

Youth Identities 50:163:383:01  
Spring 2021

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Office Hours: By appointment – we would be happy to speak with you about any aspect of the course! Please email us to arrange a video conference at your convenience.

**Course Description:**

This seminar examines how young people form their identities while making a life in cities, primarily within the United States but also in global contexts. We pay close attention to the influences of urban settings such as neighborhood, school, work, family, and peer groups, as well as child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

In particular, we center the experiences and identities of young people who experience marginalization through racism, transphobia, homophobia, poverty, criminalization, misogyny, xenophobia, ageism, and ableism. We seek to hear and listen to their voices and stories in order to understand their lives but also to correct our collective vision, challenge the myths that shortchange their identities, and follow their lead in enacting joy, resistance, and care. The course takes an interdisciplinary childhood studies approach, applying perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and human development through critical race, queer, and feminist lenses.

Through these frameworks, we respect and appreciate the insights and theories that young people bring in exploring their own identities. We take a justice orientation to this class—this means that we explore how deep, complex, and critical understandings of youth identities can help us personally and professionally to play a **proactive** role in our communities. We explore ideas about how to transform environments and relationships to support young people to just be—intact, joyful, expressive, and safe—in their own skin and multiple identities. In the course we understand that identity is always socially constructed. Further, these identities change across context and time. We also draw upon youth writings, digital expressions, art, and poetry, as well as films to enrich our understanding of urban youth perspectives on their own identities.

Identity is fascinating, complex, and essential!

**Readings**

All readings are available digitally through the Paul Robeson Library—you can access these readings on our canvas site under the “Reading List” tab directly under Modules.

Other required materials such as youth poetry, documentary film clips, and other media are embedded under the module in which the material is discussed.

**Course Schedule**

Deadlines are 11:55 pm unless otherwise noted. Because we are living during a global pandemic and engaging in college coursework is extraordinary under these conditions, you will always have a full two-day grace period for submitting assignments. You do not need to contact us and no questions will be asked. If you require additional time, please contact the professor or TA.

Modules will run **Tuesday through Monday** unless otherwise noted. **Each Monday is a required synchronous class that meets on zoom during our scheduled class time: 2:05-3:25 pm.** During our synchronous meeting, I will response to questions and review the course material covered in the module; we will hear from fabulous and inspiring guest speakers; and we will work in small groups.

Module 1	Jan 19-Jan 25
Module 2	Jan 26-Feb 1
Module 3	Feb 2-Feb 8
Module 4	Feb 9-Feb 15
Module 5	Feb 16-Feb 22
Module 6	Feb 23-March 1
Module 7	March 2-March 8
Module 8	March 9-March 12 (Fri)
Spring Break	March 13-March 21
Module 9	March 23-March 29
Module 10	March 30-April 5
Module 11	April 6-April 12
Module 12	April 13-April 19
Module 13	April 20-April 26
Module 14	April 27-May 3

### ASSIGNMENTS:

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments. Assignment details are available on Canvas for you to review at any time. All assignments are due electronically via Canvas. Assignments should be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx) format. If you do not have Microsoft office, please see: <https://it.rutgers.edu/microsoft-office/microsoft-office-for-students/> We will discuss each assignment prior to each due date. Due dates are indicated on the below schedule.

<p><b>Participation</b>          (one engagement activity + synchronous Monday attendance) = 3 points per module          Engagement activity will be due on <u>Thursday</u> for each module.</p>	40%
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Ecological (Auto)Biography (3-5 pages, double-spaced) DUE: Monday, February 15	20%
YA Book Discussion/Lesson Plan (written, podcast, or video) DUE: Monday, March 22	10%
Group Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Review (Complete worksheet &amp; evaluation) (10%)</li> <li>• Presentation (15%)</li> <li>• Summary of Experience (1-2 pages, double-spaced) (5%)</li> </ul> See Presentation Dates Below and Sign-up Accordingly	30%

**Course Schedule**

*(Schedule and agendas are subject to change. Changes will be announced on Canvas; please manually reflect schedule changes on your syllabus)*

**Introduction:**

*What is identity? How do we study it? Who do we consider as youth? Why might we look at youth identities in cities?*

**Module 1** Jan 19-Jan 25:

**Welcome to Youth Identities!**

**Introductions, Review Syllabus, Developing Guidelines for Discussion**

In this first week, you will review the syllabus closely, pick your presentation group, listen to my introductory videos, participate in the identity exercises on the module site and introduce yourself. There is no other assigned reading.

Monday, Jan 25:

Introductions and small group work

\*\*\*\*By **Monday at 9am, sign-up for your presentation group.** You will be meeting in your small groups during the synchronous class on Monday.

