

## 163:101:02 Introduction to Childhood Studies

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:35-10:55am  
ATG-223

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### Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the multidisciplinary field of childhood studies. We will question taken-for-granted assumptions about the child as we explore how understandings, representations, and experiences of childhood vary across historical, cultural, and geographical contexts. Examining the significance of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and language within children's lives, we will consider the diverse experiences of childhood. Core themes include the social construction of childhood, children's agency, and debates surrounding children's rights and work in a global context. Assignments will encourage students to bring a critical perspective to images and narratives of childhood.

### General Education: USW; DIV

### Course Objectives

This course seeks to:

- introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies, including its methods and theoretical frameworks
- encourage students to reflect upon, question, and critique socially constructed beliefs about children and childhood
- explore the diversity of children's experiences within and across historical, cultural and national contexts
- help students to understand how childhood studies research and approaches can inform work relating to children in a variety of professional and academic contexts

### General Education

Please note that this class is approved for the *United States in the World (USW)* Themes and Approaches and for the *Diversity (DIV)* cross-cutting category under the new General Education curriculum. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- understand different ways that childhood is addressed as a social and historical "invention"
- explore how notions of childhood and children's experiences may differ according to historical contexts, social circumstances and social identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class and national/cultural contexts (USW 3)
- explore issues in children rights and child work/labor in ways which transcend national borders and their implications for policy and practice (USW 1)

- analyze and engage with current debates surrounding children's rights, both globally and in the context of US politics and culture (USW 6)
  - demonstrate an awareness of differences, inequities, and the contributions of diverse groups to the constructions of childhood and to the experiences of children in and their contributions to US society (DIV 2)
  - describe how race and gender construct childhood differently within US society, presently and historically (DIV 6)
  - use course concepts to analyze, question, and deconstruct cultural ideas and narratives of childhood
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## Course Readings

All course readings will be available on Canvas. Students are expected to come to class having read the required reading and prepared to discuss its main points. Please bring required readings to each class (in print or digitally).

## Evaluation Components

<u>Type</u>	<u>Date(s) Due</u>	<u>Weight</u>
- Discussion Facilitation	To be assigned	10%
- Weekly Discussion Posts	Fridays at noon	10%
- Image Analysis Paper	Feb 13	10%
- Take-home Tests (2)	Mar 6 and Apr 10	40% (2 x 20%)
- Final paper proposal	Apr 17	5%
- Final paper	May 5	15%
- Attendance & Participation	Throughout the course	10%

### Discussion Facilitation (10%) - Date to be determined

Each student will sign up for one class when they are responsible for fostering discussion on Canvas. (This means that for any given class we may have two or three students signed up for discussion facilitation.) On this day, you are responsible for writing a prompt that is designed to foster discussion among classmates. Your prompt should reflect on the assigned reading for that day and raise questions for discussion. There are many ways you might do this. For example, you might want to draw connections to an example from the media and invite classmates to share additional examples. Alternatively, you could discuss a particular theme in the reading that resonated with your own experience and invite reflections from classmates. Or you could identify a tension or debate within the reading and ask classmates what they think about it. Or you could do something else entirely! The only requirement is that you reflect on the reading in some way and raise questions for discussion.

**Discussion facilitation prompts should be at least 150 words and are due on Canvas BEFORE class begins.**

### Discussion Posts (10%)

Throughout the course, students are required to write weekly discussion posts on Canvas, responding to the prompts written by their classmates. To obtain full points, **you must respond to at least one of these prompts each week.** Since we will have multiple discussion facilitators for each class, you do not need to respond to every single prompt (but you're certainly welcome to!). I would encourage you to prioritize prompts that have fewer responses, to ensure each discussion facilitator gets some

engagement. Discussion posts are not formal writing assignments, but rather an opportunity to share ideas in dialogue with others. Think about them as similar to the kinds of comments you might make during class discussion. The goal is to have ongoing dialogue about course material and its wider relevance. There is no required word count for these posts, but please be sure to respond in full sentences. **Discussion posts are due by noon on Fridays.**

### **Image Analysis Paper (10%)**

Early in the course we will examine the powerful role of images in reflecting and reinforcing ideas about childhood. For this assignment, you will critically analyze an image that you think represents socially constructed beliefs about childhood. Be sure to share the source of the image you have chosen (e.g., is it from a book cover, an advertisement, online news source, movie poster, school brochure, public service announcement, stock photo, etc.?) Your paper will use course readings to analyze how this image conveys dominant beliefs about childhood. Image analysis papers should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font. Further instructions will be provided in class.

