

**Winter 2010**  
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00PM - 3:20PM  
555 Clark, Room 00B01  
**Sociology 327: Youth and Society**  
**Dr. Karrie Ann Snyder**

**Contact information:**

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**Office hours:** **Thursdays:** 11:15 to 12:30pm and **Wednesdays:** By Appointment Only

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. Children and adolescents and their behavior have often been considered to be the root of many social concerns (such as teen pregnancy, suicide, 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 – 30% (February 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

**3) Essay – 20% (March 8<sup>th</sup>)**

\*\*Details to be discussed later in the quarter.

**4) Take-Home Final – 30% (March 16<sup>th</sup>)**

**NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED. 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*

Simmons, *Odd Girl Out*

Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood*

Several journal articles are listed on the syllabus. Those articles will be available on the Blackboard site as noted by \*\*.

(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.***

## **I. Introduction to the Sociology of Youth**

### **Week 1**

#### ***Monday – Jan 4***

Introduction to the Course

#### ***Wednesday – Jan 6***

\*\* *Sociology Compass* 1/1 (2007): 322–334.

## **II. Historical Variations in Childhood**

### **Week 2**

#### ***Monday – Jan 11***

Mintz, *Huck's Raft* - Chapters 1, 2, 5

#### ***Wednesday – Jan 13***

Mintz, *Huck's Raft* - Chapters 4, 8, 10 (Chapter 9 Optional)

### III. Rise of the Teenager

#### Week 3

**Monday – Jan 18**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No class

**Wednesday – Jan 20**

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

#### Week 4

**Monday – Jan 25**

Palladino, *Teenagers* – Chapters 7, 8, 11, 12

### IV. A Study of Youth Culture

**Wednesday – Jan 27**

Gaines, *Teenage Wasteland* – Page 1 - 114

#### Week 5

**Monday – Feb 1**

Gaines, *Teenage Wasteland* – Pages 143 – 262

(Skip Chapters “This is Religion I” and “This is Religion II”)

**Wednesday – Feb 3**

**IN-CLASS MIDTERM**

### V. The “Problems” of Youth

#### Week 6 – Media and Youth: Victim or Villain?

**Monday – Feb 8**

Documentary: *Killing Us Softly*

Parker-Pope, “The Myth of Rampant Teenage Promiscuity”

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/27/health/27well.html>)

\*\*Wilson and Huntington, “Deviant (M)others: The Construction of Teenage Motherhood in Contemporary Discourse,” *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 59-76, Jan 2006.

**Wednesday – Feb 10**

Sternheimer, “It’s Not the Media: The Truth About Pop Culture’s Influence On Children” (handout)

Mintz, Chapter 16, “Parental Panics and the Reshaping of Childhood”

#### Week 7 - Youth Delinquents: Should They Be Treated Like Kids or Adults?

**Monday – Feb 15**

Documentary, TBA

**Wednesday – Feb 17**

\*\*Excerpts/articles from the *New York Times* – Readings and links will be available on the course blackboard site.

## **Week 8 – Bullies and Mean Girls**

### **Monday – Feb 22**

Simmons, *Odd Girl Out* – Introduction & Chapters 1, 2, 3

### **Wednesday – Feb 24**

Simmons, *Odd Girl Out* – Chapters 5, 7, 9 and Conclusion

## **VI. Transition to Adulthood**

### **Week 9**

#### **Monday – Mar 1**

Movie Essay Day!!!!

#### **Wednesday – Mar 3**

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

### **Week 10**

#### **Monday – Mar 8**

Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood* – Chapters 8 and 10

**Final Essays Due!**