

“Youth and Conflict”

SIS-619-018, SIS-419-018

Spring 2011, Tuesdays 8:10 – 10:40 PM, Room SIS 120

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Course Summary:

This course will examine the relationship between youth and conflict. We will explore various definitions of youth as a biological, cultural, and political category. We will discuss youth and children as victims of conflict, as perpetrators of violence, and as builders of peace. Other topics include youth and nationalism, the effect of conflict on educational systems, the special situation of girls affected by conflict, the efforts of international child protection agencies and NGOs to work with children and youth affected by war, children’s testimonies of violence, and the involvement of youth in peacebuilding.

This is an interdisciplinary endeavor. We will move around the world, and back and forth across levels of analysis. Our task is to simultaneously try to understand the experiences of young people caught up in war, map the theoretical and practical literature on youth and conflict, and carry out a multi-disciplinary critique of that literature. Throughout, our task will be to uncover the taken-for granted assumptions about youth and conflict and the subsequent political effects. Several experts will visit the class through the course of the semester.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will:

- Understand the experiences of children and young people caught up in conflict, varying by age, gender, and national context.
- Be familiar with foundational texts *and* cutting edge thinking in the field of youth and conflict
- Be aware of key debates over programming for children affected by conflict
- Be familiar with international child rights instruments
- Be familiar with international child protection organizations
- Develop a critical perspective on child and youth policy

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the following elements:

Classroom Participation: 10%

This includes class attendance, participation in class discussions and activities, in-class written assignments and oral presentations, and evidence that you have completed the readings.

Summary of an International Agreement: 10% (due January 25)

You will choose from a list of international agreements related to youth and give a summary and analysis of the key provisions of the agreement. (A template will be provided).

Reflection on a child soldier narrative: 10% (due February 8)

You will write a brief (3 page) review of a book length narrative (fiction or non-fiction) by or about a former child soldier. Summarize the events of the book and your reaction to them, but more importantly draw out five themes of interest.

Country Report: 20% (due March 15)

Pick a conflict, or conflict-affected country, and write a five-page report on children and youth in that context.

Organization Report: 20% (due April 5)

Pick an agency that works on the issues of children and/or youth affected by conflict (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children, The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Amnesty International) and write a five-page report on their activities and their theoretical framework.

FINAL PROJECT: Term Paper OR Final Exam: 30%

Each student will decide whether to write a term paper or take a final exam as the final project for the course.

For the term paper option, you will write a research paper on a topic of your choice related to course readings and discussions (fifteen pages for undergraduates and twenty pages for graduate students). You must discuss with me your topic choice *at least once at least* a month before the final due date. Term papers are due **April 19**.

For the exam option, the exam will consist of several short essays on the main concepts of the course. Exam is **May 4**.

There will, of course, be further discussion of these assignments as their due dates approach.

Books to purchase:

Boyden, J. and J. de Berry, Eds. (2004). Children and Youth on the Front Line: Ethnography, Armed Conflict and Displacement. Studies in Forced Migration. New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books.

Boothby, Neil, Alison Strang and Michael Wessells. (2006). A World Turned Upside Down: Social Ecological Approaches to Children in War Zones. Kumarian Press.

McEvoy-Levy, Siobhan, Ed. (2006). Troublemakers or Peacemakers? Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building. University of Notre Dame Press.

Other readings will be available on Blackboard. I reserve the right to add or subtract readings as we progress.

Course Outline:

Week 1 (11 January): Introduction

Introduce course themes and participants. Film on war-affected children in Uganda.

Week 2 (18 January): International humanitarian discourse on youth and conflict.

When did we first start hearing about children affected by war? What has the UN done?

Readings:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Machel, G. (1996). *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. New York, United Nations.

Statement to the UN General Assembly by Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 17 October 2007

(<http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/17oct2007stateme.html>)

Kuper, J. (2000). "Children in Armed Conflicts: The law and its uses." *Development* 43(1): 32-39.

"Obama waives sanctions for four countries that use child soldiers" (2010). *Christian Science Monitor*. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2010/1029/Obama-waives-sanctions-for-four-countries-that-use-child-soldiers>

Week 3 (25 January): What is a child? What is a youth?

