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# Course Syllabus

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## Childhood and Violence

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:05pm - 3:25pm**  
 Armitage Hall, 124  
 Course number: 50:163:285 (Childhood Studies) / 50:480:291 (Global Studies)

**Fall 2021**  
 Rutgers University, Camden

**Instructor: Anthony Wright, Ph.D.**  
 Assistant Professor, Department of Childhood Studies  
 Email: [anthony.wright@rutgers.edu](mailto:anthony.wright@rutgers.edu)  
**Office Hours: WebEx**, Mondays, 3:45pm - 5:45pm ([Signup sheet here](#))  
 Artis Building, 329 Cooper St., Room 205  
 Pronouns: he/him/his

**Teaching Assistant (TA): Cecelea L. Tomi, MSW**  
 Ph.D. Student, Department of Childhood Studies  
 Email: [cecelea.tomi@rutgers.edu](mailto:cecelea.tomi@rutgers.edu)  
**Office Hours: Zoom**, By appointment only ([Schedule an appointment here](#))  
 TBD  
 Pronouns: she/her/hers

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will consider how young people are affected by violence, as well as how they participate in it. Although the word "violence" calls to mind blatant acts of physical assault, such as when one person shoots or stabs another, in this course we will consider forms of violence that go well beyond these obvious examples. We will discuss the concept of "structural violence," which the discipline of medical anthropology has developed to help make sense of how systemic inequalities and institutionalized forms of oppression harm people in a range of ways. As we will see, violence, in all its forms, is not evenly distributed across societies or populations. Certain individuals and populations are much more directly subjected to certain forms violence than others.

In the first unit of the course, we will build a conceptual toolkit that will help us to define and identify diverse forms of violence. We will discuss the concepts of genocide, structural violence, structural vulnerability, everyday violence, symbolic violence, moral injury, intersectionality, and embodiment, all of which will use to help analyze the material we will cover in subsequent units. We will also explore the question of how to make sense of the relationship between young people and violence. We will question dominant representations of childhood as a state of moral purity, innocence, and protection from the dangers of the world, and we will discuss how to make sense of situations in which young people participate in violence at the same time as they are victims of it.

In the second unit of the course, we will discuss how histories of colonialism and racism have generated distinct forms of violence that harm different populations in distinct ways, and which continue to cause harm in the present. We will focus primarily on racism in North America, looking at examples from the United States, Canada, and Mexico. We will discuss the history of church- and state-run boarding schools for Native American children in the United States and Canada. These schools enacted the forced cultural assimilation of Native American children, often subjecting them to psychological, physical, and sexual violence in the process. We will discuss anti-Black racism in the United States, tracing a line from the historical institution of slavery to the current institution of mass incarceration.

Following this, we will discuss anti-Asian racism, paying particular attention to the harm caused by the "model minority" stereotype. Finally, we will discuss the immigration debate in the United States. We will consider how the consolidation of an increasingly punitive immigration enforcement regime causes harm to families and individuals on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the third unit of the course, we will discuss how sex and gender norms cause harm to young people whose bodies and modes of self-presentation do not conform to these norms. We will begin by discussing the concept of patriarchy and the various ways that male dominance has been institutionalized and enforced. Next, we will explore the related concepts of heteronormativity and homonormativity, which draw attention to the stigmatization and exclusion of LGBTQ+ people within prevailing social structures. Finally, we will discuss transgender childhoods, focusing particularly on how pediatric knowledge about transgender children has given rise to medical interventions that range from regulatory to facilitative.