**Identity Frameworks:**

*How do psycho-social frameworks on identity shed light on young people's experiences? How do we draw upon intersectionality to understand structures of oppression and liberation on young people's identities? How do we understand youth voices as forms of social transformation?*

**Module 2** Jan 26-Feb 1

**Making Sense of Identity: Ecological Systems Theory**

Required Reading:

Nakkula, M.J. and Toshalis, E. 2008. *Understanding Youth: Adolescent Development for Educators* (Chapters 1, 2, and 12).

Supplemental (Not required):

Nicole M. Vélez-Agosto, José G. Soto-Crespo, Mónica Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Stephanie Vega-Molina, and Cynthia García. 2017. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory Revision: Moving Culture from the Macro Into the Micro. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 2017, Vol. 12(5) 900–910

Monday, Feb 1:

Visitors: **Michelle Storrod** and **Gaylene Gordon**, “Ecological Ruptures & Strain: Girls, Juvenile Justice and Phone Removal” and the ROSES advocacy program for girls in Camden’s Juvenile Justice System.

**Module 3** Feb 2-Feb 8

**Making sense of identity: Intersectionality**

Reading:

The Combahee River Collective, April 1977. The statement is available online at [www.circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html](http://www.circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html).

Raible, J & Nieto, S. 2008. Beyond Categories. In *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Guo Winona and Vulchi Priya. 2019. Tell me Who You Are: Sharing our Stories of Race, Culture, and Identity. New York: TarcherPerigee (pp. 1-20 and 83-91)

Monday, Feb 8:

In-class Assignment: Lesson Plans, <https://www.chooseorg.org/for-educators>

**Youth Identities across Camden**

*How do young people experience and resist place-based stigma?*

*What does it mean to be from Camden?*

*How is structural change in the city embodied and resisted through youth identities?*

**Module 4** Feb 9-Feb 15

## **Making sense of identity: Transformative Justice and Joy**

Reading:

Silver, L.J. (2019). "Transformative Childhood Studies: A Remix in Inquiry, Justice, and Love." *Children's Geographies*

Monday, Feb 15: Visitor TBD

## **DUE Feb 15: Ecological (Auto)Biography**

### **Module 5** Feb 16-Feb 22

#### **Youth Identities in Camden**

Reading:

Danley, S., & Weaver, R. 'They're not Building it for Us': Displacement Pressure, Exclusion and Protesting Neighborhood Investment. *Societies* 8(74), 1-16.

Cairns, Kate. 2018. Youth, temporality and territorial stigma: Finding good in Camden, New Jersey. *Antipode* 50(5): 1224-1243.

Darnell, Moore. 2018. *No Ashes in the Fire*. New York: Nation Books. (Chapters 1 and 2).

Monday, Feb 22: Camden Panel: **Stephen Danley** and **Kate Cairns** will visit class to discuss their Camden-based research and activism.

#### **Criminalization**

*How do interlocking oppressions criminalize and confine particular racialized, queer, and urban youth?*

*What would it take to decriminalize these young people?*

### **Module 6** Feb 23-March 1

#### **Criminalization**

Reading:

Rios, Victor. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press. (Chapter 3: "The Labeling Hype")

Morris, Monique. 2016. *Pushed Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls at School* (Chapter 5: Repairing Relationships, Rebuilding Connections)

View documentaries from Rios: The Pushouts and from Morris: Pushed Out.

Monday, March 1: **Presentation 1**: *Punished* (Chapter 3) and **Presentation 2**: *Pushed Out* (Chapter 5)

#### **Queer Identities and Homelessness**

*How do we understand identity exploration through gender and queer identities?*

*How do we understand youth psychical and psychological experiences of home?  
How can we use these understandings to better support the well-being of young people  
across a spectrum of gender identities?*

**Module 7** March 2-March 8

**Homelessness and LGBTQ+ Intersections**

Reading:

Robinson, Brandon A. 2020. *Coming out to the Streets: LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Oakland: University of California Press. (Chapter 2, Chapter 4, Conclusion)

Monday, March 8: **Presentation 3** (Chapter 4)

**Module 8** March 9-March 12 (Friday)

**Identity through Young Adult Literature**

Reading: **Pick ONE**

Acevedo, Elizabeth. 2019. *With the Fire on High*. New York: Harper Teen.  
(Not available at Paul Robeson Library, but digital copies can be requested from your public library.)

Watson, Renee. 2017. *Piecing Me Together*. New York: Bloomsbury.  
(Available at Paul Robeson Library.)

Ibi Zoboi and Salaam, Yusef. 2020. *Punching the Air*. New York: Balzar and Bray  
(Not available at Paul Robeson Library, but can digital copies can be requested from your public library.)

**DUE: March 22, YA Book Discussion**

**Module 9** March 23-March 29

**Disability**

Annamma, Subini Ancy. 2014. Disabling Juvenile Justice: Engaging the Stories of Incarcerated Young Women of Color With Disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education* 2014, Vol. 35(5) 313–324.

