

Economic Demography Syllabus

Department of Economics

ECON 2400 - Winter 2025

Dalhousie University acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

Dalhousie University also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.

Course Instructor(s)

Name	Email	Office Hours
Mrittika Shamsuddin	Mrittika.Shamsuddin@dal.ca	Thursday, 10am-12pm, 6214 University Ave, Room B22
Jiefeng Wang	Jiefeng.Wang@dal.ca	TBA

Course Description

This course investigates the economic determinants and consequences of the size, growth and age structure of human populations. Topics include the economic impact of immigrants, the growing pension burden as population age, how age structure affects employment, how population growth interacts with economic growth and the causes of demographic behavior, including fertility, health, marriage and labor supply.

Course Prerequisites

ECON 1101, ECON 1102 with minimum grades of C

Course Exclusions

NA

Course Structure

Course Delivery

- This course will be delivered face-to-face.

Lectures

Section 01: TR 1:05– 2:25 pm LSC C238

Course Materials

Required Readings:

- *Demography and Economics, by Anya Hageman*

The book can be accessed here

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/demographyandeconomics/>

- *Other required readings will be posted in Brightspace. See below for a list by week. Videos, and podcasts per week will also be posted in Brightspace.*

Assessment

Assignments

Assessment	Weight (% of final grade)	Date
In- class assignment (6/9)	40%	Every week (except the first and the last week)
Debates & Reflections	20+10=30%	March 25 th , 27 th , April 1 st and 3 rd
Final Exam	30%	Scheduled by Registrar

In-class assignments

- Every week from the second week, there will be an in-person assignment in class, which will be for 30/40 minutes.
- 5 of these assignments are meant to test your understanding of the concepts discussed in class. They will contain problem-solving and short answer questions. This will be individual work.
- 2 of the assignments will give you practice on gathering secondary data, create visualizations and identify trends.
- The other two assignments will expose you to writing policy briefs.
- There will be 9 of these assignments and your best 6 performances will be used for grade calculation.

Final exam

- The final exam will be in-person and the date will be announced by the registrar. The final exam is cumulative.
- The final exam will have 5 problem-solving questions, 5 short-answer questions and 2 data questions. It is individual work.
- The final exam will be for 2 hours.

Debates & Reflection

- This will be a group work, held on the last two weeks of classes (March 25-Apr 3).
- You can choose your own group of 4 but you will have to choose a topic from a given list provided (approved) by me.
- According to the rubric provided, I along with your peers will be evaluating you.
- After the debate you will individually submit a paragraph reflecting on your experience and what you have learnt.

Conversion of numerical grades to final letter grades follows the

Dalhousie Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D (50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F (0-49)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)	

Course Policies on Missed or Late Academic Requirements

Course Policies related to Academic Integrity

If you miss the class assignment for any reason, there will be no retake since we will be taking your best 6 out of 9 assignments. However, if you could not finish the work within class time or want to improve your grade, you can submit once more after incorporating the feed-backs and be re-evaluated.

If you miss the final exam on medical grounds, I will shift the weight to your submitted individual works. There will be no need to submit doctors' notes/SDAs.

The debates will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

All work submitted for grading should be your own. Plagiarism and collaboration in assignments and final exam will be considered failure of academic Integrity and will be reported.

Turnitin will be used to test for plagiarism when you submit your written work.

Any diagram or table on your assignments should be your work and not copy and pasted from any other source. You should look at the source of the data, collect the data and draw your own diagrams.

You can use generative AI and large language models (e.g., ChatGPT) to only improve the grammar of your assignments but you are required to acknowledge your usage and submit both the commands you type and the output generated.

If class is cancelled due to instructor illness, or if a given week's course material cannot be completed during class time for any reason, the material will be presented in videos that will be uploaded to Brightspace.

I will try my best to respond to email within 24 hours on a weekday, 48 hours on a weekend.

