

First-Year Seminar – Fall 2015

Longer Lives, Fewer Babies, and the Extraordinary Rise of Living Alone:
How Demographic Transformations Determine our Present and Shape our Future

Professor: Tony Underwood

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I check my email very frequently. If you are unable to meet with me during my scheduled office hours, please email me to schedule an alternative time to meet. My door is (almost) always open!

Office Hours: Monday & Thursday, 3-4pm; Wednesday, 9:30-10:30am; or by appointment.

Writing Associate: John Leibundgut '18, leibundj@dickinson.edu

Library Liaison: Theresa Arndt, arndtt@dickinson.edu, office hours by appointment

Required Texts & Websites

- Rosenwasser, D., Stephen, J. 2012. *Writing analytically*. Boston: Wadsworth.
- Klinenberg, Eric. 2012. *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*. New York: Penguin.
- Peterson, M.N., Peterson, T.R., and Liu, J. 2013. *The Housing Bomb: Why Our Addiction to Houses is Destroying the Environment and Threatening Our Society*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.
- Iceland, John. 2014. *A Portrait of America: The Demographic Perspective*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Moodle (via Gateway)

Most materials for this course – syllabus, course schedule, any additional readings – will be available via *Moodle*. You should check *Moodle* regularly as I will post any additional readings or resources here. If you have difficulty using *Moodle* or other IT resources, you should contact the Information Technology Help Desk on x1000 or in the basement of the Waidner-Spahr library.

Class Meetings: MF, 11:30 am – 12:45 pm; Althouse 110

Course Description and Learning Goals

The First-Year Seminar (FYS) introduces students to Dickinson as a “community of inquiry” by developing habits of mind essential to liberal learning. Through the study of demographic change and its implications for economic, social, and environmental sustainability, students will:

- critically analyze information and ideas in the texts we discuss;
- examine issues from multiple perspectives;
- discuss, debate and defend ideas, including one’s own views, with clarity and reason;
- learn to find, evaluate, and correctly incorporate outside sources so as to avoid plagiarism; and
- create clear academic writing.

This seminar’s topic investigates how demographic transformations determine our present and shape our future through a lens of sustainable development. In 1950, four million American adults lived alone, accounting for 9 percent of all households. Today 33 million – roughly one in every seven adults – live alone, accounting for 28 percent of all U.S. households. One million people live alone in New York City, and in Manhattan, nearly half of all residences are one-person dwellings. Average life expectancy at birth in the U.S. has increased from 62 years in 1935 to 79 years today to a projected 85 years in 2050. Longer life spans beget lower birthrates. As living standards improve and people become more confident that their children will survive into adulthood, succeeding generations reduce the number of children they have. As a result, the population grows more slowly – which is good news for the planet – but what does it mean for society? What does it mean for the future of the U.S. economy? These demographic transformations are dramas in slow motion. They unfold incrementally, almost imperceptibly, but have real consequences; some of them good, others maybe not. Through a variety of readings in demography, economics, environmental science, and sociology we will explore the demographic changes occurring in the United States and elsewhere and discuss their consequences. Why are so many adults living alone? Why are people having fewer babies? Why are adults waiting so long to get married, or not getting married at all? Meanwhile, 10,000 baby boomers are retiring every day. What does this mean for the economy? Is this putting unsustainable stress on the social safety net? Can we keep our commitments to the old without bankrupting the young? Furthermore, as we continue to live longer and have fewer babies we continue to build larger and larger homes. Does this make sense? What does this mean for the future of the environment and the planet?

What Is Required of You

Readings/Preparation

You should complete all readings in advance of the class in which they will be discussed. You should also complete the tasks from the Course Schedule that are listed in the column labeled “What to prepare for class today.” You will want to reference this column every day so that you know what is expected of you at each class.

In order for our meetings to be successful, it will be important for you to do the following:

1. **READ.** Come to class prepared to discuss the material.

2. **RISK.** Be open with your opinions and your questions. Listen to and encourage everyone's ideas so they can take risks too.
3. **RELAX.** Don't take criticism of your own ideas personally. Change your mind when the evidence shows that you should.
4. **RESPECT.** Act toward your peers as you would have them act towards you. Be civil. Be charitable.
5. **REASON.** Play the skeptic, but be critical of reasoning, ideas, and data – not of people.
6. **RESTATE.** Try to paraphrase another's explanation in a way that makes sense. Focus on coming to the best possible answer.

Journals

Frequently, I will ask you to complete some form of a writing task (be sure to check the column in the Course Schedule labeled "What to prepare for class today") in your journals. You are expected to bring your journal with you to every class. I will be collecting these throughout the semester for completion grades.

