SYLLABUS--ELPS 776: History of Children & Youth in America

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This course is about children and youth and their place in society. It also is about how the social structure affects childhood and the process of human development, including formal education. In particular, we will consider the ways childhood as a set of distinctive experiences has evolved in American society in the past and at present, focusing on a variety of issues, including race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. As such, the course can also help professionals in education and allied human service fields to reflect on the social, cultural & behavioral dimensions of childhood, and to work more effectively with children and youth in a variety of settings.

In pursuing these ends, the course represents a portion of the "professional and pedagogical studies" segment of the university’s graduate programs in education and related fields. It focuses upon the relationships of individuals, institutions and communities, helps develop historical consciousness, and examines problems from multiple perspectives, utilizing the academics disciplines of history and the social sciences.

The course will use a combination of small and large group presentations, discussion and lectures, along with life experiences and videos. We will read material from several books and a number of articles over the next sixteen weeks, and because discussions will focus on this material it is very important that reading assignments be completed on time. In general, two hours of study, reflection and /or writing is expected for each hour of class time, averaged over the course as a whole, for all assignments. Regular and punctual attendance is expected; please contact me if you are unable to attend class. If you miss more than twenty percent of the total class time this term, no matter the reason, I will recommend that you repeat the course.

Writing Assignments

Writing assignments include a variety of genres: brief responses to the readings on Blackboard, a critical essay review, and a thematic paper. I will provide guidelines for these various assignments. The thematic paper will focus on a topic of your choosing, related to the topical focus of the course, and you are free to collaborate. Please consult with me about your plans; we will discuss this more during the course of the quarter. For starters, however, I recommend the following as fundamental guidelines:
Individual project: 10 page paper, eight sources  
Two-person project: 15 page paper, twelve sources  
Three-person project: 20 page paper, sixteen sources  

The critical review essay is to be on a book of your choice dealing with childhood in historical or contemporary terms. The recommended length of this essay is 1000 words. Please consult with me about your choice of a book. I have posted a list of books for you to consider on the course Blackboard site. The essay is due on March 4 (class 8). *It generally works best to choose a book that is related to the larger theme you would like to address in the final paper, as this gives you a head start on thinking about it.*

For each week I have posted a discussion question to help frame responses to the readings. You can choose to address a different question about the reading, but everyone must post at least one response of 100 words or more on the Blackboard discussion board. These should not be formal papers, and will be "due" at noon on the day of class, so that other class members can read and respond to them if they would like. These responses will not be graded, but failure to post one will count against the participation portion of your grade.

**Participation**

Class participation is very important. It is difficult (and possibly embarrassing) to have discussions without reading; and it also is often frustrating to read without discussion. Those who come to class prepared--and willing--to discuss the readings, even if only to ask questions, will get maximum credit for class participation.

As we have small numbers, I’d like to run the class in a seminar format. Each week, the class will start with a discussion led by students. Everyone should take a turn in leading this opening interchange. If there are enough students, it is possible to do this in teams.

Students also will make presentations to the class about their final papers. These are scheduled for the final three class periods. The objective of these presentations is to help you think more clearly about your topic, to write a stronger paper, and to inform the class about a range of issues related to the topic focus of the course.

The grade for this course will be determined in the following manner: class participation and "response" postings 35%; essay review 25%, topical paper 40%.

**Required Texts** (available in Edwards Campus Bookstore)

2. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave  
There also will be articles assigned or suggested, which can be accessed via Blackboard, under the “Course Documents” section, along with supplementary readings.

**Class and Assignment Schedule**

**Class 1 (January 14)  Introduction & Overview**

Presentation: Children in History

**Class 2 (January 21)  Childhood in a Preindustrial Era**

Reading: Mintz, Chs. 1, 2 & 3
Supplementary (from Bb): “Childhood in Late Medieval England”
“Puritan Education”

Lecture: Children of the Republic

**Class 3 (January 28)  Childhood & Democracy**

Reading: Mintz, Chs. 4, 5 & 6
Supplementary (from Bb): “Economic Conditions & Schooling, 19th Century”

Lecture: The Experience of Diversity

**Class 4 (February 4)  Slave Children**

Reading: *Narrative of Frederick Douglas*, Chs. 1-9
Supplementary (from Bb): “Slave Childhood”

Lecture: “Child-Saving”

**Class 5 (February 11)  Social Class, Adolescence & Institutions**

Reading: Mintz, Chs 7, 8 & 9
Supplementary (from Bb): “Children & Religion in 19th Century America”

Lecture: Urbanization & Childhood

**Class 6 (February 18)  Growing Up Ethnic in the City**

Reading: Mintz, Ch 10; Yezierska, Book 1
Supplementary (from Bb): “Children & Play, 19th Century”
Lecture: Discovery of Adolescence & Diversity

Class 7 (February 25) On Their Own: Forging a Youth Culture

  Reading: Mintz, Ch. 11; Yezierska, Book 2
  Supplementary (from Bb): “Immigrant School & Youth”

Lecture: Rebels in Search of Themselves

Class 8 (March 4) Trials of Self-Reliance: Depression & War

  Reading: Mintz, Chs. 12 & 13; Yezierska, Book 3
  Supplementary (from Bb): “Rural Poverty & Children, 1930s”

Lecture: The Age of Affluence

Critical Essay Review Due at This Date

Class 9 (March 10) Children & Youth in Postwar America

  Reading: Mintz, Chs. 14; hooks, pp. 1-90
  Supplementary (from Bb): “Divorce in Recent History”

Lecture: Generation Gap

March 18—Spring Break

Class 10 (March 25) Youth Revolt?

  Reading: Mintz, Ch. 15; hooks, pp. 91-183.
  Supplementary (from Bb): “Helping Poor Children”

Lecture: A Loss of Idealism?

Class 11 (April 1) Generations X, Y & Z

  Reading: Mintz, Chs. 16 & 17
  Supplementary (from Bb): “The Changing High School”

Lecture: The Problems of Prosperity
Class 12 (April 8) Children of Privilege

Reading: Salzman, pp. 1-150
Supplementary (from Bb): “The Hurried Child, Past & Present”

Lecture: Understanding Inequality

Class 13 (April 15) Persistent Problems of Inequality

Reading: Annette Lareau article & “Childhood Poverty” (Blackboard)
        Salzman, pp. 150-269.
Supplementary (from Bb): “Rap Music and Youth Culture”

Discussion: Democracy, Inequity & Childhood

Classes 14, 15, 16 (April 22, 29, May 6)

Student Presentations of Projects & Wrap-up (5/6)

Final Paper Due: May 13

School of Education Mission and State Standards

The course addresses the core values of the School of Education, as reflected in the following statement regarding professionalism:

“The Unit candidates are engaged in professional learning that expects a commitment to ethical and caring practice in which continued learning and professional development are paramount. As such, while the initial focus of many beginning teachers often is limited to their own classrooms, our candidates are prepared to expand their horizons to the schools and communities they will serve, as well as to their professional associations at the state and national education levels.

Candidates are prepared to understand the complexities of knowledge and best practice, curriculum and their relationship to all students as professionals in practice. The Unit candidates must demonstrate successfully this commitment through course content, demonstrations, projects and field based experiences to the caring for all students from various backgrounds and experiences. Candidates must demonstrate in their preparation the ability to evaluate and implement the curriculum, instruction, and caring appropriate to all students.”

The primary mission of the School of Education is to prepare leaders in education and human services fields. As stated in the School Code

Within the University, the School of Education serves Kansas, the nation, and the world by (1) preparing individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields, (2) expanding and deepening understanding of education as a
fundamental human endeavor, and (3) helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges.

The components that frame this mission for our initial and advanced programs are Research and Best Practice, Content Knowledge, and Professionalism. These interlocking themes build our Conceptual Framework.

Additionally, the following KSDE standards for professional education are addressed by the course:

**Standard #10  The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all students' learning and well-being.**

**Knowledge**
1. The educator understands schools as organizations within the larger community context and understands the operations of the relevant aspects of the system within which he or she works.
2. The educator understands how factors in the students' environment outside of school (e.g., family circumstances, community environments, health, and economic conditions) may influence students' lives and learning.

**Performance**
1. The educator participates in collegial activities designed to make the entire school a productive learning environment.
2. The educator consults with parents, counselors, other educators within the schools, and professionals in other community agencies.
3. The educator identifies and uses community resources to foster learning for all students.
4. The educator establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians from diverse home and community situations and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships in support of learning and well-being for all students.
5. The educator talks with and listens to all students, is sensitive and responsive to clues of distress, investigates situations, and seeks outside help as needed and appropriate to remedy problems.

**Standard #13 The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.**

**Knowledge**
1. The educator understands how and why the American system of education developed.
2. The educator has critical awareness of the norms and values inherent in the American system of education.
3. The educator understands how social forces have shaped and continue to shape American education.
4. The educator is aware of the ethical standards that should guide the professional teacher’s interaction with all students, colleagues, parents, and members of the community.
5. The educator understands how educational policy is formulated and how it affects classroom practices.
6. The educator understands legal issues that impact all students, classrooms, teachers, administrators, and parents.

**Performance**
1. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide interaction with all students, colleagues, parents, and community members in a manner that demonstrates respect for them as persons.
2. The educator uses knowledge of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide instruction, educational practices, and decision making.
3. The educator supports policies and practices that promote student welfare and development.
4. The educator follows all legal requirements for working with all students, other teachers, administrators, and parents.