

CHILD/YOUTH RIGHTS AND SECURITY IN GLOBAL POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Winter 2020

Instructor: Marshall Beier
Email: mbeier@mcmaster.ca
Class: Tuesdays, 8:30-11:20
Room: KTH 105

Office: KTH-508
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-4:00

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Course Description

Taking its cues from a broadening of International Relations over the last two decades that has occasioned the inclusion of more and different kinds of actors and agency than allowed for so long as the field's central preoccupation was with states alone, this course asks what comes to light when we look for young people in dominant stories about security, development, and more. Children and youth are not easily found in these stories – at least not conspicuously so – and even self-consciously 'critical' approaches in International Relations have only begun to ask why. That does not mean, however, that stories about security, development, and so forth are not about children and youth in important ways. Indeed, a critical interest in the politics of subjecthood is revealing of ways in which young people, though not present in our field's dominant stories, are actually indispensable to those same stories. In spite of this, however, the particulars of how they are relied upon conceptually also insist on their objectification, with the result that they do not appear as acting subjects.

Our aim in this course will be to inquire into myriad and everyday ways that global power and politics construct, rely upon, constrain, regulate, diminish, and deny the possibilities and prospects for young people's political subjecthood. As we will see, disciplinary International Relations encodes a politics that, in the case of childhood, not only writes some actors out of its stories but, in so doing, also works to enable and sustain ideas necessary to the maintenance of important circuits of status quo power and privilege.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should:

- Have a deeper understanding of how children are constructed and positioned in international relations and of the effects this has on political possibilities for children and others.
- Recognize and evaluate key concepts from contemporary social theory and how they both play a part in and help us to make sense of international relations.
- Have built on and refined research and writing skills through argumentative essays.
- Have developed skills in leading and participating in group discussions.

Required Materials and Texts

- All required readings are available online via e-Journals from the Library website.

Class Format

The course will operate on a weekly seminar format based on regular and consistent participation by all students.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Seminar Participation – 25%
2. In-class Presentation – 10%, date to be assigned
3. Think Piece – 25%, due in class January 28, 2020
4. Essay – 40%, due in class March 31, 2020

Course Evaluation – Details

Seminar Participation (25%)

Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions. Attending class having read and thought about the assigned readings for the week will be essential to effective participation. Questions can also be a stimulus to discussion and will be counted as participation.

In-class Presentation (10%), date to be assigned

Students will each give a short presentation (12-15 minutes in length) during the term. Each presentation will cover one reading assigned for the week in which it is given. Presentations should (very) briefly outline the main thrust or argument of the reading, but the main focus should be on the student's assessments of them. Students should end their presentations by proposing 2 or 3 questions or points for class discussion.

Think Piece (25%), due in class January 28, 2020

Students will write a short essay of approximately 1000 words arising from the material covered in readings for the week of January 14th. This assignment is to be a 'think piece' in which students will make the case for a particular understanding of childhood over others suggested by the readings and in class discussion.

Essay (40%), due in class March 31, 2020

Students will prepare an analytic essay of 10-12 pages length. Topics will deal with issues raised in the course and will be developed by students in consultation with the instructor.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 7)

Introduction to the Course

Readings: None

Week 2 (January 14)

Definition by Deficit: Constructing Childhood

Readings:

- Alison M.S. Watson, "Children and International Relations: A New Site of Knowledge?" *Review of International Studies* 32:2 (2006).
- J. Marshall Beier, "Children, Childhoods, and Security Studies: An Introduction," *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).
- Barbro Johansson, "Doing Adulthood in Childhood Research," *Childhood* 19:1 (2011).
- Victoria M. Basham, "Telling Geopolitical Tales: Temporality, Rationality, and the 'Childish' in the Ongoing War for the Falklands-Malvinas Islands," *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).

Week 3 (January 21)

Dangerous Childhood: Regulating Youth, Constraining Young People

Readings:

- Henrik Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," *International Studies Quarterly* 50:3 (2006).
- Hannes Weber, "Demography and Democracy: The Impact of Youth Cohort Size on Democratic Stability in the World," *Democratization* 20:2 (2013).
- Nicole Nguyen, "Scripting 'Safe' Schools: Mapping Urban Education and Zero Tolerance During the Long War," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 35:4 (2013).
- Victoria M. Basham, "Raising an Army: The Geopolitics of Militarizing the Lives of Working-Class Boys in an Age of Austerity," *International Political Sociology* 10:3 (2016).

Week 4 (January 28)

Endangered Childhood: Emotional Scenery and the Projects of Others

Readings:

- Erica Burman, "Innocents Abroad: Western Fantasies of Childhood and the Iconography of Emergencies," *Disasters* 18:3 (1994).
- Helen Brocklehurst, "The State of Play: Securities of Childhood – Insecurities of Children," *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).

• Lorraine MacMillan, "Children, Civilianhood, and Humanitarian Securitization," *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).

• J. Marshall Beier, "Ultimate Tests: Children, Rights, and the Politics of Protection," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 10:1-2 (2018).

Note: Think Piece due in class.

Week 5 (February 4)

Engendered Childhood: Intersecting Politics of Protection

Readings:

• Charli Carpenter, "'Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups': Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians as Transnational Issue," *International Studies Quarterly* 49:2 (2005).

• Tatek Abebe and Sharon Bessell, "Dominant Discourses, Debates and Silences on Child Labour in Africa and Asia," *Third World Quarterly* 32:4 (2011).

• Loubna Hanna Skalli, "The Girl Factor and the (In)Security of Coloniality: A View from the Middle East," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 40:2 (2015).

• Helen Berents, "Hashtagging Girlhood: #IAmMalala, #BringOurGirlsBack and Gendering Representations of Global Politics," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18:4 (2016).

Week 6 (February 11)

Dictating Childhood: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Readings:

• John Eekelaar, "The Emergence of Children's Rights," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 6:2 (1986).

• Thomas Hammarberg, "The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – And How to Make It Work," *Human Rights Quarterly* 12:1 (1990).

• Susan Shepler, "The Rites of the Child: Global Discourses of Youth and Reintegrating Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone," *Journal of Human Rights* 4:2 (2005).

• Esther Erlings, "Is Anything Left of Children's Rights? How Parental Responsibility Erodes Children's Rights Under English Law," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 24:3 (2016).

Week 7 (February 18)

No class – Reading Week

Week 8 (February 25)

Authorized Voices: Implementing and Impeding Article 12 of the UNCRC

Readings:

- Rachel Hinton, “Children’s Participation and Good Governance: Limitations of the Theoretical Literature,” *International Journal of Children’s Rights* 16:3 (2008).
- Laura Lundy, “‘Voice’ is Not Enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,” *British Educational Research Journal* 33:6 (2007).
- Allison James, “Giving Voice to Children’s Voices: Practices and Problems, Pitfalls and Potentials,” *American Anthropologist* 109:2 (2007).
- Lothar Krappmann, “The Weight of the Child’s View (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child),” *International Journal of Children’s Rights* 18:4 (2010).

Week 9 (March 3)

Recovering Agency: Young People and Political Subjecthood

Readings:

- John O’Neill, “Is the Child a Political Subject?” *Childhood* 4:2 (1997).
- Emma Uprichard, “Children as ‘Being and Becomings’: Children, Childhood and Temporality,” *Children & Society* 22:4 (2008).
- Priscilla Alderson, “Research by Children,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 4:2 (2001).
- Dianne Scullion, “Passive Victims or Empowered Actors: Accommodating the Needs of Child Domestic Workers,” *International Journal of Children’s Rights* 21:1 (2013).

Week 10 (March 10)

Pathways to Participation: Electoral Politics and Beyond

Readings:

- Jeremy Roche, “Children: Rights, Participation and Citizenship,” *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research* 6:4 (1999).

- John Wall and Anandini Dar, "Children's Political Representation: The Right to Make a Difference," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 19:4 (2011).
- John Wall, "Why Children and Youth Should Have the Right to Vote: An Argument for Proxy-Claim Suffrage," *Children, Youth and Environments* 24:1 (2014).
- Kate Bacon and Sam Frankel, "Rethinking Children's Citizenship: Negotiating Structure, Shaping Meanings," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 22:1 (2014).

Week 11 (March 17)

Complicated Subjects: Child Soldiers

Readings:

- Mary-Jane Fox, "Girl Soldiers: Human Security and Gendered Insecurity," *Security Dialogue* 35:4 (2004).
- Lorraine Macmillan, "The Child Soldier in North-South Relations," *International Political Sociology* 3:1 (2009).
- Katrina Lee-Koo, "Horror and Hope: (Re)presenting Militarized Children in Global North-South Relations," *Third World Quarterly* 32:4 (2011).
- Catarina Martins, "The Dangers of the Single Story: Child-Soldiers in Literary Fiction and Film," *Childhood* 18:4 (2011).

Week 12 (March 24)

No Class – Independent Essay Writing

Week 13 (March 31)

Mundane Militarizations of Childhood: Beyond the Global South

Readings:

- Marc G. Doucet, "Child's Play: The Political Imaginary of International Relations and Contemporary Popular Children's Films," *Global Society* 19:3 (2005).
- Henry A. Giroux, "The Militarization of US Higher Education after 9/11," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25:5 (2008).
- Gina M. Pérez, "How a Scholarship Girl Becomes a Soldier: The Militarization of Latina/o Youth in Chicago Public Schools," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 13:1 (2006).

- Wendy M. Christensen, “Recruiting Through Mothers: You Made Them Strong, We’ll Make Them Army Strong,” *Critical Military Studies* 2:3 (2016).

Week 14 (April 7)

Rethinking Risk and Resilience

Readings:

- Claudia Seymour, “Ambiguous Agencies: Coping and Survival in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo,” *Children’s Geographies* 10:4 (2010).
- Chris Gilligan, “‘Highly Vulnerable’? Political Violence and the Social Construction of Traumatized Children,” *Journal of Peace Research* 46:1 (2009).
- Allison M.S. Watson, “Resilience is its Own Resistance: The Place of Children in Post-Conflict Settlement,” *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).
- J. Marshall Beier, “Shifting the Burden: Childhoods, Resilience, Subjecthood,” *Critical Studies on Security* 3:3 (2015).

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Written work must be submitted in hard copy in class and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

When marking your written work throughout the term, I will consider the following criteria. Please be sure to read them carefully:

Analytical Content: Higher grades will be given to work that demonstrates comprehension of the readings and issues raised in class, and that presents an interpretation and critical analysis of that material. Lower grades will be given to work that simply summarizes or describes the readings and course content. To determine whether you are on the right track, ask yourself, “Am I telling the reader what I think about the concepts and ideas in my paper and why they are important to my argument, or am I simply telling the reader what those concepts are?” The key here is engagement with the literature, as opposed to repetition of the literature.

Development of an Argument: Higher grades will be given to work that has a clearly stated thesis and a set of logically developed and reasonably comprehensive arguments in support of that thesis. Lower grades will be given to work that has no thesis or has a thesis that is not logically developed or supported by the body of the paper. Ask yourself, “Does my paper seek to prove a point?” The key here is to attempt to convince your reader of the soundness of your argument (i.e., that you are ‘right’). Imagine that you are telling someone about your brilliant idea for world peace – have you anticipated and accounted for their questions and counter-arguments in your paper? NOTE: a paper that has a clear thesis is almost unavoidably analytical, while the

failure to pay attention to your thesis and arguments will make the ‘analytical content’ requirement difficult to meet.

Grammar, Spelling, and Style: Higher grades will be given to written work that is grammatically correct and is clearly and accurately written, while lower grades will be given to work that is difficult to read or understand due to excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors. Different approaches work for different people, but I would recommend that you try the following every time you have a written assignment: after completing your assignment, put it away for a while (ideally, for a few days); when you pick it up again, read it carefully, slowly, and aloud – when we are familiar with a paper we tend to skim it during proof-reading, thereby missing errors, so make sure you are reading it word for word. Mistakes in grammar may not always look wrong, but they usually sound wrong. If you need some help with writing, you are encouraged to contact the Student Success Centre (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/>) for assistance.

Meeting the Requirements of the Assignment: All written work must be submitted on time, must be of the appropriate length, must use the required number and type of resources, and, most importantly, must address the issues or questions posed in the assignment.

Mechanics and Aesthetics: Higher grades will be given to written work that includes all of the basic requirements of any written assignment. This includes a title page, complete and proper referencing in a major recognized format, and numbered pages. Further, all of the conventions of essay writing should be observed (i.e. double-spacing, use of a standard sized font, uniform one-inch margins, single spacing and indenting of quotes longer than four lines, etc.). Lower grades will be assigned to work that does not include all of these elements, and to work that is sloppy in general. Again, a careful proof-reading will be helpful.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

| MARK | GRADE |
|-------------|--------------|
| 90-100 | A+ |
| 85-90 | A |
| 80-84 | A- |
| 77-79 | B+ |
| 73-76 | B |
| 70-72 | B- |
| 67-69 | C+ |
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |

| MARK | GRADE |
|-------------|--------------|
| 0-49 | F |

Late Assignments

Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a late penalty of 5 per cent per weekday to a maximum of 5 days, after which they will not be accepted and a mark of 0 will be recorded. In the interest of fairness to all students, there will be no exceptions to this unless you have arranged with me in advance for an extension. Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Extensions on assignments can be arranged in the event of illness or similar circumstances. All extensions must be arranged in advance of the day on which a paper is due.

In light of the format of the course and the emphasis on regular and consistent participation in class discussions, attendance is mandatory. Some absences (such as in cases of illness, for example) may be unavoidable. Please contact me in advance (or as soon thereafter as possible) via email if you are going to be absent.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.