In the fourth unit of the course, we will discuss class structures and the forms of poverty, deprivation, and neglect that they produce throughout the world today. We will begin by discussing how "labor" has become demarcated as an "adults-only" sphere of activity, with the concept of "child labor" being used in a morally charged manner that implies the culpability of adult caregivers. We will discuss how the stigmatization of child labor has led to global and national interventions that have been the site of intense controversy. While some see anti-child labor interventions as an inherently benevolent cause, others see these interventions as forms of Western imperialism that further impoverish the poorest inhabitants of the so-called "developing world." We will then discuss child poverty in the so-called "developed world," focusing particularly on the United States, which is the wealthiest nation in the world, but which has alarmingly high levels of economic inequality and therefore child poverty. Finally, we will discuss the question of schools and formal education as engines of social and economic mobility. As we will see, while schools have been proposed as solutions to poverty, in actuality, they often reproduce class inequalities.

In the fifth unit of the course, we will hold a writing/research workshop to help you prepare for your final papers. We will discuss some pointers for writing a strong paper, and we will go over how to use the Internet to search for reputable sources that you can use to inform your research. There will be no quiz for this final unit.

Although the course is divided into distinct units focused respectively on the violence of race, gender, and class structures, it is important to remember that the specific forms of violence we will discuss in each unit do not exist in isolation. For example, many people in the world today are affected by racist, sexist, and classist violence simultaneously. On the other hand, people may also embody a complex mix of oppression and privilege. For example, many men in the world today may be negatively affected by racial oppression but may still embody a degree of male and heteronormative privilege. For these reasons, it is important not to conclude that the separation of these issues for the purpose of analysis and discussion necessarily implies their separation in the real world.

**Content Warning: In this class, we will be reading, watching, listening to, and discussing highly sensitive, controversial, and upsetting issues, such child abuse, racist violence, and sexual violence. We will take time in class to discuss the reactions we all have to the material, and hopefully that will help to process any difficult emotions triggered by the course. At the same time, it is good to know your own limits, and if, after reviewing the syllabus, you feel that the course material will be too emotionally difficult for you, then it is probably a good idea to consider enrolling in a different class.**

## LEARNING GOALS

- Develop familiarity with concepts and issues that have driven scientific, political, and ethical debates about the relationship between young people and diverse forms of violence.
- Form an understanding of how specific social institutions perpetuate violence and inequality among young people.
- Develop understanding of the relationship between scientific research and interventions intended to reduce or contain violence among young people.
- Critically evaluate your own ethical positions on the various issues we explore.
- Improve writing skills by completing two short reading/video response papers and a final paper.
- Learn and practice constructive forms of collaboration by participating in small group activities throughout the semester.

## REQUIRED READINGS

All of the readings are available in the "Files" section of the course Canvas site, so you will not be required to buy any books. For those of you who do wish to purchase hard copies, you should be able to find them on eBay or an online retailer of your choice. Some of the readings will not be available from popular online retailers, as they are academic journal articles, and you will need to print them out if you want a hard copy.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade	Due Date(s)
Participation	20%	At the end of class each day
Unit quizzes	40% (10% each)	Unit 1 quiz: September 15 Unit 2 quiz: October 13 Unit 3 quiz: November 10 Unit 4 quiz: December 1
Reading/Video Response Papers (2)	20% (10% each)	Paper 1: October 4 Paper 2: November 22
Final Paper	20%	December 17

**1) Participation:** We will not take attendance in this class, but your participation grade will be based on in-class activities, so it is very important that you attend, as you will not be able to make up these activities, although we will drop up to two incomplete participation exercises. All participation grades will be given as complete or incomplete. In other words, if you are present in class and complete participation activities, you will get full credit.

**2) Unit Quizzes:** We will have a quiz at the end of each unit. Quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. You will be permitted to use your notes to complete the quizzes. You will be allowed to make up missed quizzes as long as you give us advance notice of your absence. If you are unable to let us know in advance, you will still be allowed to make up quizzes as long as you provide documentation of a legitimate emergency that prevented you from coming to class. If you do not provide advance notice or documentation, you will not be allowed to make up the quiz.

**3) Reading/Video Response Papers:** All students will be required to submit TWO short papers responding to ONE FILM and ONE READING of your choice. These papers are not meant to be summaries but rather an opportunity for you to share your own thoughts and reactions to the readings and films. The papers should each be 2 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins.

