

**CHILD/YOUTH RIGHTS AND SECURITY
IN A GLOBAL POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE**
POLSCI 4YR3
Winter 2022 / Term 2

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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 January 31, 2022
4. Essay – 40%, due March 14, 2022

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 January 31, 2022

Students will write a short essay of approximately 1000 words arising from the material covered in readings for the week of January 17th. 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. Papers are to be submitted directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in Word or PDF format by 11:59 pm on the due date; students will receive an email from the instructor within 24 hours confirming receipt of their paper.

Essay (40%), due March 14, 2022

Students will prepare an analytic essay of 10-12 pages length. Drawing from assigned readings, topics will make connections between issues raised in the course and will be developed by students in consultation with the instructor. Papers are to be submitted directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in Word or PDF format by 11:59 pm on the due date; students will receive an email from the instructor within 24 hours confirming receipt of their paper.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 10) Intro

Introduction to the Course

Readings: None

Week 2 (January 17) Definition by Deficit

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 24) Dangerous Childhood

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).
- 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).
- Lesley Pruitt, "Rethinking Youth Bulge Theory in Policy and Scholarship: Incorporating Critical Gender Analysis," *International Affairs* 96:3 (2020).

Week 4 (January 31) Endangered Childhood

Endangered Childhood: Emotional Scenery and the Projects of Others

Readings:

- 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).
- Iuliia Hoban, "Objects and Subjects: Strategic Use of Childhood in the Debate Over the Canadian Contribution to MINUSMA," *Childhood* 27:3 (2020).

Note: Think Piece due.

Week 5 (February 7) Engendered Childhood

Engendered Childhood: Intersecting Politics of Protection

Readings:

- 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).
- Eleanor Gordon and Katrina Lee-Koo, "Addressing the Security Needs of Adolescent Girls in Protracted Crises: Inclusive, Responsive, and Effective?" *Contemporary Security Policy* 42:1 (2021).

Week 6 (February 14) Dictating Childhood

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 21) Mid-term recess, NO CLASS
No class – Reading Week

Week 8 (February 28) Recovering Agency

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).
- Dianne Scullion, “Passive Victims or Empowered Actors: Accommodating the Needs of Child Domestic Workers,” *International Journal of Children’s Rights* 21:1 (2013).
- Jonathan Josefsson and John Wall, “Empowered Inclusion: Theorizing Global Justice for Children and Youth,” *Globalizations* 17:6 (2020).

Week 9 (March 7) Pathways to Participation

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 10 (March 14) Complicated Subjects

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).

Note: Essay due.

Week 11 (March 21) Mundane Militarizations of Childhood

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).
- 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).
- Catriona Pennell, "'Remembrance Isn't Working': First World War Battlefield Tours and the Militarisation of British Youth During the Centenary," *Childhood* 27:3 (2020).

Week 12 (March 28) No class – ISA Conference

No Class – ISA Conference

Week 13 (April 4) Rethinking Risk and Resilience

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 directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in either Word or PDF format, no later than 11:59 pm (Eastern) on the date it is due.

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](#) 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

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

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.

Courses With An On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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 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 behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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 behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a

positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.