

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Fall 2021  
Thursdays 6:00 – 8:50 p.m.  
Artis Building 111  
Childhood Studies 521:01

Instructor: John Wall  
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Office: 429 Cooper Street, Room 305  
Office hours: Thursdays 4:00-5:00 pm

## OBJECTIVES

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This course examines children's rights from a range of theoretical, social, historical, and practical perspectives. It asks what it means to construct children and youth as possessing rights, how child and human rights are critiqued, how considerations of childhood challenge broader human rights ideas and practices, how actual children's rights have changed over time, what key struggles for rights are emerging today locally and internationally, how children and youth participate in such struggles, and how children's rights face complex issues of globalization, cultural difference, marginalization from power, and practical implementation. Students will leave the course with a solid grounding in children's rights research and an understanding of the various dimensions involved in children's rights dilemmas, struggles, and possibilities.

## READINGS

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All readings are posted on the course Canvas website, "2021FA CHILDREN'S RIGHTS" (<https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/148941>). Readings are listed under each course module. There are no other readings besides those on Canvas website.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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1. Class Participation. This is a seminar course in which all students are expected to participate actively and constructively in all class discussions. Class time is your opportunity to explore interests, try out ideas, and discuss issues with others who may have different points of view. Class participation is graded on the quality and frequency of contributions over the semester. Please inform the instructor ahead of time if you will be absent or late.
2. Discussion Leading. Each student is responsible for leading part of the class discussion on **two** separate weeks. Discussion leading means picking **one** substantive academic article from that week's readings and, when we get to discussing that article, taking over the class for 10 minutes by doing the following: (1) describe one central point from the article that you find important; (2) provide the class with a quote on that point from the article; and (3) raise one debatable question about that point and lead the class in a discussion of that question. You will need to coordinate with the other discussion leaders for your weeks so that each student picks a different article or at least a substantively different point to discuss if they choose the same article.

3. Final Paper Presentation. At the end of the course, we will hold a two-week in-class conference during which each student will present their ideas for their final paper. Each student is responsible for making a 10-minute oral presentation to the rest of the class on the problem and argument that their final paper intends to pursue. Students are free to use powerpoint or not as they prefer. Each presentation will be followed by in-depth responses and discussion from the class.
4. Final Paper. There is one final paper for the course, of approximately 15-20 pages in length. You will be free to pursue any issue from the course of interest to you. Detailed instructions will be given out well before the due date. Your paper should make use of all necessary course readings, as well as other readings as researched by the student. The purpose is to develop your own substantive and carefully constructed argument. Use our article readings throughout the course as models for your paper.

## GRADING

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The final course grade is based on the following:

Class participation: 20 points  
 Discussion leading: 20 points (10 points each)  
 Conference presentation: 20 points  
 Final paper: 40 points

Grade scale:

A (90%): outstanding  
 B+ (85%): very good  
 B (80%): satisfactory  
 C+ (75%) or lower: poor

Any plagiarism or cheating in any part of the course will result in receiving an F for the course and university disciplinary action.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### Academic Policies

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity (<https://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/faculty/faculty-resources/academic-integrity-policy/>).

### Graduate Student Writing Assistance

The Rutgers Camden Graduate School offers free writing assistance, plus other advice on achieving academic success (<https://graduateschool.camden.rutgers.edu/writing/>).

### Division of Student Affairs

Rutgers' Division of Student Affairs on our campus can assist with a wide range of academic and non-academic concerns such as advising, health issues, stress management, international affairs, and much else (call 856-225-6050 or see <https://studentaffairs.camden.rutgers.edu>).

## SCHEDULE

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### I. Introduction

Sep. 2 Introduction to the Course. Read ahead of class: (1) Quennerstedt, "Children's Rights Research Moving into the Future." (2) Wall, "Human Rights in Light of Childhood."

### II. Theorizing Children's Rights

Sep. 9 Rights in Theory. Readings: (1) Fagan, "Human Rights." (2) Collins, et al, "New Directions in Feminism and Human Rights." (3) Barreto, "Epistemologies of the South and Human Rights."

Sep. 16 Rights and Children. Readings: (1) Van Daalen et al, "Children's Rights as Living Rights." (2) Fay, "Decolonizing the Child Protection Apparatus." (3) Cordero Arce, "Maturing Children's Rights Theory."

Sep. 23 Rights and Globalization. Readings: (1) "1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child." (2) UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Concluding Observations on Costa Rica." (3) Engel, "Vertical and Horizontal Perspectives on Rights Consciousness." (4) White, "Children's Rights and the Imagination of Community in Bangladesh."

Sep. 30 Rights under Critique. Readings: (1) Balagopalan, "Why Historicize Rights-Subjectivities?" (2) Aufseeser, "Control, Protection and Rights." (3) Viterbo, "Problematising Law, Rights, and Childhood in Israel/Palestine, Chapter 1 excerpt."

### III. Exploring the "Three Ps"

Oct. 7 Protection Rights. Readings: (1) Liebel, "Protecting the Rights of Working Children instead of Banning Child Labour." (2) Rosen, "The Legal Conundrum of Child Soldiers." (3) Egan and Hawkes, "The Problem with Protection." (4) Makuch et al., "Tomorrow's Stewards."

Oct. 14 Provision Rights. Readings: (1) Kilkelly and Donnelly, "Participation in Healthcare." (2) Johnson, "The Child's Right to an Education." (3) Quennerstedt, "Young Children's Enactments of Human Rights in Early Childhood Education." (4) Stoilova, et al, "Global Kids Online." (5) Guillén-Fernández and Vargas-Chanes, "Multidimensional Child Poverty from the Child Rights-Based Approach."

Oct. 21 Participation Rights. Readings: (1) Crowley, "Is Anyone Listening? The Impact of Children's Participation on Public Policy." (2) Lund, "Rethinking the Participating Child." (3) Fitzgerald, et al., "Children's Participation as a Struggle

Over Recognition.” (4) Imoh and Okyere, “Towards a More Holistic Understanding of Child Participation.”

#### IV. Going into Depth: Citizenship Rights

- Oct. 28      Rights to Citizenship. Readings: (1) Sarkar and Mendoza, “Bolivia’s Children’s Parliament.” (2) Cockburn, “Children as Participative Citizens.” (3) Moosa-Mitha, “A Difference-Centered Alternative to Theorization of Children’s Citizenship Rights.” (4) Lister, “Why Citizenship: Where, When and How Children?”
- Nov. 4      Migration Rights. Readings: (1) Josefsson, “We Beg You, Let Them Stay.” (2) Bhabha, “Governing Adolescent Mobility.” (3) Wood, “Impact of Punitive Immigration Policies.” (4) Mugadza, et al, “The Concept of a Child within Sub-Saharan African Migrant Homes.”
- Nov. 11      Rights to Vote. Readings: (1) Franklin, “Children’s Political Rights.” (2) Wall, “Why Children and Youth Should Have the Right to Vote.” (3) Hart and Atkins, “American Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Olds are Ready to Vote.” (4) López-Guerra, “Enfranchising Minors and the Mentally Impaired.”
- Nov. 18      Wrap-up and Discussion of Final Papers. Readings: (1) Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, excerpts.
- Nov. 25      *Thanksgiving Recess (no class)*

#### VI. Conclusion

- Dec. 2      Student Conference, Part 1. Instructions to be announced.
- Dec. 9      Student Conference, Part 2. Instructions to be announced.

*Final papers are due on Canvas no later than Monday December 20th at 11:59 p.m.*