**4) Final paper:** Your final paper will be a research paper based on a topic related to the course. You will be required to cite at least one book/article from the class and at least one book/article from a reputable outside source. The final week of class, we will have a 2-part workshop where we will go over the assignment requirements in detail and discuss some basics on how to conduct internet research and write a research paper. Your paper will be due the following week. Papers should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins. They will be graded on a 100-point basis according to the following criteria:

90-100 points	The paper is extremely clear, well-organized, and free of major typographical errors. Course concepts are used in a way that demonstrates strong comprehension, critical thinking and creativity. All works are properly cited and a bibliography page is included with full citations. The paper is the proper length and format, and it incorporates at least one outside book/article and one
80-90 points	The paper is relatively clear, well-organized, and has few, if any, major typographical errors. Course concepts are used in a way that demonstrates basic comprehension. All texts and lectures are cited with minimal errors and a works cited page is included with full bibliographic citations. The paper is the proper length and there are minimal formatting errors.
70-80 points	The paper is somewhat unclear and contains multiple major typographical errors. Course concepts are used in a way that does not demonstrate adequate comprehension. Not all works are properly cited and/or there are an insufficient number of citations. The paper is below the required length and there are significant formatting errors.
60-70 points	The paper is extremely unclear and contains multiple major typographical errors. Course concepts are used in a way that demonstrates poor comprehension. There are citations from an improper source and/or there are an insufficient number of citations. The paper is below the required length and there are significant formatting errors.
60 points and below	The paper does not meet any of the requirements, or no paper was submitted.

## OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

**COVID-19 Mandatory Mask Policy:** In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the university requires that all students, faculty, and staff wear masks on campus. If for any reason you do not think you will be able to comply with this policy, please let us know ASAP.

**Office Hours:** Your professor and your TA will hold office hours each week in both in-person and virtual formats. In order to ensure that virtual and in-person appointments do not overlap, we will use online signup sheets where you can select a time slot on a first come first serve basis. Our signup sheet links, office locations, and links to our WebEx sites can be found at the top of the syllabus with our contact information. We encourage you to drop in just to say hello or to ask any questions that you might have about readings or lecture content. In general, attending office hours is a great way to get to know your professors and TAs, and this can be really helpful in the future if you need things like letters of recommendation.

**Email:** Both of us can be reached via email. Our addresses are posted at the top of the syllabus with our contact information. We will do our best to respond to your emails within 48 hours. If you have an urgent issue, please put the word URGENT in the subject, and we will respond as soon as possible. Also, if you have an in-depth question about a reading or lecture, it would be much better to come to office hours, as we will not be able to have very detailed conversations about course content via email.

**Norms of Communication:** In this class, we will be discussing a number of emotionally charged and controversial topics. I absolutely welcome disagreement and debate, but it must take a civil, constructive form. Hate speech and other inappropriate forms of intimidation or interpersonal aggression will not be tolerated. While we do not have to agree with each other, it is crucial that our debates and discussions be carried out in a respectful way.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism—passing off another's ideas or words as one's own—is a serious act of academic dishonesty and represents a serious violation of the academic integrity policy of Rutgers University. Careless or inadequate citing of ideas or words borrowed from another also constitutes an act of academic dishonesty. It is each student's responsibility to acquaint themselves with Rutgers University's rules on academic integrity:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

You should be aware that we will be electronically monitoring for plagiarism with the application Turnitin. Any actions of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be adjudicated. If, after reviewing these rules, you are unsure about which actions constitute violations of the academic integrity policy, please contact me before handing in an assignment; I will be happy to help.