You will bring your image to class on Wed February 8th to workshop your ideas with classmates. Image analysis papers are due Mon February 13th.

### **Take-home tests (2 x 20% = 40%)**

Two take-home tests will evaluate students' comprehension of course material. You will have roughly 10 days to develop essay responses to test questions. The tests will require you to demonstrate your understanding of core material covered in the readings and in-class sessions.

### **Final paper: Debunking myths of childhood (15%)**

Throughout the course, we will critically examine common beliefs about children and childhood. For the final project, you will write a paper that draws upon course material to challenge a common myth or assumption about children and/or youth. This myth might be something you've encountered in news media or popular culture, or perhaps in your everyday experiences with family or community. The focus is entirely up to you. The one requirement is for you to identify a common misperception about childhood and discuss how course material challenges this assumption. In order to do so, you will need to construct an argument and support this argument by drawing upon relevant scholarship. At minimum, your paper must discuss at least three course readings. Imagine that your reader is new to the field of childhood studies and unfamiliar with the research you are drawing upon. Final papers should be 3-4 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font) with citations and references in APA format. Further instructions will be provided in class.

### **Final paper proposal (5%)**

A few weeks before the final paper is due, students will submit a brief proposal outlining their initial ideas for the paper. The goal of the proposal is to get you thinking about the paper and to provide an opportunity for feedback. Further instructions will be provided in class.

### **Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Active participation is essential for success in this course and will be recorded throughout the term. Students are expected to come to class on time, having completed the assigned readings and prepared to engage in respectful discussion. Class sessions will often begin by asking students to complete an "entry ticket" – a brief response to a question on the readings. Be prepared to discuss the author's key points and to share your thoughts on the text. **Always bring the assigned reading to class.**

Class periods will often involve group work, as well as full class discussion. During class discussions, please keep in mind that participation is not only about talking, but also about *listening* and making room for other perspectives. Thus, in addition to personal contributions to class dialogue, the participation grade also reflects students' attendance, attention, and respectful participation while

classmates are speaking. Open disengagement from in-class learning (e.g., not attending class, arriving late, texting, or other disrespectful behavior) will *lower* your participation grade.

**Attendance** is a crucial component of course participation and will be recorded throughout the semester. That said, I understand that there are times when students are unable to attend due to illness or other reasons. If you are unable to make it to class, please let me know.

### **Grading**

Grades will be calculated as follows:

90 — 100% = A

86 — 89% = B+

80 — 85% = B

76 — 79% = C+

70 — 75% = C

60 — 69% = D

59% and below = F

### **Due Dates**

Due dates are designed to help you manage your workload and provide opportunities for feedback. If you are unable to submit an assignment by the designated date, please let me know. I understand that life happens and I am ready to be flexible. I simply ask that you communicate with me so that we can work out alternative arrangements.

### **Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity**

Rutgers University-Camden seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community, including in classroom space, and a community in which students respect academic integrity and the integrity of your own and others' work.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy. To review the academic integrity policy, go to <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity> To review the code, go to: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct>

### **Learning Center- Learning Specialists and Tutoring**

I am committed to making course content accessible to all students. The Learning Center provides Learning Specialists who can help you build a learning plan based on your strengths and needs. Tutors, study groups and more services are available you for free. Many services are available in virtual formats and after normal business hours. In addition, if English is not your first language and this causes you concern about the course, the Learning Center can help. You can learn more about these services by calling 856-225-6442, emailing [rclc@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:rclc@camden.rutgers.edu) or [learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website [https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/ You can schedule an appointment with](https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/You-can-schedule-an-appointment-with-Learning-Specialist-to-create-a-plan-of-action-using-the-website) Learning Specialist to create a plan of action using the website.

### **Office of Disability Services (ODS)- Students with Disabilities**

If you are in need of academic support for this course, accommodations can be provided once you share your accommodations indicated in a Letter of Accommodation issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you have already registered with ODS and have your letter of accommodations, please share this with me early in the course. If you have not registered with ODS and you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact ODS

by email ([disability-services@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:disability-services@camden.rutgers.edu)) or phone (856) 225-6954. More information can be found at their website: <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>.

