

**LS 104AC: Youth, Justice and Culture**  
Summer 2019

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**Office Hours:**

By appt. before and after class

**GSI:** Yael Plitmann

It is not uncommon to hear youth are ‘the future’...a proclamation that has considerable power to call for the remaking of people, places, and society at large. Young people and their lives are imbued with incredible significance, constantly assessing what the future will look like when generation anew comes into adulthood. Given such power, the category of youth is thus incredibly *productive*: our ideas about what ‘youth’ is, our institutions for governing ‘youth’, and our creation of a period of time called ‘adult’, with all its commensurate roles and responsibilities, are each produced by social contestation around the idea of ‘youth.’ Nowhere is this clearer than in the legal world we construct around the lives of young people. Youth are regulated, legislated, guided, controlled, and as the legal construction of youth puts it, in a perpetual state of dependence. In our course, we want to understand not just how youth is constructed as an idea, but how these ideas are given material reality through the legal regulation of young people.

Young people are tightly controlled and surveilled, and in the most extreme circumstances, separated from adults and other young people entirely—by design, by law, and sometimes, by outright criminalization. This intense regulation shapes not just the present and future of society, but also the lives and futures of individuals and communities. And unsurprisingly, the legal regulation of young people produces all sorts of divergent futures—futures of prosperity and stability for some youth, while others are forced to live precarious lives, with extraordinary state surveillance centered on them often from birth. As we will uncover in this course, the productive capacities of youth as a social construct are integral to the production and reproduction of social inequality—especially based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and even, age.

This course explores how the legal regulation of youth produces and creates cleavages amongst the youthful population that result in different potentials, futures, and ultimately, life chances based on race, class, gender and sexuality. Given the racialized constructions of youthful populations, this also means taking account of how we construct the spaces and places of youth, with a particular interest in how the category of ‘urban youth’ shapes the constructions and legal regulations of youth.

To understand the role of youth in society today, this course will explore the historical development of youth regulation, surveillance and control. We will examine how youth have been constructed as legal, medical, psychological, and even biological subjects necessitating state intervention and control. Further, we will examine how contemporary concerns about juvenile delinquency and youth violence have shaped the representation of especially urban youth, and the construction and reaction to youth spaces. Finally, we will ask ourselves throughout the course how youth have responded to adult-incursions, and examines ways that youth have sought to create their own spaces, practices, and possibilities. Throughout this course, we will ask how youth are situated amongst broader social, cultural, and political trends in the United States by continually revisiting the following questions:

1. *How do adults represent youth and how does this contribute to the continuation, reproduction, and domination of systems of inequality?*
2. *How do representations of young people shape adult incursions into their lives?*
3. *How have young people responded to living in an adult-centered world?*

This course meets the “American Cultures” requirement. After this course, you will be able to meet the following learning outcomes:

- Understand how theoretical and analytical issues relevant to understanding race, culture and ethnicity shape the experience of youth
- Understand how youth are integrated comparatively within the history, culture, and economy of U.S. society
- Understand how youth systems and interventions impacted racial groups in U.S. society

**All course readings are available online at bcourses.** Participation is essential to your success in this class. Thus, it is imperative that you **complete all assigned readings before class**. Failure to do so will be reflected in your grade; if you are having difficulties keeping up please come and see me.

1. Come to class prepared. Preparation means having read the assigned reading for that day, and having thought about the reading in the context of course themes.
2. Participate in class discussion, section, and complete all in-class assignments.
3. Complete the following assignments.
 

▪ Quizzes, in-class assignments and participation	25%	daily
▪ Midterm	25%	June 13
▪ Final Exam	25%	July 3
▪ Final paper and presentations	25%	June 27 (paper due), July 1
4. **No LATE assignments will be accepted. Make-up exams will not be offered**—please mark your calendar with the dates of the exams. If you cannot take the exam on these dates, you should not take this course. In the event of emergency circumstances (hospitalization, sudden death of immediate family member, etc), contact the GSI with documentation of emergency circumstance prior to commencement of the exam or assignment.

5. **Grading Policy:** All grades determined by the GSI are final. The professor will **not** re-grade any assignments. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please speak to the GSI *early* (i.e., the first 3 days). If you would like to protest a grade on an assignment, you must wait for 48 hours after receiving the assignment before submitting the appeal. The appeal should provide a written overview of why you believe you deserve a higher grade on the assignment, referring both to your actual submission and comments you received.

**Quizzes, in class assignments and participation:** Every day you should expect a quiz on the reading. The first ten to fifteen minutes of each meeting will be used for quizzes; students who arrive late to class will not be given more time. Students who arrive after the quiz forfeit the quiz. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped in the calculation of your final score. If you have an excused absence, please contact me for instructions on how to make up the quiz. On quizzes, students will be asked to do the following: (1) Recount and describe a passage that you found particularly compelling (1 paragraph); (2) Discuss how that passage relates to the overall argument of the reading, making sure to state the argument explicitly (1 paragraph); and (3) Discuss how the passage and reading overall prompts your further reflection on a current or past event related to policing in society (1 paragraph). In addition to reading quizzes, there will also be periodic in class assignments related to lecture and the reading. Students must be in class to complete these assignments. Along with quizzes and in class assignments, participation in class discussion is an essential component of the learning process in this course. To that end, students will be asked both to participate on a regular basis in class and during the course discussion section.

