

Anthropology 180A: Anthropology of Childhood

R. Stryker

Course Description: Western depictions and understandings of youth often stereotype children as passive receivers of cultural knowledge. However, children are actually active producers of culture in the modern world -- they act as laborers, teachers and sages, soldiers, and conflict resolvers. In this course, we will focus on the myths and realities of children around the world in light of industrialization, globalization and transnationalism. Students will first become familiar with some sociohistorical and theoretical frameworks to help them think about childhood as an object of ethnographic study. Students then turn to child-centered, ethnographic accounts of childhood across the world, focusing specifically on children's experiences in such communities as adoptive homes in middle-class America, street child slums of industrial Brazil, the child sex work industry of Thailand and children's collectives in pre- and post-Apartheid South Africa, just to name a few. The course ultimately provides students with the tools they need to move beyond mere sentimentalization of children and childhood towards a more sophisticated understanding of children as geopolitical subjects, and toward the varied and multicultural experiences of children and childhood around the world.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance is mandatory/Participation is highly valued. Roll is taken at every class; two absences will be excused during the semester. (20%)
- Kinerculture Assignment (3-5 pages) (20%)
- Constructing Childhood Essay (5-7 pages) (25%)
- Take-Home Exam (8-10 pages) (25%)
- Reflection Paper: Children as Social Agents (10%)

Required Texts:

Jiménez, Francisco. 1997. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Massoni, Kelley. 2010. *Fashioning Teenagers: A Cultural History of Seventeen Magazine*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Tilton, Jennifer. 2010. *Dangerous or Endangered?: Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America*. New York: New York University Press.

Required articles are on Electronic Reserve as well as hard copy at the circulation desk at Olin Library for students.

Class Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, as participation is highly valued for the course. Roll is taken at every class, and two absences over the course of the semester will be excused. All other absences will be considered cause for a lower participation grade for the course (20% of your total grade).

Late Papers/Assignments: Late papers will be accepted. However, for every day (including weekend days) that your paper is late, your paper will be penalized. For example, if your paper is one day late, the highest grade you may receive on the paper is an A-, two days late, a B+, and so on. I will accept late assignments electronically via e-mail, unless this option becomes untenable (i.e., you, your computer or your software proves unreliable).

Mid-Semester Progress Reports/Deficiency Notices: I will provide a brief mid-semester progress report directly to each student immediately after midterms. If your work is unsatisfactory (D or below), I will file a mid-semester deficiency notice with the M Center/Academic Records. A copy of this deficiency notice is sent to the Dean of Students and to your advisor, who will confer with you regarding improvement of your studies.

Incomplete Grades: An incomplete grade ("I") may be given if you do not finish the required assignments for the course by the end of the semester. However, I only give incomplete grades under dire circumstances, such as extreme student illness or a loss in the family. If I do grant you an incomplete grade for the course, you have until the last day of the next semester to turn in any remaining required assignments for the course. If you do not turn in your assignments by then, the "I" will be changed to an "F".

Disability Services: If you have a physical or learning difference, you have the right to request and receive any aids provided by the campus to assist you with course requirements. To find out about what services are available to you, please first see Kennedy Golden, Assistant Dean of Division of Student Life, in the Cowell Building, – or contact her: (510) 430-2132 or kennedyg@mills.edu. Once you have spoken with an office representative and have contracted your accommodations, I am happy to contract whatever aid you may need in the classroom.

Policy on Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is the act of passing someone else's work off as your own. Neither cheating nor plagiarizing will be tolerated in the course. Students shall honestly prepare assignments and take examinations and submit them at the time and in the manner specified by the instructor. The content of all submitted examinations and assignments is assumed to represent the student's own work unless otherwise specified (e.g., group projects). Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic trust. For purposes of the Mills College Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as intentionally or knowingly using someone else's ideas, words, and/or thoughts without properly crediting the source. All work for which a source is not cited is presumed to be that of the writer. If the Academic Integrity Standards described above are violated, the instructor will decide on an appropriate response that may include the assignment of extra work, lowering grades on a particular assignment, failure of the course, and/or the report of the incident to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty for further sanction.

Anthro 180 Course Syllabus

** indicates that the article can be found on Electronic Reserve.
E-reserve Access Password: anth180a-s12 (it is case-sensitive)

All materials should be read by the date indicated on the syllabus.

Thursday, January 19th: Introductions/Syllabus Review

Lecture/Discussion: **What is the Anthropology of Childhood? What is Childhood Studies?**

Reading: No reading due.

Anthropological and Cultural Psychology's Perspectives on Childhood: An Overview

Tuesday, January 24th: A Brief History Cross-Cultural Approaches to the Study of Childhood

Reading due: LeVine, R. A. (2007). "Ethnographic Studies of Childhood: A Historical Overview."**; Montgomery, Heather, "Childhood within Anthropology"**

Thursday, January 26th: Contemporary Cultural Psychology and the Study of Childhood

Reading due: Lancy, David. "Accounting for Variability in Mother-Child Play."**; Katie G. Silva, Maricela Correa-Chávez, and Barbara Rogoff. "Mexican-Heritage Children's Attention and Learning from Interactions Directed to Others"**

"Seen but Not Heard": The Making of Western Childhood

Tuesday, January 31st: The Origins of Western Childhood

Reading: 1 and 2) Aries, Phillipe, "The Ages of Life"** and "The Discovery of Childhood"**; 3) Calvert, Karin, "The Material Culture of Early Childhood: The Upright Child"**

Thursday, February 2nd: The Child as Consumer

Reading: Robbins, Richard, "Capitalism and the Making of the Consumer" [especially, pp. 21-31]**; *Fashioning the Teenager*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Tuesday, February 7th:

Reading: Fashioning the Teenager, Chapter 2-4

Thursday, February 9th:

Reading: Fashioning the Teenager, Chapters 5-6, Epilogue

Tuesday, February 14th:

Reading: Steinberg, Shirley R., “The Bitch Who Has Everything”^{**}; Chin, Elizabeth, “Ethnically Correct Dolls: Toying with the Race Industry”^{**}

Film: Excerpts from the film, *Barbie Nation* and Discussion

Thursday, February 16th: The Child as Object of Affection/Children and Psychology

Reading: Freud, Sigmund, “The Sexual Life of the Child”^{**}; 2) Lasch, Christopher, “Social Pathologists and the Socialization of Reproduction”^{**}; 3) Piaget, Jean, “The Construction of Reality in the Child”^{**}; 4) Stryker, Rachael, “The War at Home: Affective Economics and Transnationally Adoptive Families in the United States”^{**}

Tuesday, February 21st: The Child as Laborer

Reading: 1) Alston, Lester, “Children as Chattel”^{**}; 2) Zelizer, Viviana, “From Useful to Useless: Moral Conflict Over Child Labor”^{**}; 3) Zelizer, Viviana, “From Child Labor to Child Work: Redefining the Economic World of Children”^{**}

Due: Kinderculture Assignment

Thursday, February 23rd: The Child as Vulnerable/Children and the State

Reading: 1) Robbins, Richard, “The Nation-State in the Culture of Capitalism” (pp. 102-117) ; 2) Donzelot, Jacques, “The Preservation of Children”^{**}

Recommended: Donzelot, Jacques, “Government through the Family”^{**}

Tuesday, February 28th: The Child as Delinquent/Children and Media

Reading: 1) Postman, Neil, “The Disappearance of Childhood: The Total Disclosure Medium”**; 2) Kellner, Douglas, “Beavis and Butt-Head: No Future for Postmodern Youth”**; 3) Begley, Sharon, “Why the Young Kill”**

Thursday, March 1st:

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1, Tilton, Jennifer, *Dangerous or Endangered?: Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America*

Guest Lecture: Jennifer Tilton, author of *Dangerous or Endangered?: Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America*

Tuesday, March 6th:

Reading: *Dangerous or Endangered?* Chapters 1-3

Thursday, March 8th:

Reading: *Dangerous or Endangered?* Chapter 4-5, Conclusion

**Rethinking Children as Geopolitical Subjects:
Destabilizing Western Constructions of Childhood**

Tuesday, March 13th: Children, Transnational Business, and Labor around the World

Reading: 1) Robbins, Richard, “The Laborer and the Culture of Capitalism” (pp. 45-58)**. Robbins, Richard, “The Nation State in the Culture of Capitalism” (pp. 117-130)**; 3) Bhagwati, Jagdish, “Anti-Globalization: Why?/ Globalization: Socially, Not Just Economically, Benign**

Recommended Reading: Wallerstein, Immanuel, “Geo-political Cleavages of the Twenty-first Century”**

Thursday, March 15th:

Reading: 1) Bhagwati, Jagdish, “Child Labor: Increased or Reduced?”**; 2) Liebel, Manfred, “The Working Child Has a Will of Its Own “**

Due: Constructing Childhood Paper

Tuesday, March 20th and Thursday, March 22nd: NO CLASS. Enjoy Spring Break!

Tuesday, March 27th: Children, Poverty and Debt

Reading: 1) Hecht, Tobias, “Introduction”**; 2) Hecht, Tobias, “Being in the Street”**

Thursday, March 29th:

Film: Excerpts from the film, *Born into Brothels* and Discussion

Tuesday, April 3rd: Children, Families, Migration and Transnationalism

Reading: Sassen, Saskia, “Global Cities and Survival Circuits”**

Thursday, April 5th:

Reading: 1) Salazar-Parrenas, Rhacel, “The Care Crisis in the Phillipines: Children and Transnational Families in the New Global Economy”**; 2) Bales, Kevin, “Because She Looks Like a Child”**

Tuesday, April 10th:

Reading: Jiménez, Francisco, *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, pp. 1-60

Thursday, April 12th:

Reading: *The Circuit*, pp. 61-134.

Thursday, April 12th: Children, War and Genocide

Reading: 1) Coles, Robert, “Race and Nationalism: South Africa”**

Tuesday, April 17th:

Reading: 1) Reynolds, Pam, “Youth and the Politics of Culture in South Africa”**; 2) Ndebele, Njabulo, “Recovering Childhood: Children in South African Reconstruction”**

Children as Speaking Subjects

Thursday, April 19th:

Reading: Boyden, Jo, “Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on the Globalization of Childhood.”**; Hava R. Gordon and Jessica K. Taft, “Rethinking Youth Political Socialization: Teenage Activists Talk Back”**

Due: Take-Home Exam

Tuesday, April 24th:

No reading due.

Film: Slingshot Hip Hop

Thursday, April 26th:

No reading due.

Discussion of the film, *Slingshot Hip Hop*

Tuesday, May 1st: LAST DAY OF CLASS. Final Review/ In-Class Final/Course Evaluations

Thursday, May 10th: REFLECTION PAPER DUE TO THE PROFESSOR. Please put a hard copy of your paper in the professor’s faculty box in Vera Long.