

A Queer Demography Course

LGBTQ* people have long been ignored in demographic research, even though sexual identity and gender identity have a great impact on people's lives, including their demographic outcomes. Since the 1990s, researchers have started to quantitatively study the LGBTQ* population, but it is only since a few years that many basic questions are studied, such as: How many LGBTQ* people are there? Do sexual and gender identity have an impact on demographic outcomes? How do the life courses of LGBTQ* people evolve?

This course introduces some of the research that has addressed these questions.

Class 1. The LGBTQ Population*

One of the questions central to research on LGBTQ* people has been to document how large the LGBTQ* population is and how this has been changing over time. The following readings will give an overview of some of the basic trends that have been documented regarding the size of the LGBTQ* population.

Core readings

Gates, G. J. (2011). How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender? (pp. 1-8). Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

Lagos, D. (2022). Has there been a transgender tipping point? Gender identification differences in US cohorts born between 1935 and 2001. *American Journal of Sociology*, 128(1), 94-143.

Rosenfeld, M. J., & Kim, B. S. (2005). The independence of young adults and the rise of interracial and same-sex unions. *American Sociological Review*, 70(4), 541-562.

Additional readings

Baumle, Amanda K. 2018. "The Demography of Sexuality: Queering Demographic Methods." In *Other, Please Specify*, edited by D'Lane Compton, Tey Meadow, and Kristen Schilt. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Baumle, Amanda K., and S. Nordmarken. 2022. "Introduction to the Demography of Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Minority Populations." In *Demography of Transgender, Nonbinary and Gender Minority Populations*, edited by A.K. Baumle and S. Nordmarken. Cham: Springer.

Black, D., Gates, G., Sanders, S., & Taylor, L. (2000). Demographics of the gay and lesbian population in the United States: evidence from available systematic data sources. *Demography*, 37(2), 139-154.

England, P., Mishel, E., & Caudillo, M. L. (2016). Increases in sex with same-sex partners and bisexual identity across cohorts of women (but not men). *Sociological Science*, 3, 951-970.

Gilroy, C., & Kashyap, R. (2021). Digital traces of sexualities: Understanding the salience of sexual identity through disclosure on social media. *Socius*, 7, 23780231211029499.

- Kolk, M., Tilley, J. L., von Essen, E., Moberg, Y., & Burn, I. (2025). The Demography of Sweden's Transgender Population: A Research Note on Patterns, Changes, and Sociodemographics. *Demography*, 62(2), 349-363.
- Lejbowicz, T., Rault, W., Trachman, M., & Envie, L. É. (2025). Gay, bisexual, and non-binary: When young people question heterosexuality. *Population & Societies*, 632(4), 1-4.
- Rault, W. (2023). Same-sex unions in high-income countries: More widely recognized and more frequent. *Population & Societies*, 607(1), 1-4.
- Stacey, L. (2024). A data portrait of cisgender, transgender, and gender-nonconforming populations in the United States: A research note. *Demography*, 61(5), 1267-1282.

Class 2. Concepts and measurement

A major issue in the quantitative study of LGBTQ* people is how to measure sexual and gender identity. Most studies had to rely on data that was not designed for these purposes, but recently large-scale surveys have started to incorporate measures of sexual and gender identity. These are, however, not without limitations.

Core readings

Cortina, C., & Festy, P. (2014). *Identification of same-sex couples and families in censuses, registers and surveys*. FamiliesAndSocieties project.

Julian, C. A., Manning, W. D., & Westrick-Payne, K. K. (2024). Responses to sexual and gender identity measures in population-level data by birth cohort: A research note. *Demography*, 61(1), 15-30.

Lagos, D., & Compton, D. L. (2021). Evaluating the use of a two-step gender identity measure in the 2018 General Social Survey. *Demography*, 58(2), 763-772.

Additional readings

Caprinali, A., and A. Vitali. 2025. "The Demography of Sexual Identity Development and Disclosure Among LGB People in Europe." *Demographic Research* 52:125–140.

Darwin, Helena. 2020. "Challenging the Cisgender/Transgender Binary: Nonbinary People and the Transgender Label." *Gender & Society* 34(3):357–380.

Doan, L., & Mize, T. D. (2020). Sexual identity disclosure among lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Sociological Science*, 7, 504-527.

Elliott, M. N., Dahlhamer, J. M., MacCarthy, S., Beckett, M. K., Orr, N., Guerino, P., ... & Martino, S. C. (2019). Using ancillary sociodemographic data to identify sexual minority adults among those responding "something else" or "don't know" to sexual orientation questions. *Medical care*, 57(12), e87-e95.

Fischer, M. M. (2016). Identifying same-sex couples in cross-national survey data: A comparison of same-sex couples' demographic and socio-economic traits in six European countries. *Nederland in context: verschillen en overeenkomsten*, 50-79.

Fischer, M. M., Kroh, M., De Vries, L., Kasprowski, D., Kühne, S., Richter, D., & Zindel, Z. (2022). Sexual and gender minority (SGM) research meets household panel surveys: Research potentials of the German socio-economic panel and its boost sample of SGM households. *European Sociological Review*, 38(2), 321-335.

Fish, Jessica N., Reczek, Corinne, and P. Ezra. 2024. "Defining and Measuring Family: Lessons from LGBTQ+ People." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 86(5):1450–1467.

Mishel, E. (2019). Intersections between sexual identity, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior among a nationally representative sample of American men and women. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 35(4), 859-884.

- Mittleman, J. (2023). Sexual fluidity: Implications for population research. *Demography*, 60(4), 1257-1282.
- Salomaa, A. C., & Matsick, J. L. (2019). Carving sexuality at its joints: Defining sexual orientation in research and clinical practice. *Psychological assessment*, 31(2), 167.
- Silva, T. J., & Whaley, R. B. (2018). Bud-sex, dude-sex, and heteroflexible men: The relationship between straight identification and social attitudes in a nationally representative sample of men with same-sex attractions or sexual practices. *Sociological Perspectives*, 61(3), 426-443.

Class 3. Family Demography I: Relationships

One of the first dimensions that demographers analyzed in the 1990s pertained to the family domain, largely due to data constraints. LGBTQ* people were often identified by their partner's gender/sex. These studies aligned with some of the first rights LGBTQ* people advocated for, such as marriage and cohabitation. A major question has therefore been how the life courses of LGBTQ* people have changed over time as possibilities to partner increased. Research in this area often faces challenges including small sample sizes and evolving definitions of partnership.

Core readings

Kolk, M., & Andersson, G. (2020). Two decades of same-sex marriage in Sweden: A demographic account of developments in marriage, childbearing, and divorce. *Demography*, 57(1), 147-169.

Ophir, A., Boertien, D., & Vidal, S. (2023). Sexuality and demographic change: Documenting family formation trajectories and cohort change in the LGB population. *Demography*, 60(5), 1581-1605.

Reczek, Corinne. 2020. "Sexual- and Gender-Minority Families: A 2010–2020 Decade in Review." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1):300–325.

Additional readings

Bohr, J., & Lengerer, A. (2024). Partnership dynamics of lgb people and heterosexuals: Patterns of first partnership formation and first cohabitation. *European Journal of Population*, 40(1), 11.

Fortes de Lena, F., & Boertien, D. (2025). A Marriage Premium for Whom? Sexual Identity, Relationship Status and Earnings. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

Geremia, G., & Vitali, A. (2025). Beyond conservative gender roles: exploring the division of paid and unpaid labour among Italian same-sex couples. *Genus*, 81(1), 32.

Hammack, P. L., Frost, D. M., & Hughes, S. D. (2019). Queer intimacies: A new paradigm for the study of relationship diversity. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 56(4-5), 556-592.

Manning, W. D., Brown, S. L., & Stykes, J. B. (2016). Same-sex and different-sex cohabiting couple relationship stability. *Demography*, 53(4), 937-953.

Ophir, A., & Boertien, D. (2024). Re-considering re-partnering: new insights about gender and sexuality in the study of second union formation. *Social Forces*, 103(1), 109-128.

Ponkilainen, M., Einiö, E., Kühn, M., & Myrskylä, M. (2025). Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples' Divorce Risks: The Role of Cohabitation and Childbearing. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

Potârca, G., Mills, M., & Neberich, W. (2015). Relationship preferences among gay and lesbian online daters: Individual and contextual influences. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77(2), 523-541.

Rosenfeld, M. J. (2014). Couple longevity in the era of same-sex marriage in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(5), 905-918.

Verbakel, E., & Kalmijn, M. (2014). Assortative mating among Dutch married and cohabiting same-sex and different-sex couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(1), 1-12.

Class 4. Family Demography II: Children

Most LGBTQ* parents used to have children within different-sex relationships, but this has rapidly changed with the emergence of assisted reproduction techniques and, in some countries, access to adoption and surrogacy. Studying LGBTQ* parents is challenging not only due to data limitations, but also because access to parenthood is shaped by marriage laws and other legal inequalities, which vary across jurisdictions and affect adoption, assisted reproduction, and parental recognition.

Core readings

Hank, K., & Wetzel, M. (2018). Same-sex relationship experiences and expectations regarding partnership and parenthood. *Demographic Research*, 39, 701-718.

Ponkilainen, M., Einiö, E., Pietiläinen, M., & Myrskylä, M. (2024). Educational Differences in Fertility Among Female Same-Sex Couples in Finland. *Demography*, 61(6), 2053-2079.

Additional readings

Baumle, A. K., & Compton, D. L. R. (2014). Identity versus identification: How LGBTQ parents identify their children on Census surveys. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(1), 94-104.

Boertien, D., Cortina, C., & Lozano, M. (2024). Pathways and obstacles to parenthood among women in same-sex couples in Spain. *Demographic Research*, 50, 1039-1070.

Boye, K., & Evertsson, M. (2021). Who gives birth (first) in female same-sex couples in Sweden?. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 83(4), 925-941.

Evertsson, M., Moberg, Y., & van der Vleuten, M. (2025). Stimulating (In) equality? The Earnings Penalty in Different-Sex and Female Same-Sex Couples Transitioning to Parenthood in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. *American Journal of Sociology*, 130(6), 1477-1525.

Moore, M. R., & Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, M. (2013). LGBT sexuality and families at the start of the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39(1), 491-507.

Ponkilainen, M., Einiö, E., Pietiläinen, M., & Myrskylä, M. (2024). Educational Differences in Fertility Among Female Same-Sex Couples in Finland. *Demography*, 61(6), 2053-2079.

Class 5. Migration & Segregation

Demographic research on migration and segregation focuses on how LGBTQ people move across regions and neighborhoods, often seeking communities with greater acceptance and safety. Research in this area also highlights patterns of spatial segregation and the challenges of capturing temporal dynamics in data.*

Core readings

Fortes de Lena, Fernanda. 2022. "Setting a Research Agenda on Sexuality and Migration." *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População* 39:1–29.

Manalansan IV, Martin F. 2006. "Queer Intersections." *International Migration Review* 40(1):224–249.

Additional readings

Luibhéid, Eithne. 2008. "Queer/Migration." *GLQ* 14(2–3):169–190.

Scheitle, Christopher, and S. K. Guthrie. 2019. "Urban Migration of Sexual Minorities." *Sexuality & Culture* 23(1):96–111.

Spring, Amy L. 2013. "Declining Segregation of Same-Sex Partners." *Population Research and Policy Review* 32(5):1–7.

Ueno, K., Vaghela, P., & Ritter, L. J. (2014). Sexual orientation, internal migration, and mental health during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 55(4), 461-481

Wienke, Chris, and Glenn J. Hill. 2013. "Does Place of Residence Matter?" *Journal of Homosexuality* 60(9):1256–1279.

Wimark, Thomas, and Fernanda Fortes de Lena. 2022. "Same-Sex Marriage and Neighborhood Landscape Overlap." *Population, Space and Place* 28(2):e2507.

Wimark, T., and J. Östh. 2014. "The City as a Single Gay Male Magnet?" *Population, Space and Place* 20(8):739–752.

Class 6. Health & Mortality

Sexual and gender diversity have a longer tradition within the fields of psychology and public health. This field gave rise to some of the central theoretical concepts like structural stigma. This area of research has often highlighted inequalities shaped by stigma, discrimination, and broader social determinants among LGBTQ* people.

Core readings

Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Structural stigma: Research evidence and implications for psychological science. *American Psychologist*, 71(8), 742.

Hughes, Lauren D., William M. King, Kimberly E. Gamarel, Arline T. Geronimus, Orly A. Panagiotou, and Jae M. Hughto. 2022. "Differences in All-Cause Mortality Among Transgender and Non-Transgender People Enrolled in Private Insurance." *Demography* 59(3):1023–1043.

Additional readings

Everett, Bethany G., Melanie Wall, Emily Shea, and Tonda Hughes. 2021. "Mortality Risk Among a Sample of Sexual Minority Women: A Focus on the Role of Sexual Identity Disclosure." *Social Science & Medicine* 272:113731.

Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Lattanner, M. R., McKetta, S., & Pachankis, J. E. (2024). Structural stigma and LGBTQ+ health: a narrative review of quantitative studies. *The Lancet Public Health*, 9(2), e109-e127.

Kasprowski, D., Fischer, M., Chen, X., de Vries, L., Kroh, M., Kühne, S., Richter, D. & Zindel, Z. (2021). LGBTQI* people in Germany face staggering health disparities. *DIW Weekly Report*, 11(5/6), 42-50.

Liu, H., & Reczek, R. (2021). Birth cohort trends in health disparities by sexual orientation. *Demography*, 58(4), 1445-1472.

Meyer, I. H., Russell, S. T., Hammack, P. L., Frost, D. M., & Wilson, B. D. (2021). Minority stress, distress, and suicide attempts in three cohorts of sexual minority adults: A US probability sample. *Plos one*, 16(3), e0246827.

Winter, S., Diamond, M., Green, J., Karasic, D., Reed, T., Whittle, S., & Wylie, K. (2016). Transgender people: health at the margins of society. *The Lancet*, 388(10042), 390-400.

Zhang, Z., Solazzo, A., & Gorman, B. K. (2020). Education and health: The joint role of gender and sexual identity. *SSM-population Health*, 12, 100668.

Class 7. Socio-economic inequalities: labour market and education

Studies on LGBTQ people and socio-economic status document disparities in employment, earnings, occupational sorting, and school experiences. These studies have highlighted the role of stereotypes, hiring discrimination, gender roles and educational choices made by LGBTQ* people.*

Core readings

Denier, N., & Waite, S. (2019). Sexual orientation at work: Documenting and understanding wage inequality. *Sociology Compass*, 13(4), e12667.

Mittleman, J. (2022). Intersecting the academic gender gap: The education of lesbian, gay, and bisexual America. *American Sociological Review*, 87(2), 303-335.

Additional readings

Badgett, M. L., Carpenter, C. S., Lee, M. J., & Sansone, D. (2024). A review of the economics of sexual orientation and gender identity. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 62(3), 948-994.

Beattie, I. R., Van Dyke, N., & Hagaman, N. (2021). What do we know about LGBTQ+ college student academic experiences and outcomes?. *Sociology Compass*, 15(3), e12862.

Burn, I., & Martell, M. E. (2022). Gender typicality and sexual minority labour market differentials. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 60(4), 784-814.

Boertien, D., Perales, F., & Pessin, L. (2024). Does intergenerational educational mobility vary by sexual identity? A comparative analysis of five OECD countries. *European Sociological Review*, 40(2), 226-241.

de Vries, L., Fischer, M., Kasprowski, D., Kroh, M., Kühne, S., Richter, D., & Zindel, Z. (2020). LGBTQI* people on the labor market: Highly educated, frequently discriminated against. *DIW Weekly Report*, 10(36), 375-383.

Drydakakis, N. (2022). Sexual orientation and earnings: a meta-analysis 2012–2020. *Journal of Population Economics*, 35(2), 409-440.

Pachankis, J. E., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2013). The social development of contingent self-worth in sexual minority young men: An empirical investigation of the “Best Little Boy in the World” hypothesis. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 35(2), 176-190.

Class 8. Policies and Well-being

Legal frameworks - such as anti-discrimination protections, partnership rights, parenting rights, and gender-recognition laws - directly influence social inclusion, economic security, and everyday life for LGBTQ people. Studies in this area show how policy environments create or mitigate inequalities, shaping both opportunities and overall well-being.*

Core readings

Baumle, A. K., & Compton, D. L. R. (2011). Legislating the family: The effect of state family laws on the presence of children in same-sex households. *Law & Policy*, 33(1), 82-115.

Badgett, M. L., Carpenter, C. S., Lee, M. J., & Sansone, D. (2025). A review of the effects of legal access to same-sex marriage. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 44(1), 266-294.

Additional readings

Boertien, D., & Vignoli, D. (2019). Legalizing same-sex marriage matters for the subjective well-being of individuals in same-sex unions. *Demography*, 56(6), 2109-2121.

Carpenter, C. S. (2020). The direct effects of legal same-sex marriage in the United States: Evidence from Massachusetts. *Demography*, 57(5), 1787-1808.

Kail, B. L., Acosta, K. L., & Wright, E. R. (2015). State-level marriage equality and the health of same-sex couples. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105, 1101–1105.

McBrien, J., Rutigliano, A., & Sticca, A. (2022). The inclusion of LGBTQI+ students across education systems: An overview.

Meslay, G., & Russell, S. T. (2025). How Do State Policies Impact Access and Pathways to Parenthood for Sexual Minority Adults?. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 22(1), 122-133.

Class 9. Theories and Perspectives from adjacent disciplines

Research on LGBTQ people is informed by theories and perspectives from adjacent disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, gender studies, public health, and political science. These frameworks have shaped how scholars understand identity, inequality, stigma, and social change, and they provide tools for interpreting empirical patterns documented in demographic research.*

Core readings

Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2023). Minority stress theory: Application, critique, and continued relevance. *Current opinion in psychology*, 51, 101579.

Thomeer, M. B., Umberson, D., & Reczek, C. (2020). The gender-as-relational approach for theorizing about romantic relationships of sexual and gender minority mid-to later-life adults. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 12(2), 220-237.

Additional readings

Badgett, M. L., Carpenter, C. S., & Sansone, D. (2021). LGBTQ economics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 35(2), 141-170.

Frost, D. M., LeBlanc, A. J., De Vries, B., Alston-Stepnitz, E., Stephenson, R., & Woodyatt, C. (2017). Couple-level minority stress: An examination of same-sex couples' unique experiences. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 58(4), 455-472.

Hall, W. J., Dawes, H. C., & Plocek, N. (2021). Sexual orientation identity development milestones among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 753954.

Rubin, G. S. (2002). Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality. In *Culture, society and sexuality* (pp. 143-178). Routledge.

Russell, S. T., Bishop, M. D., & Fish, J. N. (2023). Expanding notions of LGBTQ+. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 49(1), 281-296.

Schilt, K., & Lagos, D. (2017). The development of transgender studies in sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43(1), 425-443.

Stacey, L., Reczek, R., & Spiker, R. (2022). Toward a holistic demographic profile of sexual and gender minority well-being. *Demography*, 59(4), 1403-1430.

Class 10. Intersectionality within the LGBTQ population.*

This class examines how multiple identities - such as sexual identity, gender identity, ethnicity and class - intersect within the LGBTQ population. Intersectional research shows how overlapping systems of inequality shape diverse experiences, highlighting that sexual and gender minority groups are not homogeneous.*

Core readings

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.

Ruberg, B., & Ruelos, S. (2020). Data for queer lives: How LGBTQ gender and sexuality identities challenge norms of demographics. *Big Data & Society*, 7(1), 2053951720933286.

Additional readings

Bercovich Szulmajster, S. (2025). Categorizing gender beyond the binary: inequalities in education from a multidimensional gender perspective. *Genus*, 81(1), 1-20.

Kasprowski, D., & Boertien, D. (2025). “Escape” from home? The moderating role of sexual orientation on the association between social origin and educational attainment. *European Societies*, 27(1), 144-170.

Goldberg, S. K., Rothblum, E. D., Russell, S. T., & Meyer, I. H. (2020). Exploring the Q in LGBTQ: Demographic characteristic and sexuality of Queer people in a US representative sample of sexual minorities. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 7(1), 101.

McDermott, E. (2011). The world some have won: Sexuality, class and inequality. *Sexualities*, 14(1), 63-78.

Mize, T. D., & Manago, B. (2018). The stereotype content of sexual orientation. *Social Currents*, 5(5), 458-478.

Poston Jr, D. L., & Baumle, A. K. (2010). Patterns of asexuality in the United States. *Demographic Research*, 23, 509-530.

Silva, T. J., & Whaley, R. B. (2018). Bud-sex, dude-sex, and heteroflexible men: The relationship between straight identification and social attitudes in a nationally representative sample of men with same-sex attractions or sexual practices. *Sociological Perspectives*, 61(3), 426-443.