

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Departments of Educational Policy Studies and History
Spring 2011

EPS/History 478
Comparative History of Childhood and Adolescence
3 Credits
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45
6112 Social Science

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Tuesdays, 11:00-1:00 and by appointment.

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, supplemented with visual images, 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.

At the beginning of each class, please store all computers and electronic devices, which should not be used for note-taking or other uses. This will facilitate concentration on lectures as well as classroom discussions. Please remember to turn off cell phones. Arriving at class on time also ensures minimal disruptions and distractions. If a disability requires the use of any electronic or other device, please contact me.

Student Responsibilities

Class attendance is expected. The quality of your class participation will help determine 10% of your final grade. Missing more than a class or two will lower your class participation grade.

Part of your class participation grade will also depend upon the quality of your writing assignments. About every other week, a 1 page, double-spaced essay is due. The essay will address a question on our assigned readings. You will have a week to complete each assignment. First drafts of an essay are rarely excellent. So edit and revise your first draft as necessary to maximize its clarity and effectiveness. Papers are due at the beginning of class and neither late papers nor email attachments will be accepted.

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 and will cover material from across the semester: 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:

Class Participation 10%

Exam No. 1 30% (February 24)

Exam No. 2 30% (April 21)

(Final) Exam No. 3 30% Due by Tuesday, May 10 by 4:00 p.m.

(Place final exam essays in my mailbox, main EPS office, Education Building 235. Hard copies only, neither Emails nor attachments accepted.)

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

Assigned reading: West, complete.

Week #12 Growing Up with the Country
April 5 & 7

Assigned reading: Nasaw, preface and chapters 1-7

Week #13 Growing Up in the City
April 12 & 14 Discussion, Nasaw

Assigned reading: Nasaw, complete.

Week #14 Growing Up in the City
April 19 & 21 ****Exam No. 2, April 21****

Week #15 Age Consciousness and the Rise of the Adolescent
April 26 & 28 The Modern High School

Assigned Reading: Cunningham, chapters 5-8.

Week #16 Growing Up in Modern America
May 3 & 5

Assigned Reading: Wright, complete.

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: The exam will be distributed in the last week of the semester. Please place your final exam in my mailbox, EPS department, Ed235, Tuesday, May 10, by 4:00 p.m. When you enter the main office, mailboxes are in the room to the immediate left. Neither late exams nor email responses will be accepted.