



MODULE SPECIFICATION

Academic Year (student cohort covered by specification)	2026-27
Module Code	2011
Module Title	Population Studies
Module Organiser(s)	Anushé Hassan and Selin Köksal
Faculty	Epidemiology and Population Health
FHEQ Level	Level 7
Credit Value	CATS: 10 ECTS: 5
Term of Delivery	Term 1
Mode of Delivery	Lectures and seminars will be delivered live and in person.
Mode of Study	Full-time
Language of Study	English
Pre-Requisites	None
Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body	None
Module Cap (indicative number of students)	30 (numbers may be capped due to limitations in facilities or staffing)
Target Audience	This module is suitable for any student who needs to understand trends and variations in fertility, mortality and population growth, theories about the determinants of such trends and the implications they have for public health and public policy. The module is core for the MSc in Demography and Health.
Module Description	This module provides an introduction to population issues, describing and explaining global population trends and processes, and the components of population change: fertility, mortality and migration. It provides students with the theoretical tools needed to understand why fertility and mortality vary over time and between regions. The module also takes a critical approach to understanding research on population, and considers how population issues are presented beyond academia.
Duration	10 weeks at 0.5 days per week



Timetabling slot	Term 1
Last Revised (e.g. year changes approved)	July 2024

Programme(s)	Status
This module is linked to the following programme(s)	
MSc Demography and Health	Compulsory
MSc Reproductive and Sexual Health Research	Optional

Module Aim and Intended Learning Outcomes

Overall aim of the module
The overall module aim is to: enable students to acquire a broad substantive knowledge of population trends and a critical understanding of the major theories, findings and debates about determinants of trends and differentials in the fertility and mortality of human populations and the consequences of such variations.

Module Intended Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the module a student will be able to: 1. Demonstrate knowledge of broad contemporary and historical variations and trends in demographic trends, particularly mortality and fertility, but also international migration, in human populations; 2. Summarize and critically evaluate the main theoretical arguments that have been proposed to explain trends and differentials in mortality and fertility; 3. Articulate and critique arguments about what explains fertility and mortality variation and trends by making use of key literature in the field; 4. Identify the key implications of different theories for fertility, health, and development policy; and 5. Understand the population and other consequences of changes in fertility and mortality, such as population ageing, and the interaction between population change, public health, and public policy. 6. Develop a critical understanding of the use of data and research on population issues, including beyond academia.

Indicative Syllabus

Session Content

The module is expected to cover the following topics:

- Contemporary population trends and processes
- The demographic transition
- Theoretical perspectives on population change & the importance of taking an inter-disciplinary approach to understanding population
- Influence of economic and social factors, and public health measures as determinants of mortality and health
- Persistence of differentials in health and fertility differentials in contemporary populations
- The future of world population
- Demographic and public health consequences of population change
- Population policies and contemporary debates
- The importance of understanding the positionality of researchers when working on population issues

Teaching and Learning

Notional Learning Hours

Type of Learning Time	Number of Hours	Expressed as Percentage (%)
Contact time	30	30
Directed self-study	15	15
Self-directed learning	25	25
Assessment, review and revision	30	30
Total	100	100

Student contact time refers to the tutor-mediated time allocated to teaching, provision of guidance and feedback to students. This time includes activities that take place in face-to-face contexts such as lectures, seminars, demonstrations, tutorials, supervised laboratory workshops, practical classes, project supervision as well as where tutors are available for one-to-one discussions and interaction by email

The division of notional learning hours listed above is indicative and is designed to inform students as to the relative split between interactive and self-directed study.



Teaching and Learning Strategy

The teaching and learning strategy focuses on lectures and seminars. Lectures are designed to deliver information, whereas seminars are an opportunity for students to engage directly with material to consolidate and deepen their understanding. Students will also have the opportunity to engage with material through a series of exercises, including written formative exercises. The formative exercises will allow students to practice completing an assignment with the same format as the assessed assignment.

Assessment

Assessment Strategy

The assessment for this module has been designed to measure student learning against the module intended learning outcomes (ILOs) as listed above. Formative assessment methods may be used to measure students' progress. The grade for summative assessment(s) only will go towards the overall award GPA.

The module will be assessed by a written assignment to be submitted in the last week of Term 1 (100% of the GPA).

Summative Assessment

Assessment Type	Assessment Length (i.e. Word Count, Length of presentation in minutes)	Weighting (%)	Intended Module Learning Outcomes Tested
Written assignment	1,500 words maximum	100	1 – 6

Resitting assessment

Resits will accord with [Chapter 8a](#) of the LSHTM Academic Manual.

The resit will take place at the start of Term 3 and will be a written assignment on a new topic.



Resources

Indicative reading list

There are many books written for a general audience which cover global population trends and the importance of population issues to health, economy and society. The following are particularly recommended:

- (1) Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling & Annal Rosling Rönnlund (2018) *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong about the World – and Why Things are Better Than you Think* (written for a general audience by a team of excellent science communicators about the state of global health, much of which focuses on demography)
- (2) Jade Sasser (2018) *On Infertile Ground: Population Control and Women's Rights in the Era of Climate Change* (a critique of population control narratives reproduced by international development actors in the 21st century)
- (3) Danny Dorling & Stuart Gietel-Basten (2017) *Why Demography Matters* (written by two British demographers for a general audience, highlighting the importance of demography to human affairs)
- (4) Sarah Harper (2016) *How Population Change Will Transform Our World* (a recent popular account about recent dramatic population changes worldwide and what implications these changes have for society and economy)

These articles tackle important population trends and topics in more depth:

- (5) Ezech, A., Bongaarts, J., & Mberu, B. (2012). Global population trends and policy options. *The Lancet*, 380, 142-48.
- (6) Are numbers really neutral? Population Reference Bureau, 2022
<https://www.prb.org/articles/are-numbers-really-neutral/>
- (7) Lee, R. (2003). The demographic transition: three centuries of fundamental change. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17, 167-190.
- (8) Gietel-Basten, S., Rotkirch, A., & Sobotka, T. (2022). Changing the perspective on low birth rates: why simplistic solutions won't work. *BMJ*, 379.



Web resources

There are plenty of resources online which have material of relevant to population studies, including:

1. Hans Rosling's Gapminder website has many useful and entertaining resources on population and development issues, from hour-long documentaries to shorter videos and data visualisations: <http://www.gapminder.org/>
2. The Population Reference Bureau's website provides a range of useful resources and reports, somewhat US-focused but it does cover global issues: <http://www.prb.org/>
3. Our World in Data has 'Research and data to make progress against the world's biggest problems' and includes much demographic data: <https://ourworldindata.org/>
4. WorldPop maps world populations: <https://www.worldpop.org/>
5. The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population is an international organisation whose website has links to a range of population resources: <http://iussp.org/>

Teaching for Disabilities and Learning Differences

The module-specific site on Moodle provides students with access to lecture notes and copies of the slides used during the lecture prior to the lecture (in pdf format). All lectures are recorded and made available on Moodle as quickly as possible. All materials posted up on Moodle areas, including computer-based sessions, have been made accessible where possible.

The LSHTM Moodle has been made accessible to the widest possible audience, using a VLE that allows for up to 300% zoom, permits navigation via keyboard and use of speech recognition software, and that allows listening through a screen reader. All students have access to "SensusAccess" software which allows conversion of files into alternative formats.

For students who require learning or assessment adjustments and support this can be arranged through the Student Support Services – details and how to request support can be found on the [LSHTM Disability Support pages](#).