



## ***POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT*** **Geography 341, Prof. Peter Walker**

**June 25-July 19, 2007, MTWH 2:00-3:50, 121 McKenzie**

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Hundreds of years before the modern environmental movement, human population growth was perceived by scholars as a grave threat to the world's resources and to social stability and progress. Other scholars challenged this view, arguing that resource degradation and human suffering are products of social, economic, and political forces rather than human numbers. Remarkably, with the passage of hundreds of years of scholarship and the emergence of modern sciences devoted to the study of human-environmental interactions, this debate remains unsettled, with passionate advocates arguing on both sides.

In this course, we will examine these arguments and consider the implications of human population growth in an ever-changing world. We will examine both the history and present status of knowledge about human population, with specific attention to the debate about the relationship between population growth and the environment. We then focus on a series of topics related to population-environment dynamics, including the contentious issue of population control policies, the status and role of women, the question of population growth and famine, theories of environmentally-driven social conflict, the AIDS crisis, and the impact of consumerism in both the rich and poor countries.

Course requirements: The course assumes no prior knowledge of these topics. Course grades will be assigned on the following basis: weekly quizzes (40%); attendance and participation (20%); student research presentations (40%). Student research presentations will be discussed and organized in the first week. All course readings and lecture outlines will be available on Blackboard. No textbook or reserve readings are required. Lecture outlines are outlines *only*; they are not a substitute for note-taking in lectures. All course material—lectures, readings, videos—may appear on the quizzes, and the day of the weekly quiz may vary and will not be announced in advance. There will be no “make-up” exams or extra credit assignments except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.

## **Week 1: Is population a problem?**

**Monday, June 25**

- **Introduction—facts and myths about population and environment**  
Video: *World in the Balance, The People Paradox*

**Tuesday, June 26**

- **Demographic trends**  
Reading: Population Reference Bureau 2007 *Population: A Lively Introduction*  
Video: *Population Transition in Italy*

**Wednesday, June 27**

- **Population and environment—was Malthus right?**  
Reading: Malthus 1798 *An Essay on the Principle of Population*  
Reading: Jonathan Swift 1729 *A Modest Proposal*  
Reading: John Bellamy Foster 1998 *Malthus' Essay on Population at Age 200*  
Video: *Paul Ehrlich and the Population Bomb*

**Thursday, June 28**

- **Is 'Population control' the answer?**  
Reading: Garrett Hardin 1968 'Lifeboat ethic';  
Reading: Peter Singer 1972 'Famine'  
Reading: Barbara Duden 1993 'Population'  
Reading: Jeffrey Sachs 2006 'Lower fertility: a wise investment'  
Videos: *China's One child; La Operacion*

## **Week 2 (Part 1): Women, human rights, and population**

**Monday, July 2**

- **Women, reproduction, and environment**  
Reading: Sen 2000 Population and gender equity  
Reading: Caldwell et al 1992 Fertility decline in Africa

**Tuesday, July 3**

- **Women, reproduction, and environment (continued)**  
Reading: Larsen 2003 Women's empowerment & fertility decline in Tanzania  
Reading: PRB 2001 Population gender & environment  
Video: *Africa's Children*

## Week 2 (part 2): Population and hunger

Thursday, July 5

- **Why people starve**  
Reading: Bill Rau 1991 *From Fesat to Famine*  
Reading: Barry Bearak 2003 *Why People Still Starve*  
Video: *Global Banquet*

## Week 3: Population, environment, violence, and disease

Monday, July 9

- **Population, environmental conflict: the case of the Rwanda genocide**  
Readings: Robert Kaplan 1994 *The Coming Anarchy*  
Reading: Simon Dalby 1996 *The Environment as Geopolitical Threat*  
Video: *Blood Diamonds*

Tuesday, July 10

- **Population, environment, and conflict: the Rwanda genocide**  
Jared Diamond 2004 *Collapse (chapter on Rwanda genocide)*  
Mahmood Mamdani 2001 *When Victims become Killers*  
Video: *Forsaken Cries; Triumph of Evil*

Wednesday, July 11

- **Population, environment, disease and the AIDS crisis**  
Bruce Newbold 2007 *Six Billion Plus: "The Impact of HIV and AIDS"*

Thursday, July 12

- **AIDS continued**  
Reading: Oglethorpe & Gelman 2007 "HIV/AIDS and the Environment"  
Reading: Hunter 2006 "HIV/AIDS and the natural environment"  
Video: *Sowing the Seeds of Hunger: AIDS, Agriculture and Famine in Malawi*

## Week 4: Consumption, consumerism, and the environment

Monday, July 16

- **Consumption: consumerism and waste**  
John DeGraff 2001: *Affluenza, The All-Consuming Epidemic*  
  
Videos: *Affluenza*, and *China Revs Up*

Tuesday, July 17

- **Consumption: manufacturing desire**

Video: *Advertising and the End of the World*  
Video: *The Persuaders*

**Wednesday, July 18**

- **Population, lifestyle, and sprawl in the American West**  
Reading: Best 2005 *How Dense Can We Be?*  
Video: Subdivide and Conquer

**Thursday, July 19**

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**