

## Birth, Marriage and Death: Lifecycles from Antiquity until Today (A005374)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0** **Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027**

A (semester 1)	Dutch	Gent	lecture seminar
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**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Devos, Isabelle	LW03	lecturer-in-charge
Verboven, Koenraad	LW03	co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

	<b>crdts</b>	<b>offering</b>
<a href="#">Bachelor of Arts in History</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject History)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Master of Arts in History</a>	5	A

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

History of the family, kin networks, population developments, migration, mortality, marriage and fertility behaviour

**Position of the course**

This is an advanced specialization course in the MA History programme. It builds on the Historical Practice courses and the methodological courses in the BA History programme. It supports MA theses in the broader domain of socio-economic history and ties in with other elective courses in this domain.

**Contents**

The aim of the course is to familiarize students with the key variables and appropriate sources and methods of historical demographic research from antiquity to the present and to provide them through critical analyses with insights into long-term demographic developments.

The course consists of two parts.

The first part consists of lectures. These comprise: 1) an introduction to the purpose of historical demography and the sources and methods used in it; 2) state of the art of recent research on marriages and households, fertility, mortality and migration. In each case, practical applications are discussed in which the basic principles and methodology of historical demography are discussed in more detail.

The second part consists of seminars. In these, students in small groups examine one imposed subject per class and develop a appropriate research design (hypotheses, sources, methods, possible pitfalls). They do this on the basis of material made available in advance and on the basis of the knowledge acquired during the lectures. Each group submits a report after the seminar.

**Initial competences**

Students have a good basic knowledge of social and economic history as taught in the BA History programme.

**Final competences**

- 1 to identify and discuss the determinants and mechanisms of demographic developments;
- 2 to be familiar with the main historical-demographic sources and techniques,

- including databases and digital tools;
- 3 to apply demographic theories and methods to historical research in a correct scientific way;
- 4 to be able to apply the principles digital source criticism to historical-demographic models;
- 5 to use model life tables and fragmentary sources to reconstruct possible life tables and demographic indicators for historical societies;
- 6 to understand the impact of societal changes on demographic developments and vice versa;
- 7 to discuss historical demographic subject in an academically correct way;
- 8 to report about a discussion on historical demographic subjects in an academically correct way.

#### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

#### **Teaching methods**

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

For an explanation of the didactic work forms see the glossary in the 'Education and Examination Code' of Ghent University (<https://www.ugent.be/student/nl/studeren/regelgeving>); see also above the section 'content'.

#### **Study material**

Type: Slides

Name: Slides  
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
 Optional: no  
 Language : Dutch  
 Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader  
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
 Optional: no  
 Language : English  
 Available on Ufora : Yes  
 Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Other

Name: Model life tables  
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
 Optional: no  
 Language : English  
 Number of Pages : 500  
 Available on Ufora : Yes  
 Available in the Library : Yes  
 Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : one-time  
 Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time  
 Additional information: Various model life tables to be used in of the group assignments.

#### **References**

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

The seminars are highly interactive.

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment

### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation, Assignment

### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

### **Extra information on the examination methods**

Non-periodic assessments are based on participation in the classes and written reports of the discussions during the seminars.

During resits non-periodic assessment is replaced by a paper.

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Periodic (exam): 60%

Non-periodic assessments: 40%

Participation is accounted for as an impact on the non-periodic evaluation in the following way:

- Participation in all the seminars = score for non-periodic evaluation x 1
- Unauthorised absence in all the seminars = score non-periodic evaluation x 0
- Unauthorised absence for some but not all seminars = score non-periodic evaluation x % presence

### **Facilities for Working Students**

Facilities:

- 1 Possible exemption from certain educational activities requiring student attendance
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during or after office hours

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy