

## History of Childhood in the United States

Lectures: TTR 9:30-10:45

Spring 2023

Instructor: Ms. Abigail Shimer

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 8:15-9:15 or on Zoom by Appointment

### Course Description

This course will cover the history of childhood in America from colonial times to the present. Students will cover how cultural ideals of childhood changed over time, as well as how region, race, class, and the law impacted the lived experiences of children. Issues covered include the changing education standards, child labor, moral and safety fears about children, and the changing ideas of how to parent children. As a class, we will examine various primary and secondary sources to see how children can be found in many unlikely places.

### Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe how political, social, or cultural systems and structures, in the past or present, have advantaged and oppressed different groups of people.
2. Describe how political, social, or cultural systems, in the past or present, have produced and sustained ideas of difference and, in the face of that, how marginalized groups have meaningfully engaged in self-definition.
3. Examine individual and collective responses for addressing practices of disenfranchisement, segregation, or exclusion.

### Course Text

There is no required text for this class that you need to buy. All reading assignments will be online.

### Assignments

- Quizzes – Students will have quizzes periodically given on the reading for that day. (SLO 1)
- Midterm Exam (SLO 2)
- Podcast Assignment (SLO 3)
- Final Exam (SLO 2)
- Participation (SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3)

### Grade Scheme

This course is graded out of 1000 points.

Quizzes/In Class Assignments	300 Total
Midterm	150
Podcast	300
Final Exam	150
Participation	100

### Late Work Policy

All work is due on the assigned date. If you have any issues meeting the deadline, please let me know before the assignment is due. Any unexcused late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is late.

### Covid-19 Absence Policy

If you get diagnosed with Covid or have to miss class for a Covid related reason, please let me know as soon as possible. This will allow me to best assist you.

### Attendance Policy

Students should come to every class. However, if for some reason you cannot attend class, please email me. Students with fewer than five absences will not receive any grade penalty. Students over five absences will receive a 5-point penalty for every class they miss. Students missing more than 12 classes will fail the class. Students are expected to arrive to class on time. After the first ten minutes of class, the door will close, and students will be counted as absent.

### Electronic Policy

Students should bring a laptop or tablet to class to reference the readings and for in-class assignments. Students will be penalized for inappropriate use of electronics.

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full Academic Integrity Policy, here:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUEXSZmFFaWFmb00/view>.

### Academic Support & Disability Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must connect with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, (336) 334-5440, [oars.uncg.edu](http://oars.uncg.edu).

### Religious Observance

The university allows for a limited number of excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of the student. Students must notify me in advance of the date of the religious observance.

### Writing Center

UNCG has a Writing Center to help students at all levels. Since this is a writing intensive course, you should take advantage of the writing center to improve your writing assignments. Visit the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>) to learn more.

### Speaking Center

The Speaking Center provides support for both speaking in class and giving oral presentations. ([speakingcenter.uncg.edu](http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu))

### Office Hours

Office Hours give you a time to speak to me about this class, history in general, or any other concerns you may have. Please let me know if these hours do not work for you and we can schedule something at another time. Additionally, if you do not feel comfortable meeting in person, please let me know and we can schedule a time to meet over zoom.

#### History Department Websites:

History Department website: <https://his.uncg.edu>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

#### Readings

All readings from class will be located online via Canvas.

#### Week 1

**Big Questions:** What is history? What is the history of childhood? How did children in the colonial period experience life?

**01/10**

**Read:** Syllabus; Historical Thinking Chart (Posted on Canvas)

**01/12**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 2 (Posted on Canvas); *Early Native Literacies in New England* (Except on Canvas);

#### Week 2

**Big Questions:** How did the European colonists think of the childhood of their children? How did they think about the childhood of Black children?

**01/17**

**Read:** [Seeing Age in Early America; Accusations of witchcraft, 1692 and 1706 \(focus only on 1692 one\)](#); *Milk for Babes* (1646) (Posted on Canvas); Daughter of Captain How Legal Case (Posted on Canvas);

**01/19**

**Read:** [Enactment of Hereditary Slavery Law Virginia 1662](#); Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, written by Himself* (Posted on Canvas);

#### Week 3

**Big Questions:** How did children experience the American Revolution? How did adults in the early United States think about children? What role did children play in early nationalism?

**01/24**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 3; A New Hampshire Youth Leaves Home to Service on an American Warship, 1779 (Posted on Canvas); Diary of Joseph Plumb Martin (Posted on Canvas)

**01/26**

**Read:** Blackwell, Marilyn S. "The Republican Vision of Mary Palmer Tyler." *Journal of the Early Republic* 12, no. 1 (1992): 11–35. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3123974>.