For your reference, here is a chart that describes the university's framework for classifying integrity violations:

Level 1 Violations	Level 2 Violations	Level 3 Violations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intentional or lack of understanding of the principles of academic integrity</li> <li>one or less degree of plagiarism or planning</li> <li>submit a minor assignment or quiz</li> <li>contribute a small portion of a major assignment</li> <li>represent a small percentage of the total work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>substantial plagiarism on a major assignment</li> <li>submit a major assignment or quiz</li> <li>contribute a significant portion of a major assignment</li> <li>represent a large percentage of the total work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>serious violation of a professional code of conduct</li> <li>extreme cases of dishonesty and malfeasance</li> <li>may involve violation of the law</li> <li>likely to cause direct harm to others</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 1 Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plagiarism on a minor assignment or a very limited portion of a major assignment</li> <li>Organizational cheating on a quiz or minor examination</li> <li>Prohibited collaboration with another student on a homework assignment</li> <li>Unauthorized sharing of course materials</li> <li>Using a source that does not exist or that one has not read on a minor assignment</li> <li>Spiking or for another student via attendance sheet or clicker in a course without attendance is granted.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 2 Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial plagiarism on a major assignment</li> <li>Copying or using unauthorized materials, sources, or collaboration on a major exam</li> <li>Distribution of course materials for financial gain</li> <li>Intentionally obstructing another student's work</li> <li>Participating in an organized cheating scheme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 3 Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any violation involving potentially criminal activity</li> <li>Coordinating an organized cheating scheme</li> <li>Having a substitute take an examination</li> <li>Cheating and/or plagiarism on a capstone project, thesis, or dissertation</li> <li>Intentionally destroying another student's work</li> <li>Falsifying patient or client records</li> </ul>

**ADA Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS).

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides students with confidential advising and accommodation services in order to allow students with documented physical, mental, and learning disabilities to successfully complete their course of study at Rutgers University - Camden. The ODS provides for the confidential documentation and verification of student accommodations, and communicates with faculty regarding disabilities and accommodations. The ODS provides accommodation services, which can include readers, interpreters, alternate text, special equipment, and note takers. The ODS acts as a signatory for special waivers. The ODS also works with students, faculty, staff and administrators to enforce the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Director: Erin G. Leuthold Armitage Hall, Room 235, 311 North Fifth Street

Phone: 856.225.2717

[disability-services@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:disability-services@camden.rutgers.edu)

<https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Unit 1: Building a Conceptual Toolkit for Making Sense of Violence

#### Week 1: Introduction to Course

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

No reading

#### Week 2: The Social Production of Violence

Monday, September 6, 2021

Labor Day

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2006. "Dangerous and Endangered Youth: Social Structures and Determinants of Violence." In *Inclusion and Exclusion in the Global Arena*. Edited by Max Kirsch. 287-317.

#### Week 3: Structural Violence and Intersectional Childhoods

Monday, September 13, 2021

Farmer, Paul. 2004. "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* 45 (3): 305-25.

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 - **QUIZ 1**

Konstantoni, Kristina, and Akwago Emejulu. 2017. "When Intersectionality Met Childhood Studies: The Dilemmas of a Travelling Concept? *Children's Geographies* 15 (1): 6-22.

#### Unit 2: Colonialism and Racism

#### Week 4: Native American Children and The Violence of Forced Assimilation

Monday, September 20, 2021

Wagamese, Richard. 2018. *Indian Horse*. Pages 43-62.

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Wagamese, Richard. 2018. *Indian Horse*. Pages 63-82.

#### Week 5: Anti-Black Racism: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration

Monday, September 27, 2021

FILM: Duvernay, Ava. 2016. 13<sup>th</sup>. Kandoo Films.

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

FILM: Duvernay, Ava. 2016. 13<sup>th</sup>. Kandoo Films.

#### Week 6 - The Model Minority Stereotype and the Erasure of Anti-Asian Racism

Monday, October 4, 2021 - **READING/VIDEO RESPONSE PAPER 1**

Podcast: "The Model Minority Myth with Ellen Wu." *Factually with Adam Cosover*. October 2012. [e](#)

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Nguyen, Viet Than. "How the Model Minority Myth of Asian Americans Hurts Us All." *Time*. June 25, 2020.