Critical theory

Readings:

Archard, David. (2004). *Children: Rights and Childhood*. Routledge. Chapter 2 “The Concept of Childhood” and Chapter 3 “the modern conception of childhood”

Selected Chapters from James, A. and A. Prout, Eds. (1997). Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood. London, Washington D.C., Falmer Press. Read: Chapter Two (“Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present” by Harry Hendrick) and Chapter Nine (“Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on the Globalization of Childhood” by Jo Boyden).

Durham, D. (2000). “Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2.” Anthropological Quarterly 73(3): 113-120.

SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT DUE

Week 4 (1 February): Youth and Conflict, Causal Connections?

Youth Bulge, Youth and Unemployment, Youth and education

Readings:

UNDP (2006). Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis? (I’ve put the whole thing on Blackboard, but you only need to read Chapter 2 – “Review of the Literature”)

Urdal, H. (2004). The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000, The World Bank.

Bilal Barakat and Henrik Urdal. (2009). “Breaking the Waves? Does Education Mediate the Relationship Between Youth Bulges and Political Violence?” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5114.

Sommers, Marc. (2007). “Embracing the Margins: Working with Youth amid War and Insecurity.” In *Too Poor For Peace: Global Poverty, Conflict, and Security in the 21st Century*. Brookings Institution Press.

Nesvaderani, Tara. (2010). *Iran’s Youth: The Protests Are Not Over*. USIP PeaceBrief #36.

Week 5 (8 February): Child Soldiers

What are child soldiers? How do they move in to and out of participation in armed conflict? What about children and Reintegration and Reconciliation?

Readings:

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers website. Review everything under the “child soldiers” tab.

The Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Burma, October 2007, Human Rights Watch (the ten page summary)

Rosen, David. (2005). *Armies of the Young*, Chapters 1 and 5

World Turned Upside Down, Chapters 7 (Neil Boothby, “When former child soldiers grow up”) and 8 (Michael Wessells, “A living wage, The importance of livelihood in reintegrating former child soldiers”).
SWAY Research Brief: Making reintegration work for youth in Northern Uganda. (2007). Available online at <http://chrisblattman.com/documents/policy/sway/SWAY.ResearchBrief.Reintegration.pdf>

REFLECTION ON CHILD SOLDIER NARRATIVE DUE

Week 6 (15 February): Youth, Trauma, and Healing.

How do we understand the effects (especially psychological effects) of armed conflict on children and youth? What is being done to address their needs?

Readings:

“The Americanization of Mental Illness.” *New York Times*, January 10, 2010.
Gibbs, S. (1994). “Post-War Social Reconstruction in Mozambique: Re-framing Children’s Experience of Trauma and Healing.” *Disasters* 18(3): 268-276.
Dyregrov, A., L. Gupta, et al. (2002). “Is the Culture Always Right?” *Traumatology* 8(3): 135-145.
Dowdney, Linda. *Trauma, Resilience and Cultural Healing: How do we move forward?* Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2007.
Veale, Angela. 2010. Individual through Community Resilience in Social Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups. In *Psychosocial web page*, edited by L. Dowdney. London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

Optional additional readings:

A World Turned Upside Down, Introduction, Chapter 1 (Kathleen Kostelny, “A culture-based, integrative approach”), and Chapter 2 (Alastair Ager, “What is family? The nature and function of families in times of conflict”).

Week 7 (22 February): A Gender Analysis

Why are girls and young women so frequently left out of discussion of “youth and conflict”? What can we say about their specific experiences?

Readings:

World Turned Upside Down, Chapter 4 (Susan McKay, “The plight of girl soldiers during and after armed conflict”).
Children and Youth on the Front Line, Chapter 3 (“The Sexual Vulnerability of Adolescent Girls during Civil War in Teso, Uganda” by Joanna de Berry), Chapter 4 (“A Neglected Perspective: Adolescent Girls’ Experiences of the Kosovo Conflict of 1999” by Aisling Swaine with Thomas Feeny) and

- Chapter 6 (“Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of FRELIMO’s ‘Female Detachment’” by Harry West).
- Shepler, Susan. (2010). “Postwar Trajectories for girls associated with the fighting forces in Sierra Leone.” In *Gender, War, and Militarism*, Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via, eds. Praeger.
- Naik, A. (2002). “Protecting children from the protectors: lessons from West Africa.” *Forced Migration Review* **15**: 16-19.

