned materials, comments and contributions may discourage participation by others

F Poor: rarely speaks, and parrots readings when put on the spot to offer an opinion. Distracts other members of the group with private conversation, inappropriate comments and/or use of wireless communication devices in class.

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students' work must reflect their unique intellectual capacity and demonstrate the application of critical thinking and problem solving. Unauthorized use of AI to complete assessments violates the fundamental intellectual purposes of the University and does not demonstrate student achievement of course learning outcomes.

Submission of materials completed by AI, without permission of the instructor, constitutes an offence under the University's academic misconduct policies, either as a form of plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids.

You are strongly encouraged to keep detailed research and reading notes, and other documentation, such as email correspondence with your GTAs or staff at the library and writing centre, or earlier drafts of your assignments, as evidence that you conducted your own research and writing.

The University of Guelph policy on the use of artificial intelligence systems may be found at <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2023/03/university-of-guelph-statement-on-artificial-intelligence-systems-chatgpt-academic-integrity/>

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the [SAS website](#).

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations](#).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the [Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses](#).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the [Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness](#). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a [Student Wellness Navigator](#) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our [mental wellbeing resources](#). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).