#### Week 7 - Border Construction, Racism, and Immigration Enforcement

Monday, October 11, 2021

Castañeda, Heide. 2019. "Introduction: Illegality and the Immigrant Family." *Borders of belonging: struggle and solidarity in mixed-status immigrant families*. Stanford University Press.

Wednesday, October 13, 2021 - **QUIZ 2**

Castañeda, Heide. 2019. "Family Separation: Deportation, Removal, and Return." *Borders of belonging: struggle and solidarity in mixed-status immigrant families*. Stanford University Press.

#### Unit 3: Patriarchy, Heteronormativity, and Gendered Childhoods/Parenthoods

#### Week 8 - Gender Inequalities

Monday, October 18, 2021

FILM: BBC News. 2014. *All That Stands in The Way*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9EVz2ZLI>

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Roberts, Dorothy E. 2011. "Prison, foster care, and the systemic punishment of black mothers." *UCLA Law Review*. 59: 1474.

#### Week 9 - Sex-Gender Normativity and the Enactment of Intersectional Identities

Monday, October 25, 2021

Gansen, Heidi M., and Karin A. Martin. 2018. "Becoming Gendered." *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*. 83-93. Springer.

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

Robinson, Brandon Andrew. 2020. "The Lavender Scare in Homonormative Times: Policing, Hyper-incarceration, and LGBTQ Youth Homelessness." *Gender & Society* 34 (2): 210-232.

#### Week 10 - The Stigmatization of LGBTQ+ Children and Youth

Monday, November 1, 2021

Jones, Saeed. 2019. *How We Fight for Our Lives*. Simon & Schuster. Pages 1-24.

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Jones, Saeed. 2019. *How We Fight for Our Lives*. Simon & Schuster. Pages 25-49.

#### Week 11 - The Pediatric Construction of Transgender Childhoods

Monday, November 8, 2021

Meadow, Tey. 2018. "Gender Troubles." *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. University of California Press.

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 - **QUIZ 3**

Gessen, Sasha. "We Need to Change the Terms of the Debate on Trans Kids." *The New Yorker*. January 13, 2021.

#### Unit 4: Class Stratification and Poverty

#### Week 12 - The Stigmatization of Child Labor

Monday, November 15, 2021

Zelizer, Viviana. 1985. "From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict Over Child Labor." *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. New York: Basic Books.

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Taft, Jessica K. 2019. "Learning with the Peruvian Movement of Working Children." *The Kids are in Charge: Activism and Power in Peru's Movement of Working Children*. New York University Press.

#### Week 13 - Child Poverty

Monday, November 22, 2021 - **READING/VIDEO RESPONSE PAPER 2**

FILM: PBS. 2020. *Growing up Poor in America*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAxQIHGodA&t=2044s>

Wednesday, November 23, 2021

Thanksgiving Break

#### Week 14 - Schools as Drivers of Social Inequality

Monday, November 29, 2021

Domina, Thurston, Andrew Penner, and Emily Penner. 2017. "Categorical inequality: Schools as sorting machines." *Annual review of sociology* 43: 311-330.

Wednesday, December 1, 2021 - **QUIZ 4**

Nolan, Kathleen. 2018. "The lived experience of market-based school reform: An ethnographic portrait of teachers' policy enactments in an urban school." *Educational Policy* 32 (6): 797-822.

#### Unit 5: Final Paper

#### Week 15 - Writing/Research Workshop

Monday, December 6, 2021

Writing/research workshop, part I.

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Writing/research workshop, part II.

**FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 17**

## Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Wed Sep 15, 2021	<a href="#">Unit 1 Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Oct 4, 2021	<a href="#">Response paper 1</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Oct 13, 2021	<a href="#">Unit 2 Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Nov 10, 2021	<a href="#">Unit 3 Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Nov 22, 2021	<a href="#">Response paper 2</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Dec 1, 2021	<a href="#">Unit 4 Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Dec 17, 2021		