Stienstra, Deborah. 2015. Trumping All? Disability and Girlhood Studies. *Girlhood Studies* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 54-70

[https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/longmore-lecture-context-clarity-grounding?fbclid=IwAR3HTm\\_F8dc\\_FOdauaZEFxZP94D1MjjysVPmMzB2i2D3AjceL0fSlbjGt2o](https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/longmore-lecture-context-clarity-grounding?fbclid=IwAR3HTm_F8dc_FOdauaZEFxZP94D1MjjysVPmMzB2i2D3AjceL0fSlbjGt2o)

Monday, March 29: **Presentation 4**: (Annamma article) and **Presentation 5**: (Stienstra article)

**Youth as Global Citizens?**

*How is citizenship experienced and lived through young people?  
How are boundaries, enclosures and transgressions of citizenship lived by young people and their families?*

**Module 10** March 30-April 5  
**Radical Education**

Reading:

Cervantes-Soon, Claudia G. 2017. *Juarez Girls Rising: Transformative Education in Times of Dystopia*. University of Minnesota Press (Chapter 1: Border Paradoxes, Dystopia, and Revolutionary Education, pp 29-52, Chapter 3: Enacting a Pedagogy of Autogestion)

Monday, April 5: **Presentation 6** (Chapter 3)

**Module 11** April 6-April 12  
**Global Citizenship**

Reading:

Abu El-Haj, T. 2007. "I was born here but my home it's not here": Educating for democratic citizenship in an era of transnational migration and global conflict. *Harvard Educational Review* 77 (3): 285-316.

Rodriguez, S. 2017. "People Hide, But I'm Here. I Count." Examining Undocumented Youth Identity Formation in an Urban Community-School, *Educational Studies*, 1 24

Monday, April 12: **Presentation 7** (Rodriguez article)

**Module 12** April 13-April 19  
**Work and Immigration**

Reading:

Estrada, Emir. 2019. *Kids at Work: Latinx Families Selling Food on the Streets of Los Angeles*. New York: New York University Press. (Introduction and Chapter 3)

Monday, April 19: **Presentation 8** (Chapter 3)

**Module 13** April 20-April 26

## Palak's module: TBD

### **Module 14** April 27-May 3

#### **Public Art and Activism**

<http://www.youthcirculations.com/blog/2020/10/2/archiving-transborder-communities-through-murals-and-social-media>

Other sources: TBD

### **Course Objectives:**

- Gain critical tools in analyzing how young people form their identities in urban spaces
- Learn how to explore the multiple conditions—oppressions and privileges--that shape how identity gets defined expressed and resisted.
- Learn skills in respectfully communicating race, gender, sexuality, and other forms of intersectional identities
- Understand the relationship between one's own identity and the identities of others
- Understand the relationship between social identity and individual determination.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- You will develop skills in in small group participation to respectfully share different perspectives, understandings, and to present group projects.
- Written analysis that combines learning across texts, other sources of media, and class online discussions
- An ability to interview, research, and integrate ideas through writing and through developing mini educational lesson.
- An ability to draw critical on one's own personal experiences of identity in relation to theories of intersectionality, critical race theory, and ecological systems theory.
- An ability to respect and appreciate differences in the class and to grow intellectually and personally from the course.

### **POLICIES:**

#### **Email**

I will make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. I do not usually check my Rutgers email after 6 pm or during the weekend. I will use email and Canvas to communicate information related to our class, so please ensure to check your Rutgers email account (and the course Canvas site) regularly for such messages.

#### **Late assignments**

If there are extenuating circumstances please contact me as soon as possible to arrange timely completion of your work.

#### Statement on Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Plagiarism may earn you a failing grade in this course and can be reported to the Dean of Students' Office for additional disciplinary action. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): Copying someone's words *verbatim*, paraphrasing without attribution, borrowing the structure, concepts, or ideas of another's work without attribution, and turning in the same work for multiple classes without permission. If in doubt, ask for guidance for how to properly attribute and cite sources.

Students are strongly encouraged to review the complete Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity: <http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/Academic-Integrity-Policy.php>

#### ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protections for persons with disabilities.

Additional information is available at the Rutgers University website:

<http://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu/disability/index.htm>

**And at** <http://studentaffairs.camden.rutgers.edu/disabled.html>

#### Food and Housing Security

When students face challenges securing food and/or housing, it can be difficult to learn. If you are in this situation, please contact the Dean of Students. If you feel comfortable, please also let me know, and I will do what I can to connect you with appropriate resources. Our campus offers various services and supports for students; know that you are not alone in dealing with these issues.

#### Grading Scale:

A 90-100%

B+ 85-89%

B 80-84%

C+ 75-79%

C 70-74%

D 60-69%

F Below 60%

**Assignment Descriptions: Please see the files under Welcome to Youth Identities with detailed descriptions of each assignment.**