**Week 4**

**Big Questions:** How did enslaved children experience Antebellum slavery?

**01/31**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 5; Fredrick Douglass, *Life of Fredrick Douglass*, Chapter 1-7; Harriett Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl* (Excerpts on Canvas)

**02/02**

**Read:** WPA Slave Narratives (Excerpts on Canvas)

**Week 5**

**Big Questions:** What roles did education play in the early United States? What role did industrialization have on the lives of children in the United States?

**02/07**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 4 (Posted on Canvas). Primary Sources TBD.

**02/09**

**Read:** TBD.

**Week 6**

**Big Questions:** What role did children play in the Civil War?

**02/14**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 6 (Posted on Canvas)

**02/16**

**Read:** Martin, *The Children's Civil War* (Posted on Canvas)

**MIDTERM EXAM DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON 02/17**

**Week 7**

**Big Questions:** What were apprenticeship laws for children during the post-Civil War years? How did the postbellum south maintain white supremacy when it came to children? What was life like for children in the South and how did race and class affect this?

**02/21**

**Read:** [Indenture of Apprenticeship, State of North Carolina, Robeson County](#);

**02/23**

**Read:** Hale, *Creating Whiteness* (Posted on Canvas); Excerpts from Mildred Lewis Rutherford Speeches on School Textbooks (Posted on Canvas)

### Week 8

**Big Questions:** What was life for children in the mid-west and west coast during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early twentieth century? How did they experience the world? What was life like for Native American children during this period? How did the United States work to assimilate Native American children?

02/28

**Read:** [Letter from Laura I. Oblinger to Uriah W. Oblinger, January 29, 1882](#); [Children's Aid Society, "Street Boys to the West," 54-60.](#)

03/02

**Read:** ["Indian No Like School," Webster City Freeman, August 8, 1911](#); ["Uncle Sam's Indian Wards," The North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune, February 25, 1916.](#); ["Indians Who Refuse to Be Civilized," The Saint Paul Globe, December 20, 1903.](#); [Fifth Grade Citizenship Essay](#);

### SPRING BREAK

### Week 9

**Big Questions:** How did children experience migration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century?

03/14

**Read:** [Irish Famine Children "Born at Sea"](#);

03/16

**Read:** [Brick by Brick Digital History Project](#);

### Week 10

How did the Progressive Era affect the way people thought about children? What were circumstances like for children in urban centers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century?

03/21

**Read:** [Child Labor in the Carolinas \(1909\)](#); [Burned into Memory: An African American Recalls Mob Violence in Early 20th century Florida](#);

03/23

**Read:** [From Cowboys to Clara Bow: A College Student's Motion Picture Autobiography](#); [Movie Dreams and Movie Injustices: A Black High-School Student Tells What 1920s Movies Meant to Him](#);

### Week 11

**Big Questions:** What was life like for children during the Great Depression? How did life change during World War II?

**03/28**

**Read:** *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt* (excerpts); [The Children's Charter \(1931\)](#);

**03/30**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 13 (Posted on Canvas); [Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga Recalls Caring for her Baby in the Manzanar Incarceration Camp](#);

**PODCAST PROJECT DUE AT 11/59 PM ON 03/31**

**Week 12**

**Key Questions:** Who are the "baby boomers"? How did culture change with the baby boom of the 1950s? How did children experience the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s?

**04/04**

**Read:** Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, Chapter 14 (Posted on Canvas); [The Baby and Childcare \(1-12\)](#);

**04/06**

**Read:** LaVerne Bell-Tolliver, *The First Twenty-Five: An Oral History of the Desegregation of Little Rock's Public Junior High Schools* (Excerpts on Canvas);

**Week 13**

**Key Questions:** How did the Cold War affect children? How morality scares and backlash to cultural changes affect children in the 1970s and 1980s?

**04/11**

**Read:** Douglas, *Where the Girls Are* (excerpts on Canvas); Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares* (excerpts on Canvas);

**04/13**

**Read:** Briggs, *Somebody's Children* (excerpts on Canvas); [Operation Babylift: Excerpts from White House Memoirs](#);

**Week 14**

**Key Questions:** What are the issues that children face since 1990? How have changes to the social safety net affected children?

**04/18**

**Read:** Roberts, *Torn Apart*, (excerpts on Canvas);

**04/20**

**Read: TBD**

**04/16**

**Read: TBD**

**Final Exam**

**Final Exam is Due by 3:00 PM Tuesday, May 2**

Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. I will notify you of any changes in class.

As we return for spring 2023, please uphold UNCG's culture of care to limit the spread of covid-19 and other airborne illnesses. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of covid-19
- Staying home when ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to isolate if ill
- Completing a self-report when experiencing covid-19 symptoms or testing positive for covid-19
- Following the CDC's exposure guidelines when exposed to someone who has tested positive for covid-19
- Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the covid-19 website