Week 8 (1 March): Youth Mobilization (for violence and peacebuilding)

Guest lecture by Mark Hamilton, SIS Ph.D. candidate and Academic Specialist Consultant, Inter American Defense College

Hamilton, Mark. “Change You(th) Can Believe In? Theories of Violent Mobilization & Lessons for Youth Peacebuilding in Policy & Practice.” Paper Presented at the 51st Annual ISA Convention, New Orleans, February 2010

Week 9 (15 March): Other effects of war on children: war orphans, separated children, child refugees, etc.

What about children and young people who are not direct participants in armed conflict, but who are nonetheless affected by it?

Readings:

- World Turned Upside Down*, Chapter 3 (Amy Hepburn, “Running Scared: When children become separated in emergencies.”) and Chapter 10 (Carl Triplehorn and Catherine Chen, “The social ecology of protecting children in war”).
- Children and Youth on the Front Line*. Chapter One, “Separated Children: Care and Support in Context” by Gillian Mann
- Chapter 13, “Peace” from Nordstrom, C. (2004). *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Leinaweaver, J. 2007. “Choosing to Move: Child agency on Peru’s margins.” *Childhood*. 14(3): 375-392.

COUNTRY REPORT DUE

Week 10 (22 March): The Politics and Symbolism of Youth and Children

Can children have political views? What are the political uses of the rhetoric(s) of childhood?

Readings:

- Liddell, C., J. Kemp, et al. (1993). "The Young Lions: African Children and Youth in Political Struggle." *The Psychological Effects of War and Violence on Children*. L. A. Leavitt and N. A. Fox. Hillsdale, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Children and Youth on the Front Line, Chapter Nine ("Beyond Struggle and Aid: Children's Identities in a Palestinian Refugee Camp" by Jason Hart).
- Utas, M. (2005). Building a Future? The Reintegration and Remarginalization of Youth in Liberia. No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts. P. Richards. Oxford, James Currey.
- Moeller, S. (2002). "A Hierarchy of Innocence: The Media's Use of Children in the Telling of International News." Press/Politics 7(1): 36-56.
- Pupavac, V. (2001). "Misanthropy without Borders: The International Children's Rights Regime." Disasters 25(2): 95-112.

Week 11 (29 March): Legal Frameworks and Institutions

Readings:

- Aptel, Cecile. (2010). Children and Accountability for International Crimes: the Contribution of International Criminal Courts. UNICEF. Innocenti Working Paper 2010-20.
- Children and Youth on the Front Line, Chapter 7 "Children, Impunity and Justice: Some Dilemmas from Northern Uganda"
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report for the Children of Sierra Leone. "Child Friendly Version." (2004). Available online at <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/TRCCF9SeptFINAL.pdf>
- "Former boy soldier, youngest Guantanamo detainee, heads toward military tribunal" Washington Post. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/09/AR2010020904020.html>

Week 12 (5 April): Trends in Programming for Children and Youth Affected by War

(A couple more readings to be added here, depending on guest speaker)

Readings:

- Kemper, Yvonne. (2005). "Youth in War to Peace Transitions: Approaches of International Organizations." Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.
- Search for Common Ground, Children, Youth and Conflict: An Introductory Toolkit for Engaging Children and Youth in Conflict Transformation. (2009). Available online at <http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/children/pdf/toolkit.pdf>

Optional Additional Readings:

- USAID (2004) Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention

Hart, J. (2004). Children's Participation in Humanitarian Action: Learning from zones of armed conflict. Oxford, University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre.

ORGANIZATION REPORT DUE

Week 13 (12 April): Youth and Peacebuilding

How can children and youth be involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding?

Readings:

Watson, Alison. 2006. "Saving more than the Children: the role of child-focused NGOs in the creation of Southern security norms." *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp 227 – 237.

Troublemakers or Peacemakers, Introduction, Chapter 6 (Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, "Politics, Protest, and Local 'Power Sharing' in North Belfast"), Chapter 8 (Jeff Helsing, et al., "Young People's Activism and the Transition to Peace: Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Israel"), Chapter 9 (Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-On, "Sharing History: Palestinian and Israeli Teachers and Pupils Learning Each Other's Narrative"), Chapter 10 (Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne, "From Violence Toward Peace: The Role of Storytelling for Youth Healing and Political Empowerment after Social Conflict"), Conclusion (Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, "Conclusion: Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building").

Week 14 (19 April): Summing Up

TERM PAPERS DUE.

In-class presentations of findings.

FINAL EXAM – 4 May

Messages from our sponsors:

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (<http://www.american.edu/emergency>) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.