History 600/800: History of Childhood and Youth

Spring 2014
Class meets: Tu/Th 2:10-3:30
Office Hrs: Tu/Th 9:35-10:15 and by appointment

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Childhood is commonly assumed to be “natural” and unchanging. Yet historical studies have shown us that the meaning and experience of childhood and youth are constructed daily, and differently, around the world. How children and adults understand infancy, childhood, adolescence, and even young adulthood has changed significantly across both time and geography. Class, race, gender, religion, sexuality, disability, and even geographic location all shape how children experience life and how the adult world views them.

Exploring a variety of historical analyses and first hand accounts, we will consider questions such as: Did childhood exist in the past, or is it a modern invention? Are childhood and adolescence “disappearing,” as some claim? Is childhood a biological or “natural” and universal stage of human development, or is it the product of society, culture, and history? How different from today was growing up in the past? How do these experiences vary depending on class, race, gender, and other social factors? Can we identify change in some areas and continuities in others, and why? What is the role of the child “expert” – the pediatrician, psychologist, educator, and social worker in shaping our views towards children and in defining “normality” for them? In which ways has the legal status of children changed over time? What are the origins of the children’s rights movement? In considering these questions, we will address themes such as inequality, victimization, discrimination, education, reform, activism, resilience, rights, and difference.

Our examination of childhood throughout history will focus primarily on U.S. history, with comparative material from Europe and Latin America. Primary sources may include memoirs, diaries, laws, and medical, psychological, and social science publications about children. Secondary sources will draw from the growing literature on the history of childhood.

Analytical framework.
To help us make sense of the vast amount of historical material discussed, we will employ a simple analytical framework that consists of the following three ideas:

1) Childhood is a social and cultural construct that has changed over time.
2) There is great diversity in the lived experience of childhood, and these experiences have been shaped by race, gender, geography, religion, ability/disability, as well as time period.
3) Throughout history, children and youth have not been passive or invisible, but rather are agents who actively contribute to their own and the adult worlds.

We will refer frequently to these overarching concepts and discuss how and to what extent specific historical instances illustrate one or more of these concepts. You should also draw on them as you do your class reading.

Learning objectives.
By the end of this course, students will have:
• Demonstrated an understanding of the main questions, themes, and methods in the literature on the history of childhood and youth.
• Engaged questions of race, gender, sexuality, ability, and diversity as they pertain to the course topic.
• Practiced reflective and critical thinking about controversies and philosophical debates about the status of children historically and in the present.
• Developed their ability to discuss historical texts, including primary sources.
• Improved their writing and speaking skills by engaging with historical literature on childhood and youth.

Assignments and class requirements
• Short papers, attendance, participation, and presentations (50% of grade).
• Three papers (50% of grade).

Short ungraded papers: Due for every class unless otherwise noted; they will be evaluated on a +/- basis. You may drop any two short papers over the course of the semester by either not submitting a paper or by indicating to me which one(s) you want dropped. Each paper should be about one page long, and should include at least one question for class discussion. Bring a hard copy to hand in AND post your paper on the designated Discussion Forum in Bb before class. You may read your classmates' responses to get a sense of questions to be raised in class discussion.

Some times there will be a specific question or writing prompt for the short paper. Other times, you are free to focus on and develop in coherent a theme from the reading. If there is more than one reading assigned that week, you must draw a common theme from all of them. Remember that we have all read the assigned reading and therefore have no need for a detailed summary of its contents. Instead, you should focus on an original analysis of the reading that develops a particular point. Do you have any criticism of the book that you might develop? Was there a particularly interesting concept that you would like to explore further?

Paper assignments:

Paper 1 (3-5 pages). Select any scholarly article from the journal *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (available via the UNH library databases) on an aspect the history of childhood and youth and describe the author’s goals; method or approach; sources used; thesis (argument); and contribution to the literature. Also include your own assessment of the article: do you agree with the conclusions drawn? Does the author effectively use sources and argumentation to prove his or her thesis? (You may also use other scholarly journal articles, such as from the *Journal of American History*, etc., as long as the history of childhood is the central topic. Check with me if you have any doubts). Due Feb. 6 in class.

Paper 2 (5 pages). Memoir analysis. You will be assigned either the McBride or the Santiago memoir in class. In your paper, describe how the book reflects a major theme of the course (e.g. inequality, discrimination, activism, etc.). Make sure to refer to at least one of the assigned class readings and to relate it to the analytical framework of the course. You may also want to consider some or all of the following questions: what is the central problem in the author or character’s life? How did adults see children? How is the child’s experience and agency expressed? What does the book reveal about the time period? Make
sure to put the events in the book in historical context. Use vivid examples from the text and cite the novel or memoir at least 5-6 times. Due March 6 in class.

**Final paper** (7 pages). A research-style paper in which you explore a topic of your choice that we have not discussed in detail in class. Trace the history of a concept, practice, or debate in the history of childhood. Or choose another focus, to follow your own interest, *as long as your approach is historical*. Topics will be selected in consultation with the Instructor. Please hand in by 4:30 on Friday, May 2 in my mailbox or under my office door.

**Important class policies**

_This syllabus is a contract. Please read it and make sure you understand everything in it by the end of the first class. If you have any questions, make sure to ask me for clarifications as soon as possible._

**Attendance.** You are permitted two unexcused absences in the semester. Absences beyond that, without a medical note or other documented emergency, will affect your grade.

**Lateness.** If you are late for class more than once, further late arrivals will be counted as absences. Do not attend class unless you can be there on time.

**Classroom behavior and rules of discussion.** Students are required to be prepared for class, to be attentive, and to contribute to thoughtful discussion of the class material. The instructor is responsible for setting the tone and limits of discussion. Please exercise respect and civility at all times. Our goal is an atmosphere of open learning and exploration of ideas. No racist, sexist, homophobic, or other dehumanizing remarks will be made in class. If you have any questions about these policies, see me as soon as possible.

**Please do not carry on private conversations, pass notes, or do text messaging in class.** This is extremely rude and will be called out in class by the instructor. Laptops are generally not permitted unless you have a specific reason and clear it with me first.

**Late paper policy:** Papers due _in class_. No extensions will be granted. One-half grade off for each day late. *All assigned papers must be handed in to receive a final grade for the course.*

**Grading.** Papers in this class will receive a letter grade. A detailed explanation of my grading criteria is available on Blackboard under “course documents.” Short papers will be graded on a pass/fail basis, but are required as part of your participation grade.

**Communication with the Instructor:** Generally the best way to reach me is via e-mail (juliar@unh.edu). I will attempt to check my mail at least once a day, and to return your mail within 24 hours. Occasionally I am unable to check my e-mail due to travel and other work obligations. It is thus best to contact me well ahead of time.

**Academic honesty.** All written work must be original, that is, not copied from other students or from written sources. There are serious consequences for plagiarism and cheating, most often failure of the course. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to the UNH Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities. For questions about how to properly cite written sources, refer to the Chicago Manual of Style or the MLA Guidelines.

_NB: If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disability Services for Students in the Memorial Union Building, Room 118 (862-2607) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs._

**Required Readings:**

Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*.
Brumberg, *The Body Project*.
Beatty et al., *When Science Encounters the Child*. 

Plus, one novel/memoir for paper #2:
- Santiago, *When I was Puerto Rican* (Last names L-Z).

*Plus* a copy of your favorite childhood book (any level, infant to teen).

*Plus* articles, available on Blackboard.

**Topics:**

**Week 1: Introduction to the course; Historical methods and topics in the history of childhood.**

Jan. 21: Goals of the course; syllabus, readings, assignments; getting to know each other.

Jan. 23: Reading:
- Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, ch. 1.

**Week 2: Children’s legal status in the transatlantic colonial world.**


Jan. 30: Reading: Premo, "Children of the Father King."

**Week 3: The Invention of Childhood in the 19th century.**

Feb. 4: Reading: Mintz *Huck’s Raft*, chapters 4-6.
- Kerzer, "The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara."
- Bayliss, “The Shifting Visions of Childhood” (NYT).

Feb. 6: *Paper one due in class. – paper presentations. No short paper this week.*

**Week 4: European and American “Child Savers.”**


**Week 5: The History of Pediatrics and Child Hygiene.**

Feb 18: Reading: Mintz, chs. 9, 10 and Apple in *When Science Encounters the Child*, ch. 10.

Feb 20: Reading: Birn, “Doctors on Record” and
- Schell, “Nationalizing Children” OR Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina*, ch. 5.

