

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Departments of Educational Policy Studies and History
Fall 2006

EPS/History 478
Comparative History of Childhood and Adolescence
3 Credits

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45
Education 249

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Course Description

Studying children and youth in the past offers a unique and fascinating way to view historical development. For centuries, philosophers, educators, political and religious leaders—as well as ordinary parents—have asked basic questions about the nature of young people and how to raise them. Concerning children, they have asked: “What is a child and what are the best ways to care for it?” “How are children best prepared for adulthood?” “What determines the limits and capacity of children to learn?” “Who should make decisions about the care and rearing of children?” Every society has answered these questions differently. And children and adolescents have often confounded the efforts of adults to answer these questions and implement policies accordingly.

Since the early 1960s, scholars in numerous academic disciplines have tried to understand the nature of childhood and youth in the past. They have drawn upon many kinds of historical sources: art, literature, religious tracts, memoirs, movies, and so on. The same is true of this course. Most of the class will focus on childhood and adolescence in Western European and then American history, starting with the medieval period and ending in the recent past.

The core of the class will be lectures, plus the occasional use of slides, films, music, and dramatic readings. I will also try to encourage classroom discussion, especially of the assigned readings. So it is important for you to keep up with the reading to maximize informed participation.

Student Responsibilities

Class attendance is expected. It is the basis for class participation, the quality of which will help contribute to 10% of your grade. Missing more than a few classes will lower your class participation grade, which will also be determined by 5 one page, double spaced writing assignments, due over the course of the semester. You will have a week to complete each assignment, which will address our required readings.

There will be three exams: two closed book (and in class) and a take-home final. Each exam is worth 30% of your final grade in the course. Each of the first two exams will consist of one essay question and some short answer and identification questions. There are no alternative dates for these exams, and more details will be made available in class. The take-home final will be comprised of two essays: your response will be limited to 3 double spaced type-written pages each. The final exam questions will be distributed in class during the last week of the semester.

To recap:

Exam No. 1	30%	(October 12)
Exam No. 2	30%	(November 21)
(Final) Exam No. 3	30%	Due December 21. See end of syllabus.
Class participation	10%	

Grading Scale: A (93-100); A/B (88-92); B (83-87); B/C (78-82); C (70-77); D (60-69); F (below 60).

If you are ill or otherwise have a legitimate reason to miss a scheduled examination, it is your responsibility to contact me before the test. Missing an exam without prior permission will lead to an automatic F.

If you are experiencing any difficulty with the course, or with your schooling generally, please come to see me.

Required Books

The following paperbacks should be available at the UW Bookstore and the Underground Textbook Exchange, as well as more cheaply at used bookstores, including via the Internet.

1. Hugh Cunningham, Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500
2. Steven Ozment, When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe
3. J.J. Rousseau, Emile [electronic copy, via My UW; this is an abridged edition]
4. William Blake, Songs of Innocence and of Experience
5. Elliott West, Growing Up With the Country
6. David Nasaw, Children of the City
7. Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

Course Outline and Assignments:

Assigned reading: for October 17 discussion, read Blake's *Songs of Innocence*; also, Cunningham, chapter 5.

Week #8
October 24 & 26 Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*
Childbirth and Midwives

Assigned reading: for October 24 discussion, read Blake's *Songs of Experience*; and West, chapters 1-3.

Week #9
October 31 & Nov. 2 Midwifery in Early American History
Orphans

Assigned reading: West, chapters 4-5.

Week #10
November 7 & 9 The "Orphan Trains"
In the White Man's Image

Assigned reading: West, complete.

Week #11
November 14 & 16 Growing up with the Country
Review

Assigned reading: Review West.

Week #12
November 21 & Turkey's Lament ****Exam No. 2, November 21****

Assigned reading: None, but exam on 11/21.

Week #13
November 28 & 30 Growing Up in the City

Assigned reading: Nasaw, complete.

Week #14
December 5 & 7 Age Consciousness and the Rise of the Adolescent
The Modern High School

Assigned Reading: Cunningham, chapters 6-8.

Week #15 Growing Up in Modern America
December 12 & 14

Assigned Reading: Lee, complete.

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: DUE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, BY 4:00, Please place hard copy in my mailbox, EPS department, Education 221. Email responses not accepted.