

Workshop Announcement

An Informal Introduction to Formal Demography

Application deadline: 19 January 2026

Workshop dates: 23-27 March 2026

About: This week-long mini-course focusing on formal demographic models and methods is sponsored by The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (Campop) and the British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) and will take place at Cambridge University. It will include illustrations from modeling fertility, mortality, and disease; population projections; and the long-run consequences of continuing current trends. The course is organized as four hours of lectures per day (11am to 4pm), split into two two-hour lectures, over five consecutive days. Participants will be expected to attend every day. There will be no participation charge (although participants will need to arrange and pay for their own travel and accommodation as necessary). However due to the compressed format, the number of participants will be limited.

Audience: The target participants are post-graduate students, early career researchers, faculty, or anyone else who already knows the basics of demographic methods but wishes a broader introduction to formal methods in an accessible way. This course could be thought of as a “second” course to fill in gaps and connect dots; participants will leave with a better understanding of how formal theory and current methods are related, where current methods can be extended, and with suggestions, examples, and materials of how better to teach demographic methods.

Organization and participation: Formal demography is a tool to develop intuition, so the lectures build on examples, illustrations, explanations, and derivations of shortcuts, approximations, and rules of thumb. The small number of participants will encourage questions and comments. During the week itself there will not be much time for traditional exercises. In lieu of that, there will be a post-workshop virtual meeting where participants will present short 5 to 10 minute presentations of their own examples, illustrations, explanations, and derivations.

Presenter: This mini-course will be presented by Robert Chung, recently retired from the University of California Berkeley’s Department of Demography, who taught formal methods and models there for many years. In 2024 he was the recipient of the Pedagogy Award from the American Sociological Society for his work in teaching formal demographic methods.

How to apply: Please send your cv (including details of previous training and/or experience with demographic methods and statistical software packages) and a motivation statement of up to 250 words to campop@geog.cam.ac.uk by the closing date of 19 January 2026. Applicants will be notified about whether they have a place on the course by the end of January.