**Week 6: Psychoanalysis and Early Developmental Psychology of Childhood.**

Feb. 25: Reading: Masse, “Constructing the Psychoanalytic Child.”
- Freud, “Infantile Sexuality” (primary source).
- Lepore, "Too Much Information."
- *Also*, pick one of the following: Grant in *When Science Encounters the Child*, ch. 11 OR Carter, “Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease.”
Feb. 27: Reading: *When Science Encounters the Child*, chs.1 and 4.  
- Van Der Veer, “Vygotsky in Context”  
- Film: *Babies*.

**Week 7: The World of Children’s Literature and Literacy.**  
March 4: Reading: Zipes, “The Potential of Liberating Fairy Tales for children”  
- Lepore, “The Lion and the Mouse” (New Yorker)  
- Acocella, ”The Lure of the Fairy Tale."  
- Craib, “Twilight of the Books.”  
- *Also, in class, we will discuss children’s literature (bring your favorite to class).*  
March 6: Discussion of memoir papers (McBride and Santiago).  
*March 6, paper two due in class -- paper presentations. No short paper.*

**Week 8: Spring Break** (March 11 and 13).

**Week 9: European and American Education Reform.**  
- Gandini, *The Italian Approach*, chs. 4 and 15  
- Richards, “Introduction to Rudolf Steiner’s Approach.”  

March 20: Reading. pick two of the following chapters from *When Science Encounters the Child*: chs. 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9.  
- *Also, skim the following two articles: “American Educational Reformers”; “The Kindergarten Movement.”*

**Week 10: Testing and Tracking: Who decides what’s normal?**  
March 25: Reading: “Brain Briefings: The Adolescent Brain”  
- Wolman, “The Truth About Autism” (*Wired*)  
- Fish, “Norms and Deviations;” read philosophy of All Kinds of Minds Institute:  
- Film *Shortbus* and [http://www.jonathanmooney.com/](http://www.jonathanmooney.com/)  
March 27: Reading: Grant in *When Science Encounters the Child*, ch. 11.  
- Fass, “The IQ.”  
- *Guest lecture by Prof. Onosko of Education today.*

**Week 11: Adolescence: The invention of the American Teenager.**  
- Bliss and Blum, “Dangerous Driving: Adolescence, Sex, and the Gendered Experience of Public Space in Mexico City.”

**Week 12: “Cycles of Crisis” – Late 20th Century and Millennial Anxieties in the U.S.**  
April 8: Reading: Mintz, chs. 14, 16.  
April 10: Reading: Brumberg, ch. 5-6.
• Film: *West Side Story* OR *Saturday Night Fever*.

*Paper idea and bibliography due in my mailbox by Monday, April 14.*

**Week 13: “Kids are People Too”: Children’s Rights.** *Paper conferences this week (sign up).*

**April 15:** Reading: Pick two of the following articles:
- Marshall, “Children’s Rights and Children’s Actions”
- Selig in *When Science Encounters the Child*, ch. 7
- Markel and Golden, “Successes and Missed Opportunities”
- Fass, “Children and Globalization.”
- *Also*, read the UNICEF “Progress for Children 2008” report (can be accessed at [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children-No.8_EN_081309.pdf)) AND,
- UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959 and 1989) (can be accessed at [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm)).

**April 17:** Reading: Gordon, “The Perils of Innocence”
- Brennan, “Children’s Choices or Children’s Interests?”
- Sack, “At the Legal Limit” (*NYT*).
- *Also* visit the websites of a few children’s rights organizations (Children’s Defense Fund, Save the Children, Free the Children, CARE, UNICEF, etc…).

**Week 14: Current controversies I (parenting) and II (education).*

**April 22:** Reading: Mintz, ch. 17; Louv, *The Last Child in the Woods*, part I; and Warner, *We’ve Got Issues*, excerpts.
- PLUS, read all the news articles in the folder on Bb, and be prepared to discuss one in class.

**April 24:** Reading: Read Louv, *The Last Child in the Woods*, part V.
- PLUS, read all the news articles in the folder on Bb, and be prepared to discuss one in class:
  - Film: *Race to Nowhere* OR *Digital Nation*.

**Week 15: Course review and student presentations.**

**April 29 and May 1:** Final paper presentations and semester review.

*Final reflection paper due before class on May 1. See BB discussion forum for instructions.*

*Final research paper due in my mailbox on the 4th floor of Horton by 4:30 pm on May 2.*