### Preferred Name and Pronouns

If you have a chosen name or preferred name other than what is listed on the roster, please let me know. If you would like to have your name changed officially on the Rutgers University-Camden rosters visit: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/chosen-name-application>. This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If I have not used your preferred gender pronouns, please correct me. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

### Basic Needs Security

When students face challenges securing food, housing, and/or technology, 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.

- **Dean of Students Office**- You can learn more about the free services by calling 856-225-6050, emailing [deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website at <http://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>
- **Rutgers-Camden Food Pantry**- You can learn more about this free service by calling 856-225-6005, emailing [scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu) or visiting the website at <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/ru-camden-raptor-pantry/>

### Wellness Center- Health and Wellbeing Resources

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. You may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success, such as illness, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug issues, feeling down, or loss of motivation. The Wellness Center Medical and Counseling staff can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential medical and mental health services available on campus by calling 856-225-6005, visiting the website at <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/> or visiting the Wellness Center on the 2nd Floor of the Campus Center.

### Childcare

Many students have care responsibilities for a child in their life, whether as a parent, an older sibling, cousin, etc. If your childcare needs ever come into conflict with the course schedule, please don't feel as though you need to miss class. I understand that sometimes plans fall through. If this happens, you are welcome to bring a child to class with you. I simply ask that you bring materials to keep them busy and remain mindful of your classmates. If you have any questions about this, feel free to contact me.

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

### **THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD**

#### **Wed Jan 18 – Introduction to the Course**

*Please read the syllabus before coming to class.*

*After class: Sign up for Discussion Facilitation dates*

#### **Mon Jan 23 – Conceptualizing Childhood**

James, Allison, and Adrian James. 2012. "Age and Maturity," "Child," "Childhood," and "Minority Group Status." In *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies*. Los Angeles: Sage.

#### **Wed Jan 25 – Conceptualizing Childhood Studies**

Ansell, Nicola. 2017. Excerpt from "Globalising models of Childhood and Youth" in *Children, Youth and Development, Second Edition*, pp. 11-27. New York: Routledge.

#### **Mon Jan 30 – Perspectives on Childhood**

Mills, Richard. 2000. Perspectives of childhood. In *Childhood Studies: A Reader in Perspectives of childhood*, edited by Jean Mills and Richard Mills, pp. 7-38. New York: Routledge.

James, Allison, and Adrian James. 2012. "Social Construction." In *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies*. Los Angeles: Sage.

#### **Wed Feb 1 – Historical Representations of Childhood**

Gittins, Diana. 2004. The Historical Construction of Childhood. In *An Introduction to Childhood Studies*, edited by Mary Jane Kehily, pp.25-38. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

*Image Analysis Assignment distributed (due Feb 13)*

#### **Mon Feb 6– Constructing and Contesting Childhood through Play**

Webster, Crystal. 2021. Fugitive play: The Imaginative World of Northern Black Childhood. In *Beyond the Boundaries of Childhood: African American Children in the Antebellum North*, 14-35. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

#### **Wed Feb 8 – Image analysis workshop (Don't forget to bring your image to class!)**

*No assigned readings. Come to class with your image prepared to share initial paper ideas. The goal of this period will be to support each other in strengthening the analysis.*

#### **Mon Feb 13 – Geographies of Childhood**

Simmons, Lakisha. 2015. Excerpts from "Introduction" (pp. 4-14) and "Suppose They Don't Want us Here? Mental Mapping of Jim Crow New Orleans" (pp. 25-29 and 41-55). In *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.

*Image Analysis Paper due*

### **CHILDREN'S WORK**

#### **Wed Feb 15 – Children's Work in Historical Perspective**

Zelizer, Viviana. 1985. From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict over Child Labor. In *Pricing the Priceless Child*, pp. 56-72. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

### **Mon Feb 20 – Children’s Work in Global Perspective**

Jijon, Isabel. 2020. The priceless child talks back: How working children respond to global norms against child labor. *Childhood* 27(1): 63-77.

### **Wed Feb 22 - Children as Translators**

Orellana, Marjorie Faulstich. 2009. “Home Work” and “Public Para-Phrasing.” In *Translating Childhoods: Immigrant Youth, Language, and Culture*, pp. 50-78. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

*Take-home test 1 distributed; due March 6*

### **Mon Feb 27 - Children as Care Workers**

Hunleth, Jean. 2019. Excerpts from “Introduction” (pp. 1-10) and “Ch. 2: Residence and Relationships” (pp. 60- In *Children as Caregivers: The Global Fight Against Tuberculosis and HIV in Zambia*.

