THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

CCGL9054: Responding to the Challenges of Aging Societies
Second Semester, 2022/23

General Information

Instructor:
Prof. Paul Lau (Faculty of Business and Economics)

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Lecture hours: Wed. 12:30-14:20 (KK101)

Office hours
P. Lau: Wed. 16:00-18:00 (KK1111)
J. Zhao: TBA

Course Website: through Moodle

Course Description:

The magnitude of demographic changes, including falling birth rates and rising life expectancy, has been substantial in the last two centuries. Such trends raise a host of social and economic questions for our society. This course examines whether government policies and individual behavior respond appropriately and adequately to these demographic changes, so as to sustain economic development and maintain the well-being of all citizens.

This course has three components. First, it briefly reviews the history of global demographic changes, and their socio-economic effects. Second, it uses the observations from different countries to illustrate how some current problems in various countries may be related to behavioral and policy issues which originated from an earlier era. Lastly, we will examine appropriate individual behavior and government policies in the coming decades when societies such as Hong Kong, China, and others around the world are aging rapidly.

Students taking this course are expected to understand the current socio-economic effects of previous demographic changes. Moreover, the course enables them to have

self-reflection on whether, and in what sense, their current behavior and future plans related to work, saving decisions, health-related activities, and retirement decisions are appropriate in light of the emerging demographic landscape. They are also given the opportunities to start thinking about appropriate policies for our society, both locally and globally, to face these new challenges.

Study Load

Activities	Number of hours
Lectures	24
Tutorials	10
Reading / Self-study	30
Assessment: Essay	25
Assessment: Presentation (incl preparation)	30
Assessment: In-class test	1
Total:	120

Course Learning Outcomes and Alignment with Common Core Programme Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes – On completing the course, students will be able to:		Alignment with Common Core Programme Learning Outcome(s)
1.	Understand the relation between global population changes and socio-economic development in most countries during the past two centuries and their likely relation in the coming decades.	CC PLO(s): 1, 2
2.	Demonstrate how individual behavior (such as retirement, schooling, saving, fertility and health-related behavior) and aggregate outcome may be affected by the changing demographic and socio-economic environment.	CC PLO(s): 4
3.	Reflect on how a person's current behavior and future plan may be influenced by the changing socio-economic and demographic factors, and critically evaluate the potential implications of his/her behavior.	CC PLO(s): 3
4.	Critically evaluate the appropriateness of government policies in improving human well-being and in sustaining socio-economic development when our societies are facing rapid population aging.	CC PLO(s): 1, 2

Course Content and Topics (Tentative)

1. **Major facts about population aging and its importance**
   Topic/Week 1: Pattern of population aging
   Topic/Week 2: Relevant demographic concepts

2. **Challenges faced by aging societies**
   Topic/Week 3 Economic slowdown/decline: Japan as an example
   Topic/Week 4: Public pension and government budgetary problems: Europe as an example

3. **Policies supporting sustainable socio-economic development in aging societies**
   Topic/Week 5: Preventing shrinking labor supply and economic decline
   Topic/Week 6: Retirement protection: Saving, old-age poverty alleviation and insurance
   Topic/Week 7: Fertility decline and policy responses

4. **Behavioral responses to population aging**
   Topic/Week 8: Retirement and saving
   Topic/Week 9: Work-related decisions
   Topic/Week 10: Intangibles

Required Reading

Cutler, D., Deaton, A., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). The determinant of mortality. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *20*(3), 97-120.

Gratton, L., & Scott, A. (2016). *The 100-year life: Living and working in an age of longevity*. Bloomsbury Publishing. (Chapters 1-4)

Hong Kong: Public Engagement Exercise on Population Policy (2013)
http://www.hkpopulation.gov.hk/public_engagement/en/doc.html

Lee, R. (2003). The demographic transition: Three centuries of fundamental change. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *17*(4), 167-90.

Recommended Website(s)

- Website of "The 100-Year Life: Living and working in an age of longevity"
  http://www.100yearlife.com/

Assessment Tasks

Assessment Method	Details of Assignment	Weighting	Alignment with Course Learning Outcome(s)

In-class test (during regular class time)	One term test, lasting for about 60 minutes, will be given to assess students' understanding of the concepts discussed in this course.	30	CLOs: 1, 2, 4
Tutorial participation	Students will be continuously assessed on their performance through tutorial activities such as presentation, self-reflection and sharing, group discussions and debates, etc.	20	CLOs: 1, 2
Self-reflection essay	Students will select one of the suggested topics to write a short essay, describing (a) the difficulties or tradeoffs they may face in making decisions in an aging society; (b) important lessons learned from individuals of an earlier generation; and (c) how they plan to deal with the problems identified.	20	CLOs: 2, 3
Project	Students will form a 3- to 4-person group and select a topic to demonstrate their understanding of the subject, and to critically evaluate the (in)appropriateness of existing government policies in improving human wellness and sustained socio-economic development.	30	CLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

Due date of the group project:
11:59 pm, April 28, 2023 (Friday)

Due date of the self-reflection essay:
11:59 pm, May 5, 2023 (Friday)

Course Level Grade Descriptors

Performance Level	Grade Descriptors for the In-class Test
A+, A, A-	For all or almost all of the questions, the student: (a) provides correct answer(s), and (b) analyzes in a clear and logical manner.

