

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Departments of Educational Policy Studies and History  
Fall 2007

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

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

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Tuesdays, 11-12:30 & Thursdays, 11-12 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.

### 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:

	Exam No. 1	30%	(October 18 )
	Exam No. 2	30%	(November 29)
(Final)	Exam No. 3	30%	Due by Thursday, December 20, 11 a.m.
(Place in my mailbox, main EPS office, Room 221. Hard copies only, no Emails.)			
	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





*Assigned reading:* West, complete.

Week #11                      Growing Up with the Country  
November 13 & 15

*Assigned reading:* Nasaw, chapters 1-7

Week #12                      Growing Up in the City  
November 20                      Discussion, Nasaw  
Thanksgiving

*Assigned reading:* Nasaw, complete.

Week #13                      Growing Up in the City  
November 27 & 29                      **\*\*Exam No. 2, November 29\*\***

Week #14                      Age Consciousness and the Rise of the Adolescent  
December 4 & 6                      The Modern High School

*Assigned Reading:* Cunningham, chapters 5-8.

Week #15                      Growing Up in Modern America  
December 11 & 13

*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, Ed221, Thursday, December 20, by 11 a.m. Neither late exams nor email responses will be accepted.***