## **CHILDHOOD AND INEQUALITY**

### **Wed Mar 1 – Children and Colonization**

Smith, Andrea. 2007. Soul Wound: The Legacy of Native American Schools. *Amnesty International USA*, March 27 2007. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/node/87342>

### **Mon Mar 6 – Racialized Childhoods**

Bernstein, Robin. 2017. Let Black Kids Just Be Kids. *New York Times*, July 26 2017.

Winkler, Erin. 2009. Children are Not Colorblind: How Young Children Learn Race. *Pace* 3(3)

*Take-home Test 1 due*

### **Wed Mar 8 – Class Cancelled – enjoy Spring Break!**

**SPRING BREAK – No classes March 13<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>**

### **Mon Mar 20 – Racialized Childhoods: Immigrant youth and belonging**

Kwon, Hyeyoung. 2022. Inclusion Work: Children of Immigrants Claiming Membership in Everyday Life. *American Journal of Sociology* 6(May): 1818-1859.

### **Wed Mar 22 - Gendered Childhoods**

Earles, Jennifer. 2017. Reading gender: A feminist, queer approach to children’s literature and children’s discursive agency. *Gender and Education* 29(3): 369-388.

### **Mon Mar 27 – Classed Childhoods**

Stockstill, Casey. 2021. The Stuff of Class: How Property Rules in Preschool Reproduce Class Inequality. *Social Problems*. Online first: 20 July 2021. Doi: 10.1093/socpro/spab019

Calarco, Jessica. 2018. Why rich kids are so good at the marshmallow test. *The Atlantic*.

### **Wed Mar 29 – Classed Childhoods: Youth Navigating Marginality**

Ray, Ranita. 2018. Excerpts from “The Mobility Puzzle and Irreconcilable Choices” (pp. 1-18) and “Saved by College” (105-120, 137-139) *The Making of a Teenage Service Class: Poverty and Mobility in an American City*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

*Take-home test 2 distributed; due Apr 10*

## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

### **Mon Apr 3 – Children's Rights**

Wall, John. 2017. Why Children's Rights. In *Children's Rights: Today's Global Challenge*, pp. 1-16. New York: Roman and Littlefield.

### **Wed Apr 5 – Globalized Childhoods**

Montgomery, Heather. 2021. Children, young people and voluntourism. In *Exploring Childhood and Youth*, edited by Victoria Cooper and Naomi Holford. New York: Routledge.

### **Mon Apr 10 – Children as a Marginalized Social Group**

Young-Bruehl, Elizabeth. 2012. Introduction: What's In a Word? In *Childism: Confronting Prejudice Against Children*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

*Take-home test 2 due*

### **Wed Apr 12 – Children and Youth as Political Actors**

Hart, Dan and James Youniss. 2017. Lower the Voting Age and Increase Participation. In *Renewing Democracy in Young America*. Oxford University Press.

### **Mon Apr 17 – Children's rights in the news: Part 1**

Readings TBD

*Assignment: Paper proposal due*

### **Wed Apr 19 – Children's rights in the news: Part 2**

Readings TBD

### **Mon Apr 24 - Researching Children's Experiences**

Hadley, Kathryn Gold. 2007. "Will the Least-Adult Please Stand Up?: Life as 'Older Sister Katy' in a Taiwanese Elementary School." In *Representing Youth: Methodological Issues in Critical Youth Studies*, edited by Amy L. Best, 157-181. New York, NY: New York University Press.

### **Wed Apr 26 – Researching with Youth: Participatory Approaches**

Fox, Madeline and Una Aya Osata. 2017. This is not a Lab Coat: Claiming Knowledge Production as Power. In *Creating Social Change Through Creativity: Anti-Oppressive Arts-Based Research Methodologies*, edited by Moshoula Capous-Desyllas, and Karen Morgaine, 245-264. Springer International Publishing.

### **Mon May 1 – Course wrap up**

*No assigned readings. We will reflect on course themes and spend time in class working on final papers.*

*If you haven't already, please remember to complete Part II of the Childhood Studies survey on Canvas.*

**Final papers are due Friday May 5 on Canvas**