Papers

Each paper will go through the invention, drafting, feedback, and revising process. The process of revision and the ultimate success of the paper depend upon a thoughtful first draft as well as a polished final draft. For each paper, you will have ample time for writing the first version and for revising after receiving feedback on the draft. All papers (first and final versions) must be word-processed and meet standard format practices: double-spaced; 12 point font, pages numbered in the lower right hand corner, title and name on first page, date of submission. Throughout the paper, the citations and documentation style should be consistent. You will be using APA style of citation (as this is the most common in the social sciences, including economics and sociology). Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade.

The Writing Center

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers. In our course, we have a dedicated Writing Associate, John Leibundgut, who is able to provide this kind of feedback. However, for other courses, or if you would like additional help in this course, Dickinson's trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor's preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, edit your writing – among other things. You can walk in or call and make an appointment at (717) 245-1620 (or 245-1767 for foreign language writing). For more information about hours and procedures, visit the web:

<http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Writing-Center/>

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Consistent with Dickinson College's Student Code of Conduct, cheating of any kind may lead to disciplinary action, which often includes failing the course. Submission of someone else's written work or using sources without proper credit is unacceptable. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by the College's principles of academic integrity. Please read Dickinson's plagiarism and academic integrity policy, available at:

http://lis.dickinson.edu/library/documents/Academic_Integrity_Info.pdf

All incoming Dickinson students are required to complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial posted on Moodle by **Monday, September 21, 2015 no later than 8 AM**. Students who do not complete this tutorial will not be able to request spring classes during the registration period in October.

Instructions:

- Log on to Moodle through Gateway.
- Select the course entitled “Academic Integrity Tutorial - 2015.”
 - Click on the link to the tutorial “Join the Conversation: Work Honestly and Use Information Responsibly.”
 - Follow the instructions carefully.
- All questions must be completed to get credit for the tutorial.

Please direct any questions about the Academic Integrity tutorial to Christine Bombaro in the Library at bombaroc@dickinson.edu.

Evaluation Policies for Writing Assignments

In general, I will evaluate your writing by considering how well you have achieved the following goals:

1. The author crafts an introduction that identifies a question, frames the question, and states a thesis.
2. The author organizes the writing, demonstrates a progression of ideas, and maintains a consistent focus or thread.
3. The author contextualizes the question and supports it with evidence.
4. The author sustains analytical inquiry throughout the assignment.
5. The author effectively incorporates relevant outside information.
6. The author engages the intended audience with a consistent, distinctive voice appropriate to the task.
7. The author adheres to appropriate standards for language use.
8. The author conforms to appropriate formats for citation of source material.

Attendance

Regular attendance and conscientious preparation for class are assumed and expected. Preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial to this course and your success in it. Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You come to class having done the day’s reading.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation without dominating or silencing others.
- You offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you root your comments in the text we are discussing. (In other words, people who try to comment on things they have not read will lose points.)
- You attend peer review sessions with a complete rough draft.
- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals when you are placed in a small group.

- You are present and engaged in every class. Therefore, you take care of your needs before you come to class. You will lose all of your participation points if you make a regular habit of excusing yourself in the middle of class to take a phone call or to use the restroom.

Classroom Environment

In the classroom, the goal is to develop and maintain an environment of mutual respect: respect for me, respect for your fellow classmates, and my respect for you. What this means is that I will do all I can to teach effectively and listen to your questions, comments, jokes, or complaints; and respond as best I can. While at the same time you listen while I am talking, avoid talking amongst yourselves, keep your cell phones away, and keep laptop usage to in-class topics. If we all abide by these policies we can learn a great deal, have enlightening discussions, and hopefully have a little fun along the way!

Final Course Grade

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Attendance/participation/peer review	10%
Information Literacy Assignments	5%
Journal	20%
Essay 1: Personal Analysis	15%
Essay 2: Comparative Analysis	20%
Essay 3: Annotated Bibliography	10%
Essay 4: Analytical Research Paper	20%

The grading scale will be as follows:

A:	92.5 – 100%
A-:	89.5 – 92.4%
B+:	86.5 – 89.4%
B:	82.5 – 86.4%
B-:	79.5 – 82.4%
C+:	76.5 – 79.4%
C:	72.5 – 76.4%
C-:	69.5 – 72.4%
D+:	66.5 – 69.5%
D:	62.5 – 66.4%
D-:	59.5 – 62.4%
F:	59.4% or below

Accommodations for Disabilities

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities, according to equal access laws. I am available to discuss the implementation of those accommodations. Students requesting accommodations must first register with Disability Services to verify their eligibility. After documentation review, Marni Jones, Director of Learning Skills and Disability Services, will provide eligible students with accommodation letters for their professors. Students must obtain a new letter every semester and meet with each

relevant professor prior to any accommodations being implemented. These meetings should occur as soon as possible in the semester, and at least five days before any testing accommodations. Disability Services is located in Biddle House. Address inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at 717-245-1734 or email disabilityservices@dickinson.edu. For more information, see the Disability Services website: www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices.