The course will be a critical examination of how “childhood” and “adolescence” have been defined in the U.S. We will consider how modern and historical conceptions of childhood and adolescence have evolved and how these definitions have been shaped by societal forces and institutions such as the economy, religion, and politics. We will also look at the lives of children themselves and how individuals experience being children, kids, teens, etc. in a particular time and place.

As a class, we will also be very critical of cultural and media portrayals of children and teenagers and ask how these representations have reflected and shaped how society views youth. We will also look at how childhood itself has been viewed as a social problem throughout history and how this has shaped contemporary issues regarding children. Children and adolescents and their behavior have often been considered to be the root of many social concerns (such as teen pregnancy, gangs, and bullying). But also many social problems arise because of society’s feeling that children and young people need to be protected (such as calls to end child labor and the “missing child” awareness movement).

The final topic for the course will be how adolescents make the transition to adulthood socially, emotionally, and economically, and how this transition has changed over time – particularly over the last several decades.

Grading and Course Policies

Student Evaluation
Grades will be based on 4 components:

1) Class Participation – 20%
**Students are expected to do the assigned readings prior to class. Students are encouraged and expected to bring their insights, questions, and opinions to class. Students are also expected to participate in online discussions on the course’s Blackboard site, group exercises during class, and any discussion assignment given throughout the quarter not listed on the syllabus.

2) In-Class Midterm – 25% (Wednesday, February 6th)

3) Analytical Essay – 25% (due in class on March 11th)
**Details to be discussed later in the quarter.

4) Take-Home Final – 30% (due Monday, March 18th at noon)

NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED and NO MAKEUP MIDTERMS WILL BE GIVEN. All papers must be turned in during class time (the take-home final exam will be submitted to my mailbox). I will not accept electronically submitted papers, however, students should retain an electronic copy in case they are asked to submit one later.
Course Materials – Available at Norris Book Center

Required Books:
Palladino, Teenagers: An American History
Mintz, Huck’s Raft
Gaines, Teenage Wasteland
Arnett, Emerging Adulthood
Rodriguez, The Pregnancy Project: A Memoir (Please note: Only Rodriguez's book will be on reserve at the library. No other books will be on reserve. Rodriguez's book will be available at Norris Book Center later in the quarter and there are many used copies available online).

**Several articles/book excerpts are listed on the syllabus. Those articles/excerpts will be available on the Blackboard site through e-reserve at the library.**

(Additional materials may be required as well and added throughout the semester. Any additional materials will be available electronically through the course website.)

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was missed. Please take note of two other students’ email addresses. My lecture notes are not available for students.

Academic Integrity

Issues regarding academic integrity will be immediately referred to the Dean’s Office. For further information regarding the academic integrity policy at Northwestern, please consult the Student Handbook and/or http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/uniprin.html.

Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (847-467-5530) and the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of class.) All discussions will remain confidential.

Laptop Policy

Laptops (along with other forms of technology including cell phones, iPods, etc.) are not to be used during lecture. This includes NO TEXTING.

**This syllabus is as of January 7, 2013. If there are any modifications to the assignments, course policies, or criteria for evaluation, any updates will be posted on the course’s blackboard site. Students are responsible for any changes and additions to the syllabus and course assignments.**
I. Introduction to the Sociology of Youth

Week 1

Monday – January 7
Introduction to the Course

Wednesday – January 9

Week 2

II. Historical Variations in Childhood

Monday – January 14
Mintz, *Huck’s Raft* - Chapters 1, 2, 5

Wednesday – January 16
Mintz, *Huck’s Raft* - Chapters 4, 8, 10 (Chapter 9 Optional)

Week 3

III. Rise of the “Teenager”

Monday – January 21
No class

Wednesday – January 23
Palladino, *Teenagers* – Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, and (read pages 81-82 and 92-93 only of Chapter 6)

Week 4

Monday – January 28
Palladino, *Teenagers* – Chapters 7, 8, 11, 12

IV. A Study of Youth Culture

Wednesday – January 30
Gaines, *Teenage Wasteland* – Page 1 - 114

Week 5

Monday – February 4
Gaines, *Teenage Wasteland* – Pages 143 – 262
(Skip Chapters “This is Religion I” and “This is Religion II”)

Wednesday – February 6
IN-CLASS MIDTERM

V. The “Problems” of Youth

Week 6 – Media and Youth

Monday – February 11
In class documentary: *Killing Us Softly*
Additional reading TBA on ‘tweens and the media

Wednesday – February 13
“Sternheimer, “It’s Not the Media: The Truth About Pop Culture’s Influence On Children”
Mintz, Chapter 16, “Parental Panics and the Reshaping of Childhood”
Week 7 – Teenage Pregnancy

Monday – February 18
Rodriguez, *The Pregnancy Project: A Memoir* - Chapters TBA

**Wednesday – February 20**
Rodriguez, *The Pregnancy Project: A Memoir* - Chapters TBA

Week 8 – Teens and Deviant Behavior

**Monday – February 25**
Documentary to be announced.
Special assignment: Class debate/group exercise! Details will be distributed during class for discussion on February 27th.

**Wednesday – February 27**
Special assignment: Some additional discussion materials will be posted online.

VI. Transition to Adulthood

Week 9

**Monday – March 4**
Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood* – Chapters 1,3,6 and one biography from Chapter 2

**Wednesday – March 6**
Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood* – Chapters 8 and 10
Take-Home Final Exam Distributed!

Week 10

**Monday – March 11**

Analytical Essay due during class! (No emailed essays will be accepted! You may also turn your essay into my mailbox prior to class time).

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMS DUE: MONDAY, March 18th at NOON!
No Emailed Exams Will Be Accepted. Exams Must Be Turned into My Mailbox.