**Midterm and Final exams:** Two exams with short answer and essay format questions will be given over the course of the semester. Further information about the exam will be provided in class.

**Youth and social control research project:** Students will be required to complete a research project on contemporary representations of youth and social control. This project will consist of a series of smaller and larger assignments, culminating in a final paper and in class presentation. A separate assignment sheet will be provided for this assignment.

### **Week 1 (May 28-30): Introduction—the cultural politics of youth**

Tuesday      *Introduction to course*

Wednesday    *Youth, adults, and governing childhood*

\*Kelly, P. (2003). Growing up as risky business? Risks, surveillance and the institutionalized mistrust of youth. *Journal of youthstudies*, 6(2), 165-180.

\*Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2018* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Thursday      Class reserved for semester project overview

## **Week 2 (June 3-6): Finding childhood, constructing youth**

Monday *Finding the adolescent: The birth of the child*

\*Lesko, Nancy (2001). "Up and down the great chain of being" from *Act Your Age! A cultural construction of adolescence*. London: Routledge.

Tuesday *Finding the adolescent: the birth of 'youthscience'*

\*Laub, John. (2002). A century of delinquency research and delinquency theory. In M. Rosenbaum, F. Zimring, and D. Tanenhaus (eds.) *A century of juvenile justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wednesday *Youth, the family, the city and the legal regulation of childhood*

\*Ward, Geoff (2012) 'Birth of a juvenile court', ch. 3 in *The Black Child-Savers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\*Brown, E. (2011). The 'unchildlike child': making and marking the child/adult divide in the juvenile court. *Children's Geographies*, 9(3-4), 361-377.

Thursday *Creating youth systems, part 1*

\*Chapters 3 & 4, from Agyepong, T. E. (2018). *The Criminalization of Black Children: Race, Gender, and Delinquency in Chicago's Juvenile Justice System, 1899-1945*. UNC Press Books.

## **Week 3 (June 10-13): Youth, deviance and governing delinquency**

Monday *Creating youth systems, part 2*

\* Turner, Joe. (2017). "Domesticating the 'troubled family': Racialised sexuality and the postcolonial governance of family life in the UK." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35, no. 5: 933-950.

\* Burton, C. S. (2016). Schools and Delinquency in the Early 20th Century: Rethinking the Origins of School Policing. *British Journal of Criminology*

Tuesday *Creating youthful bodies*

\*Barcelos, Christie A. "Producing (potentially) pregnant teen bodies: Biopower and adolescent pregnancy in the USA." *Critical Public Health* 24, no. 4 (2014): 476-488.

Wednesday Midterm review

Thursday      **Midterm**

**Week 4 (June 17-20): Youth, fear, and the new politics of youth crime**

Monday          *Remaking youth justice, part 1*

*In Re Gault, In Re Winship, and McKeiver v. Pennsylvania*

Tuesday        *Remaking youth justice, part 2*

\*Hinton, E. (2015). "A War within Our Own Boundaries": Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State. *The Journal of American History*, 102(1), 100-112.

Wednesday     *Urban youth and the politics of criminalization, part 1*

\*Lohmeyer, B. A. (2018). Youth as an artefact of governing violence: Violence to young people shapes violence by young people. *Current Sociology*, 66(7), 1070–1086.

\*Matthew D. Lassiter, Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America's War on Drugs, *Journal of American History* Volume 102, Issue 1, June 2015, Pages 126–140.

Thursday        *Urban youth and the politics of criminalization, part 2*

\*Chapter 4, "Awful Acts and the Trouble with Normal." From Meiners, E. R. (2010). *Right to be hostile: Schools, prisons, and the making of public enemies* Routledge.

**Week 5 (June 24-27): Remaking the child/adult divide**

Monday          *Governing youth lives, part 1*

\*Rios, Victor. (2011). Chapters 3 and 4 in *Punished: Policing the lives of black and Latino boys*. New York: New York University Press.

\*Selection from Cox, A. (2018). *Trapped in a vice: The consequences of confinement for young people*. Rutgers University Press.

Tuesday        *Governing youth lives, part 2*

\*Goddard, T., & Myers, R. R. (2017). Against evidence-based oppression: Marginalized youth and the politics of risk-based assessment and intervention. *Theoretical Criminology*, 21(2), 151–167.

Wednesday     *Speaking back to adult control?*

\*Chapter 6, "Horizons of Abolition." Meiners, E. R. (2010). *Right to be hostile: Schools, prisons, and the making of public enemies* Routledge.

Thursday      *presentations*

**\*\*\*final paper due June 27\*\*\***

**Week 6 (July 1-3): Youth justice futures**

Monday              *presentations*

Tuesday             Final exam review

Wednesday         **Final exam**

Have a great rest of your summer break! ☺