COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the social demography and social structure of Los Angeles and their consequences for health and other aspects of well-being. Los Angeles is a huge and highly diverse metropolitan area, which is often seen as a model (both good and bad) of future urban development in the United States and abroad. The goal is both to develop a deeper understanding of the Los Angeles region (and similar urban areas in the US and other countries) and to use Los Angeles as a laboratory for considering large issues of demographic change, social structure and inequality, race/ethnic and income segregation, immigration and settlement, and the consequences of these processes for residents’ health and welfare. The course also considers urban and public health policies.

This quarter, the course is limited to doctoral students who have completed at least one course in multivariate statistical analysis. Admission to the course requires instructor permission.

Students are required to:

- Complete all readings and consider the issues they raise before coming to class;
- Participate in online discussions with classmates and the instructor on Wednesday before class;
- Participate fully in class discussions at a professional academic level;
- Take full responsibility for assignments and getting them in on time;
- Prepare a paper of publishable quality during the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Completion of all readings and class room discussion (20% of grade)
2. Participation in online discussion prior to class (15% of grade)
3. Complete a short assignment (20% of grade)
4. Class presentation of paper topic and approach (10% of grade)
5. Final class paper (35% of grade)

Further details on each of these requirements is provided below.
Readings and Class Participation

Students are required to complete all readings and to think seriously about them before coming to class. Make sure you understand the central ideas raised in each reading, how the readings relate to each other, theoretical and analytic issues they raise, how the analysis was done and what the conclusions are. The readings are “front-loaded” intentionally, i.e., the reading load at the beginning of the course is heavier than at the end. The goal is to leave you more time to finalize assignments and papers toward the end of class.

Online Discussion Prior to Class

To jump start class discussions each week (except the first), one or two students will be assigned to post “initial observations” about the readings for that week. Initial observations must be posted to the Chat section of the course website on ccle.ucla.edu by 6PM on the Wednesday before each class. Each student will be assigned to post initial observations for one week’s reading. Observations are intended to be provocative and stimulate other students (and the instructor!) to think about the material. However, they should not be offensive or potentially offensive to other participants. Observations should be brief (a paragraph or several sentences, perhaps) and can include:

- Questions that the readings raised individually or collectively
- Issues or questions related to the readings but on current events in Los Angeles
- Central themes of the readings (individually or collectively) which may not be readily apparent
- Critiques or discussion of limitations or strengths of the analysis
- Ideas generated by readings and topic in general

As soon that that week’s observations are posted (by 6PM), other students should read the observations and add their own (comments on the student’s observations, other questions, ideas, or issues). The time for adding observations each week will close one hour before class.

Short Assignment

Students are required to complete a short assignment, which will be due the sixth week of class. The assignment can take one of three forms:

1. An observational study of an organization, place, or neighborhood in Los Angeles County designed to answer a question about the social demography and social structure of Los Angeles;
2. Interview with a Los Angeles politician, city or county planner, senior utilities official, housing developer, religious leader, community organizer, non-profit leader, etc. and a brief paper based on the interview;

3. Contribute to L.A. NSC: Collection of census tract (and/or block group) level data for all tracts in Los Angeles County on an important variable (or small set of related variables) that are not included in the Los Angeles Neighborhood and Services Characteristics (L.A.NSC) data (see http://lasurvey.rand.org/data/contextual/lansc/). Data must be from a reliable source, of high quality, on an important topic related to social stratification, demography and/or health, and digitized in an Excel or STATA file.

In each case, prepare a brief paper (~5-10 pages) describing what you did and analyzing what you learned (and in the case of collection of census tract data, a brief presentation of the data and findings). These should be short, concise, and well written (professional quality) papers. Some or all may be publishable after revision.

You can also propose another form in which this assignment can be completed and I will consider it. However, you must have advance permission if you want to go this route. The goal is to “get your hands dirty” by exploring some aspect of Los Angeles in person.

Class Presentation

Final Paper

Students will write a paper for this course. The goal of the paper is to be of publishable quality (i.e., after some revisions, you can send it to a professional journal). The paper can take one of two forms:

1. An empirical analysis of survey or other data on an important research question related to Los Angeles (see suggested list of data sets)
2. A thorough and critical review of the literature on a particular topic and how it works or plays out in Los Angeles.

Papers will be discussed at greater length in class. A one page proposal for the paper is due by the fourth week of class. Students are urged to decide on a paper topic early and get started on the analysis in the first week or two of the quarter. Final papers are due on the final day of class.
OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING

If you are not familiar with urban social theory, I recommend:

Sociology


Economics


Public Health


(Public health students – if you are not familiar with urban sociology, read some of the articles above, not just this piece.)

Demographic Methods


REQUIRED COURSE READING AND SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction
No Readings

Week 2. Los Angeles History, Growth, and Development to Early 1900s


Chapter 1 "From Pueblo to Town"

Chapter 2 "Private Enterprise, Public Authority, and Urban Expansion."

Chapter 4, “The Great Migration.”

Week 3. Los Angeles, 1900-Present


Chapter 9 “Los Angeles Becomes Industrial”

Chapter 12 “The Los Angeles Region Transformed”


**Short Pieces on Contemporary Demography**


Johnson, Hans and Joseph Hayes. The Demographics of Mortality in California. At: http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/cacounts/CC_504HJCC.pdf


**Week 4. Inequality**


**Optional Reading:**


http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag_ca_losangeles_md.htm


Week 5. Immigration


http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/9wk9b621


Week 6. Race and Ethnicity

Waldinger, Roger, and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (eds.). 1996. Ethnic Los Angeles, New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Read two of the following:

Ch. 9, "The Mexican-Origin Population: Permanent Working Class or Emerging Middle Class," by Vilma Ortiz.
Ch. 10, "Central Americans: At the Bottom, Struggling to Get Ahead," by David E. Lopez, Eric Popkin, and Edward Telles.
Ch. 12, "Middle Easterners: a New Kind of Immigrant," by Mehdi Bozorgmehr, Claudia Der-Martirosian, and Georges Sabagh
Ch. 14, "Anglos: Beyond Ethnicity?, by Roger Waldinger and Michael Lichter.


Week 7. Residential Segregation


Short Reports:


**Week 8. The Great Recession (11/14)**


Jones, Malia, Anne R. Pebley, and Narayan Sastry (2011) “Eyes on the Block: Measuring Urban Physical Disorder Through In-Person Observation” Social Science Research, Volume 40, Number 2, Pages 523-537

**Optional:**


**Week. 10 Health and Well-being (12/5)**


Look through: