

**POLICY ANALYSIS:
(SESSION 2)
The United States Census
A Review of Census 200 and Plans for the Future**

INTRODUCTION

The Decennial Census of Housing and Population is a massive statistical undertaking that serves a variety of important societal and governmental functions. Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution stipulates that there will be an enumeration of the entire population every ten years for purposes of reapportioning seats in the United States Congress. These population counts are also used for purposes of redistricting Congressional and other political jurisdictions at all levels of government. As a result of these various uses in support of our governmental/political structure, Census results and activities acquire an immense and an intense political focus from across the entire spectrum of U.S politics and geography.

In addition to serving the purpose cited in the Constitution, Census results are also used for the distribution of Federal and other funds for programs that range across a wide range of important topics and interests: education, environment, unemployment and job training, health research, etc.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly to many researchers in and out of government, the Census serves the critical purpose of documenting and summarizing the characteristics of individuals, households, housing units, and communities throughout the entire country. The Census provides a unique source of information about our country and its people, for areas and population groups, large and small. These data cannot be obtained from any other source.

The 1990 Census, rightly or wrongly, has come to be known as “the failed Census.” It is against this backdrop of failure, and surrounded by bitter legal and political debates over both Census methods and operations, that the most recent Census, Census 2000, was launched. At the outset of Census 2000, official Government oversight agencies and Congressional members expressed grave concerns and widely predicted the likelihood of failure. Over the course of six weeks, **WWS 594 1** will examine the record of what actually occurred. Of necessity, the short course will consist of a relatively rapid, but still detailed review of what was accomplished during the conduct of Census 2000. Major controversies and issues confronted during the Census will be examined, as will select components of the rich body of detailed data that Census 2000 has produced and some of the societal trends that the Census has helped identify.

Finally, the course will conclude with a look at the future. This will include an examination of the current plans to improve future Census taking as well as the data available for public policy and research purposes, as well as Congressional interest in the conduct of Census of Americans overseas.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

Census 2000 was often referred to as the largest peace time mobilization in our Nation's history. The course is designed to promote greater understanding of the operational, methodological and technical issues that must be confronted in the conduct of a successful Census. Controversies related to the use of statistics to improve results (the so-called sampling or adjustment controversy) will be examined, as will other major technical and operational issues that determine Census success and impact the subsequent use of the data.

GRADING STRUCTURE

The final grade for Course 594k will consist of assignments graded and weighted as follows:

- 50 % Issue/Research Paper (8-10 pages doubles spaced)
- 10% Briefing Paper (one page explaining topic of paper and its importance)
- 15% Oral Presentation (ten minute presentation on issue/research paper topic)
- 25 % Class participation

OFFICE HOURS

Available upon request. Contact Tim Waldron (84143) to schedule appointment.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

- April 14** **Submit one page paper summary**
- April 28** **Class presentations on topic**
- May** **Papers Due (tentative)**

SPRING 2004

WWS 594I COURSE CALENDAR AND DUE DATES

The calendar of events and course requirements for **WWS 594I Policy Analysis (Session 2) The United States Census is** set forth below on a week-by-week basis. Please make note of the calendar of events and the scheduled completion dates for course requirements, including the briefing paper, the oral presentation, and the research paper.

WWS 594kl will meet on Wednesdays **from 1pm to 4 pm** beginning Wednesday, March 24, 2004.

Week 1
(March 24)

Topics

- Introductions of course participants
- Discussion of Course Requirements
- Overview of Census 2000
 - Results
 - Costs
 - Issues/controversies

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK 2

(To be assigned---readings will relate to the controversy related to “sampling” as addressed by the U.S. Supreme Court)

Week 2
(March 31)

Topics

Guest Lecturer: Preston J. Waite
Associate Director
United States Census Bureau

Topics

Census 2000 Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation

Adjustment decisions in Census 2000

Future of “Sampling”

Week 3
(April 7)

Topics

Apportionment Process Overview

Changing Demographics in the United States

Overview of the Census 2000 Results

Review Population Trends

Review Demographic Trends

Week 4
(April 14)

Topics

Census 2000 Outreach and Advertising

The Census Long Form Controversy

Uses of Long Form Data

Sources of Long Form Questions

Week 5
(April 21)

Topics

The Census 2000 Race and Ethnicity Questions

The “Missing” Hispanics

Counting the Homeless

Enumeration of Group Quarters

ASSIGNMENTS FOR WEEK 6

Prepare ten to fifteen minute in class presentation on research paper or report stating what the topic is, why it is important, what you recommend.

Week 6
(April 28)

Topics

Individual presentations by class members

Status of American Community Survey

Status of Legislation for Census of Americans Overseas