Health and safety: All students are required to comply with health and safety requirements on campus, and should be considerate of others' health concerns. Non-compliance may be reported under the Code of Student Conduct.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the components and dynamics of population size, structure, and distribution.
- Analyze how fertility, mortality, and migration influence population changes.
- Reflect on how individual decisions regarding fertility, marriage, labor supply, and migration impact demographic trends.
- Evaluate how demographic changes affect labor markets, economic growth, and development.

- Critically assess the outcomes of various public policies on population dynamics.
- Collect demographic data and use visual tools to analyze and identify trends.

Course Content

Week	Date	Lesson Topic(s)	Reading/Assessment (Preliminary)
1	Jan 6	Introduction to Population Economics	<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 1</p> Rosling, Hans. "Global Population Growth, Box by Box." <i>TED Conferences</i> . [Video]. Available at: TED .
2	Jan 13	The Malthusian Model and Pre-Industrial History	<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 2, Ch- 15</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lam, David. 2011. "How the World Survived the Population Bomb: Lessons From 50 Years of Extraordinary Demographic History." <i>Demography</i> 48 (4): 1231-1262. 2. Becker, Stan. 2013. "Has the World Really Survived the Population Bomb? (Commentary on 'How the World Survived the Population Bomb: Lessons From 50 Years of Extraordinary Demographic History')." <i>Demography</i> 50 (6): 2173-2181. 3. Lam, David. 2013. "Reply to Stan Becker, 'Has the World Really Survived the Population Bomb? (Commentary on 'How the World Survived the Population Bomb: Lessons from 50 Years of Extraordinary Demographic History')." <i>Demography</i> 50 (6): 2183-2186. 4. Oreskes, Naomi. 2023. "Eight Billion People in the World Is a Crisis, Not an Achievement." <i>Scientific American</i>. Available at: Scientific American. <p style="text-align: right;">Submit: Assignment 1</p>
3	Jan 20	Demographic Data	<p style="text-align: center;">Ch 3 – Ch 7, Ch 14 & 15</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schwabish, Jonathan A. 2014. "An Economist's Guide to Visualizing Data." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 28 (1): 209–34.

			<p>2. Population Reference Bureau. "History of Census and Census Taking." [Video]. Available at: Population Reference Bureau.</p> <p>Assignment 2 – Data Project</p> <p>Ch 8 – 10</p>
4	Jan 27	Crisis and Mortality	<p>1. Rosling, Hans. "HIV: New Facts and Stunning Data Visualizations." <i>TED Conferences</i>. [Video]. Available at: TED.</p> <p>2. NPR. 2023. "A Bad Economy Can Be Good for Your Health." <i>NPR</i>. Available at: NPR.</p> <p>3. Case, Anne, and Angus Deaton. 2022. "The Great Divide: Education, Despair, and Death." <i>Annual Review of Economics</i> 14 (1): 1-21.</p> <p>4. Charette, Elliot, and Andrew Goodman-Bacon. 2023. "Deaths of Despair and Economic Opportunity." <i>For All</i>, Spring 2023, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.</p> <p>Assignment 3</p> <p>Ch 11-Ch 13</p>
5	Feb 3	Fertility	<p>1. de Silva, Tiloka, and Silvana Tenreyro. 2017. "Population Control Policies and Fertility Convergence." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 31 (4): 205-228.</p> <p>2. Doepke, Matthias, Anne Hannusch, Fabian Kindermann, and Michèle Tertilt. 2023. "The Economics of Fertility: A New Era." In <i>Handbook of the Economics of the Family</i>, Vol. 1 (1).</p> <p>3. Dubner, Stephen J. 2015. "Why Do People Keep Having Children?" <i>Freakonomics Radio</i> Podcast. Link.</p> <p>Assignment 4 – Policy Brief</p> <p>Ch 16 and 17</p>
6	Feb 10	Age Structure and the Economy	<p>1. Maestas, Nicole, Kathleen J. Mullen, and David Powell. 2023. "The Effect of Population Aging on Economic Growth, the Labor Force, and Productivity." <i>American Economic Journal</i>:</p>

