

The examination consists of three parts. Participants are to select one of the listed essays in each section of the examination. They are to then write detailed, referenced and comprehensive answers drawing primarily from the assigned readings list and integrating additional recent publications in the area.

Section One: Migration and Mortality

1. Describe the major theories of international migration. Do certain theories apply more to some migrant flows than others? Explain. After discussing the different theories, choose one migration flow and discuss it in detail, including its history, demographic features and potential future course. Discuss which existing theories are the most useful for understanding the migration flow that you have chosen.
2. One of the most common generalizations in the sociology of health is the inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and mortality. Regardless of the time period, nation, or unit of analysis, higher socioeconomic status is almost invariably linked to lower mortality. While this differential is well established, attempts to explain why the relationship exists have been less successful. What do you think accounts for the persistent inverse relationship between these two variables? What theories, concepts, and mechanisms have been employed to explain this generalization?

Section Two: Age Period and Cohort and Life Course

3. Over the past four decades, the specification of age, period, and cohort (APC) models and the implementation of such models in the analysis of demographic and sociological data have increasingly attracted the attention of researchers, who published important contributions to the topic in some of the top disciplinary journals.
 - a. In various publications, researchers refer to the difficulty of this type of analysis as the “APC conundrum.” Why is it called a “conundrum”? Explain.
 - b. Researchers proposed several solutions to the problem. Select two of such proposals and compare them by discussing their pros and cons.
 - c. For what type of data is the APC analysis appropriate? What type of data is immune to the APC problem? Identify a successful application of a particular APC analysis and discuss the major benefits of applying such an analysis.
4. Life course research has become one of the major paradigms in demography, psychology, and sociology, with journals, research centers, scholarly societies devoted to its study and promotion.
 - a. What are the five life course principles? Why are they important for demographic and sociological research?
 - b. Select one of the life course principles that you consider most important or most interesting and

discuss how it has been studied in empirical research. You may focus on one or a few empirical studies.

c. Some scholars recently proposed a conceptualization of the life course as a set of behavioral processes together known as the “life course cube.” What is this cube? Discuss the benefits, limitations, and empirical feasibility of the proposal.

Section Three: Family and Fertility

5. Gender and gender roles are central in many theories of fertility decline, whether focused on issues of women’s marital entrance and sexual debut (Proximate Determinants), women’s education increasing the costs of childbearing (Becker), decreasing importance of marriage (Lesthaeghe), Ideational change (Thornton), Gender Equity (McDonald), and others.

a. In your opinion, what are the three strongest/most compelling theoretical approaches to understanding fertility focused on gender?

b. What are the central elements of these three approaches to fertility decline, how are they similar or different.

c. Linking to research engaging with each of your selected approaches, what are the theoretical advantages/ unique insights into understanding fertility decline for each of the three?

d. To what extent to any of your selected approaches include a focus on male as well as female issues related to gender?

e. To what extent are your three selected approaches best suited to studies focused on the decline from high fertility to lower, or from lower fertility to below replacement fertility?

6. As Seltzer (2019) states, “All demographic events occur in families”. Yet, patterns of family formation, union type, duration and durability, childbearing assumptions, and norms regarding familial obligations and expectations are changing across many societies.

a. Select one region of the world (for example, North American, Southeast Asia, Europe, Scandinavia) or, if you prefer, a single country. Briefly, what makes family an interesting topic in the case you select?

b. Compare and contrast the experiences of continuity and change in basic family patterns in your region over the past 25 years, with the shifts in family form and function related to the Second Demographic Transition. Does your region fit within the SDT framework? Why or why not?

c. Engaging with theoretical and empirical work within the demography of the family, critically describe and discuss either 1) how changing family processes within your selected case are likely to impact care resources for elderly populations OR 2) influence childbearing and patterns for childcare in the near to mid-term.