

Childhood in America
Fall, 2017

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The Learning goals for this course are as follows:

Students will become more historically literate by demonstrating in written work, oral presentation, and/or classroom discussions the following:

1. More in depth knowledge of historical facts, themes and ideas over a broad period of time.
2. An ability to evaluate more complex historical evidence.
3. A deeper, more sophisticated understanding of the concept of context and a comprehension of change over time.
4. Recognition that there are different perspectives on the past, whether those be historical, interpretive, or methodological in nature.
5. Writing skills that are coherent and reflective, analytical and grammatically correct.

This course takes as axiomatic two propositions: first, the family has been the most basic form of social organization in the western world during the modern period; second, that children and child rearing have come to play an increasingly central role in American culture, society and politics over the last 150 years. Topics include transformations in ideologies of motherhood; coming of age under the system of racial slavery in the south; the relationship of men and masculinity to boyhood, fatherhood and family life; changing customs in youthful, heterosexual romance; the “divorce revolution” of the twentieth century and its effect on children; the sentimentalization of childhood; the emerging cultural power of teenagers and their place in American society; the sexual revolution of the nineteen sixties; the rise of right wing family politics in the late twentieth century; international adoption; and the commercialization of childhood over the course of the twentieth century.

Requirements include: weekly “reflection papers” on the reading, due dates to be announced regularly in class; a four-five (4-5) page paper on Horatio Alger’s *Ragged Dick*, due --; A six to seven (6-7) page on *Warriors Don’t Cry* by Melba Patillo-Beals, due ----; a midterm and a final exam. The Final Exam will be held on

I will post questions for both papers several weeks before they are due. There will be discussion of the reading assignments on the day they are due. **Discussion is a central part of this class, and will make up a significant portion of your final grade.** Your Discussion grade will consist of your weekly “reflection papers” and contribution to class discussion insofar as possible in a class of this size.

Readings that are preceded with an asterisk (*) are posted on Sakai. Assignments are listed by due date.

Grading:

Midterm:	20%
Papers:	35%
Final:	20%
Discussion:	25%

The Following Books will be available at the Rutgers University (Barnes and Noble) bookstore:

Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick, or Street Life in New York*

Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*

Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of Childhood in America* (text book: optional)

The Colonial Family

Jan. 20 : Introduction

Jan. 22 : *Philippe Aries, "From Immodesty to Innocence"
*“Colonial Legislatures Permit Harsh Punishment for Disobedient Children” (1642, 1646, 1654)

Transformations in Gender and Childhood in the Nineteenth Century

Jan. 27 : *Anne Bradstreet, "Thoughts on Child Rearing"
*John Locke, "The use of Reason in Child Rearing"

Jan. 29 : Miriam Forman-Brunell, "The Politics of Dollhood in Nineteenth-Century America"
*Jane H. Hunter, "Inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family: Diaries and Girlhood in Late-Victorian America"
*“The Reverend Francis Wayland Describes Discipline,” (1831)

Childhood and the Civil War

Feb.3: *E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture"

Feb.5: *Reid Mitchell, "Coming of Age in the Union Army"

Boyhood and the American Dream

Feb.10: Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick, or Street Life in New York*
*Daniel T. Rogers, "Nineteenth Century Boys' Literature"

Feb. 12: NO CLASS: Work on Alger Papers

Romance, Sexual Liberalism and Fashion at the Turn of the Century

Feb. 16: PAPER DUE BY 11:59 PM. UPLOAD TO SAKAI. BRING HARD COPY TO CLASS ON TUESDAY, FEB. 17.

Feb. 17: * August Kohn, "Children in the Mills"
* David Nasaw, "Children at Work in the City" and "The Littlest Hustlers"

Feb. 19: *Kathy Peiss, "Putting on Style"
*Mary Odem, "Single Mothers, Delinquent Daughters, and the Juvenile Court in Early 20th Century Los Angeles"

Youth, Commercialism and the Capitalist Market: The Making of the Priceless Child

Feb. 24: **"The Natural History of the Gang"
**"Adolescent Girls in Samoa and America"

Feb 26: *Zelzner "From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict over Child Labor"
*Susan J. Matt, "Children's Envy and the Emergence of the Modern Consumer Ethic, 1890-1930"
Shirley Temple and the Great Depression: Film Clips (in class)

The Highs, Lows and Dangers of "Mother Love"

March 3: *John B Watson, "Against the Threat of Mother Love"
*Philip Wylie, "Momism"

March 5: Film: *Stella Dallas* (1937)

"Children's Culture" Comes of Age

March 10 : *Stephen Kline, "The Making of Children's Culture"
Review for Midterm

March 12: MIDTERM

Creating the Era of the "Family Mystique"

March 24: * Martha Wolfenstein, "Fun Morality: Analysis of Recent American Child-Training Literature"
*Miriam Forman-Brunell, "Imagined Bobby-Soxer Baby Sitters and the Uses of Girls' Work Culture"

March 27: *Lynn Spiegel, "Seducing The Innocent: Childhood and Television in Postwar America"
*Wertham, "Such Trivia As Comic Books" (1953)
*Rachel Devlin, "Adolescent Authorities: Teenage Girls, Consumerism, and the Transformation of Fatherhood"

Children and the Civil Rights Movement

March 31: Melba Patillo-Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*

April 2: *Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship Since Brown vs. Board of Education* (prologue, ch. 1)
*Hanna Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock" (1957)

The Sixties and Seventies: Youth Revolution

April 6: PAPER DUE, 11:59 P.M.: UPLOAD VIA SAKAI. BRING A HARD COPY TO CLASS ON TUESDAY, APRIL 7.

April 7: **The Moynihan Report* (selections)

April 9: Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Howard F. Stein, "Child Abuse and the Unconscious in American Popular Culture"
**"Vote for Eighteen-Year-Olds: What Justices Said on Both Sides"
**"Now That the Voting Age is Lower"

Divorce and Childlessness in the 1970s

April 14: *Henry A. Giroux, "Stealing Innocence: The Politics of Child Beauty Pageants"
* "Choosing Childlessness"
**"Kidnapping in Contemporary America"
**"Surviving the Breakup: How Children Respond to Divorce"

April 16: Film: *Kramer Vs. Kramer* (1979)

Consumerism and the New Familialism

Apr. 21 : *Joe L. Kincheloe, "The New Childhood: Home Alone as a Way of Life"
*Eve Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Child Up Gay,"
**"The Disappearance of Childhood: The Total Disclosure Medium"

Apr. 23: * "Anorexia Nervosa in the 1980s"
**"Adulthood Later, Dude!"
**"Mother's Little Helper: Ritalin and Attention Deficit Disorder"
* "What Makes Nick Tick: Nickelodeon Is. . . CNN for Children"

Families and Children in the 21st Century

April 28 : *Mary Celeste Kearney, "Riot Grrrl: It's not Just Music, It's Not Just Punk"
*Peggy Orenstein, "What's Wrong with Cinderella?" (2007)

April 30: *Erica Rand, "Older Heads on Younger Bodies"
*A.O. Scott, "The Death of Adulthood in American Culture"
*Maggie Jones, "Why a Generation of Adoptees is Returning to South Korea"