			<p><i>Macroeconomics</i> 15 (2): 306–32.</p> <p>2. Ferede, Ergete, and Bev Dahlby. 2023. "The Effect of Population Aging on Economic Growth in Canada." <i>Fraser Institute</i>. Available at: Fraser Institute.</p> <p>Assignment 5 – Feb 14</p>
7	Feb 17	Break	
8	Feb 24	Population and Environment	<p>Ch 18-Ch 19</p> <p>1. Muttarak, Raya. "How Climate Change Affects the Population Dynamics." <i>TED Conferences</i>. [Video]. Available at: TED.</p> <p>2. Borgschulte, Mark, David Molitor, and Eric Yongchen Zou. 2024. "Air Pollution and the Labor Market: Evidence from Wildfire Smoke." <i>The Review of Economics and Statistics</i> 106 (6): 1558–1575.</p> <p>3. Hunter, Lori M. 2000. <i>The Environmental Implications of Population Dynamics</i>. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.</p> <p>Assignment 6 – Data Project</p>
9	Mar 3	Population changes and economic development	<p>Ch 25</p> <p>1. Jones, Charles I. 2022. "The End of Economic Growth? Unintended Consequences of a Declining Population." <i>American Economic Review</i> 112 (11): 3489–3527.</p> <p>2. Bloom, David E. 2020. "Population 2020." <i>IMF Finance & Development</i> 57 (1).</p>
10	Mar 10	Migration	<p>Ch 20-Ch 22</p> <p>1. Clemens, Michael A. 2011. "Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?" <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 25 (3): 83–106.</p> <p>2. Clemens, Michael A. 2022. "Migration on the Rise, a Paradigm in Decline: The Last Half-Century of Global Mobility." <i>AEA Papers and Proceedings</i> 112: 257–61.</p>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Jia, Ning, Raven Molloy, Christopher Smith, and Abigail Wozniak. 2023. "The Economics of Internal Migration: Advances and Policy Questions." <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i> 61 (1): 144–80. 4. World Bank. 2023. <i>World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies</i>. Washington, DC: World Bank. Chapters 1-4. Assignment 8
11	Mar 17	Migration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. World Bank. 2023. <i>World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies</i>. Washington, DC: World Bank. Chapters 5-9. 2. Peri, Giovanni. 2024. "Immigration and the Economy." <i>EconoFact Chats</i> Podcast. July 7, 2024. Link. 3. Foged, Mette, Linea Hasager, and Giovanni Peri. 2024. "Comparing the Effects of Policies for the Labor Market Integration of Refugees." <i>Journal of Labor Economics</i> 42 (S1): S335-S377. 4. Card, David. 2001. "Immigrant Inflows, Native Outflows, and the Local Labor Market Impacts of Higher Immigration." <i>Journal of Labor Economics</i> 19 (1): 22-64. Assignment 9 – Policy Brief
12	Mar 24		Debates
13.	March 31		Debates
14.	Apr 7	No class	

University Policies and Statements

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit or e-mail the Indigenous Student Centre at 1321 Edward St or elders@dal.ca. Additional information regarding the Indigenous Student Centre can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Internationalization

At Dalhousie, 'thinking and acting globally' enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders." Additional internationalization information can be found at: <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/internationalization.html>

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Additional academic integrity information can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact the Student Accessibility Centre (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro. For courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture, please contact the Student Success Centre in Truro (<https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/agricultural-campus/student-success-centre.html>)

Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view.

Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Additional diversity and inclusion information can be found at: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner - perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. The full Code of Student Conduct can be found at:

https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html

Fair Dealing Policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. Additional information regarding the Fair Dealing Policy can be found at:

https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html

Originality Checking Software

The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy. Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method. Additional information regarding Originality Checking Software

can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-submission-of-assignments-and-use-of-originality-checking-software-policy-.html

Student Use of Course Materials

Course materials are designed for use as part of this course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.