B+, B, B-	For most of the questions, the student: (a) provides correct answer(s), and (b) analyzes in a clear and logical manner.
C+, C, C-	For a reasonable proportion of the questions, the student: (a) provides correct answer(s), and (b) analyzes in a clear and logical manner.
D+, D	For a few of the questions, the student: (a) provides correct answer(s), and (b) analyzes in a clear and logical manner.
F	For all or almost all of the questions, the student cannot: (a) provide correct answer(s), and (b) analyze in a clear and logical manner.

Performance Level	Grade Descriptors for Tutorial Participation
A+, A, A-	The student: (a) clearly demonstrates thorough understanding of the course material in tutorials, (b) participates actively and constructively by engaging with other classmates' ideas sensitively all the time, and (c) articulates ideas clearly and fluently all the time.
B+, B, B-	The student: (a) demonstrates good understanding of the course material in tutorials, (b) participates actively and constructively by engaging with other classmates' ideas sensitively most of the time, and (c) articulates ideas clearly and fluently most of the time.
C+, C, C-	The student: (a) demonstrates a basic understanding of the course material in tutorials, (b) participates most of the time, and (c) expresses ideas clearly most of the time.
D+, D	The student: (a) demonstrates a basic understanding of some of the course material in tutorials, (b) participates some of the time when prompted, and (c) expresses ideas clearly some of the time.
F	The student: (a) demonstrates little or no understanding of the course material in tutorials, or does not attend tutorial, (b) has little or no participation in group discussion even with prompting, and (c) has serious difficulty in expressing ideas clearly.

Performance Level	Grade Descriptors for the Project
A+, A, A-	The student: (a) clearly identifies the main problem based on familiarity of the research done previously and/or real-world issues, and (b) provides critical analyses of the issues in a coherent framework.
B+, B, B-	The student: (a) identifies the main problem based on familiarity of the research done previously and/or real-world issues, and (b) provides critical analyses of the issues.
C+, C, C-	The student: (a) demonstrates some familiarity of the research done previously and/or real-world issues in identifying the main problem, and (b) provides competent analyses of the issues.
D+, D	The student: (a) demonstrates a little familiarity of the research done previously and/or real-world issues in identifying the main problem, and (b) provides some reasonable analyses of the issues.
F	The student: (a) does not clearly identify the main problem, and (b) provides poor analyses of the issues.

Performance Level	Grade Descriptors for the Self-reflection Essay
A+, A, A-	The student: (a) identifies the trade-offs related to the topic of his/her reflection in a comprehensive and convincing manner, and (b) proposes a plan to deal with the difficulties faced in a comprehensive and effective manner.
B+, B, B-	The student: (a) identifies the main trade-offs related to the topic of his/her reflection in a fairly convincing manner, and (b) proposes a plan to tackle the difficulties faced effectively.
C+, C, C-	The student: (a) identifies some main trade-offs related to the topic of his/her reflection in an appropriate manner, and (b) proposes a plan to tackle the difficulties faced, but the argument may not be very sound.
D+, D	The student: (a) identifies some trade-offs related to the topic of his/her reflection but the arguments are not convincing, and

	(b) proposes a plan, but it does not appear to be able to deal with the difficulties directly.
F	The student: (a) cannot identify trade-offs related to the topic of his/her reflection, and (b) fails to indicate his/her plan to deal the difficulties faced.

Term Test

The in-class term test is scheduled on **March 29 (Wed.).** There will be no make-up for the term test. If you do not attend the test, you will automatically get zero mark for the test. However, if there is a legitimate medical reason that you miss the test, you will need to inform the teacher and provide medical certificate **within 72 hours** of the test. In such case, the weight of the other components will be adjusted accordingly.

Academic Conduct

The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/
Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following types of cases:

a. Plagiarism - The representation of someone else's ideas as if they are one's own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one's own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged.

b. Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects - The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort. Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgement:

(1) The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;
(2) The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is prima facie evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (1) might be invoked.