

# **INTS 316: Introduction to Childhood Studies**

## **Fall 2019**

**Wednesdays: 10:30- 1:10**  
**Robinson Hall 120**

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**Note:** Elements of this syllabus are subject to change per the discretion of the professor. Any changes to this syllabus will be announced and provided to the students in writing.

### **Course Description**

This course focuses on the study of childhood from birth to adolescence. It approaches childhood from the perspective of several disciplines, including Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, and Education. The reading and assignments have been chosen to foster thinking about childhood theory, research, policy, and practical applications of this knowledge to decisions regarding children and youth. In addition, students will be introduced to a number of contemporary issues that, when confronted, will introduce students to a number of complex and scientifically unresolved childhood issues that will allow for the development of important analytical, evaluative, and decision-making (i.e., critical thinking) skills. This learning community employs a number of methods of teaching, learning, and assessment in order to meet varying individual needs and to capitalize upon the strengths and skills of all learners.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students should:

1. Become more familiar with qualitative and quantitative research methods involved in the study of childhood (e.g., ethnographies, case studies, participant observations).
2. Become familiar with research that describes changes in the societal definitions of childhood and children's "place" in society.
3. Understand the differences between psychological, anthropological, and sociological perspectives on children and childhood.
4. Have the opportunity to read original research about children that makes their perspective the center of study.
5. Become familiar with examples of cultural artifacts created by, for, or with children.
6. Develop skills of investigation, analysis, creative problem solving, communication and writing through group and individual projects.
7. Understand children and childhood from non-academic sources such as art, books, film and the larger media.

**Mason Core learning objectives fulfilled by this course include:**

**As part of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Learning Outcomes, Students will learn to:**

- Explain how individuals are influenced by contextual factors

- Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs
- Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

**Writing Intensive (WI) requirements fulfilled by this course:** The faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee has approved this course to fulfill the Writing Intensive (WI) requirement in the Integrative Studies major. These requirements are met in 4 ways: 1) ~5 in-class short reading quizzes and reflection papers on class material, 2) two-in class examinations, 3) a 3-5 page paper that critically analyzes the bidirectional relationship between a child's environment and their behavioral/social difficulties through analysis of a character in a book, and 4) a final experiential/final assignment that will include a 5-page written component. Class time will be devoted to instruction on how to complete assignments successfully and the instructor will provide detailed comments on all writing components for the course.

### **Required Readings:**

Berns, Roberta (2013; 10<sup>th</sup> Edition). *Child, Family, School, Community: Socialization and Support*. Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Shriver, L. *We Need to Talk about Kevin*. Harper Collins.  
ISBN: 978-0-06-112429-7

*Dreams of Freedom in Words and Pictures*. Francis Lincoln Children's Books. ISBN 978-1-84780-453-2 (Please order this book online).

**Note:** The majority of required readings come from the textbook. The textbook also serves as a reference for you throughout the semester and should be a source of information for your written assignments and final project, including (when relevant) chapters of the textbook that were not directly assigned as part of the course schedule.

**Late Work.** Papers and other assignments are to be turned in to the instructors at the beginning of class on the day due. **Late work will be reduced one letter grade per day that it is late** (including Saturday & Sunday). No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family. Please do not plan to turn work in to your instructor's mailbox unless you have specific permission to do so. Unless otherwise stipulated, work should be submitted in class in hard copy format; emailed and faxed material is not acceptable.

### **Learning Differences:**

If you have learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, furnish appropriate documentation to the Disability Resource Center. (703-993-2474, Sub I, Room 222) In addition to providing the appropriate forms, please take the initiative to discuss

### **Campus and Academic Resources:**

Writing Center (703-993-1200, Robinson A, Room 114) The University Writing Center provides tutors who will help you to brainstorm, structure, revise and edit written work (and help you

compile and check your citation of sources!). Please make an appointment directly with the center staff for help.

Counseling Services (703-993-2380, SUB I, Room 364)

**Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434, or Counseling and Psychology Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

Grading Scale for this Learning Community	
93-100 A	77-79 C+
90-92 A-	73-76 C
87-89 B+	70-72 C-
83-86 B	69-60 D
80-82 B-	Else F
	<b>Points</b>
<b>Participation</b> Collaborative learning is an important feature of the School of Integrative Studies. Students are expected to attend class (arriving on time and remaining until the end of the session), to participate actively and responsibly, and to hand in all assignments when due. Students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts. There will be various in-class writing assignments, which may be graded as a component of participation, including reading retention quizzes. As stated in the GMU student handbook, because “class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.”	10
<b>Tests (each worth 20 points)</b>	40
<b>Response Paper Based on <i>We Need to Talk about Kevin</i> Novel</b>	10
<b>Book Reading Assignment</b>	10
<b>Final: EL Project and Accompanying Assignment (See Below)</b>	30

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due and Notes to Prof</b>
Week 1 August 28	Welcome and Introduction to the Course		
Week 2 Sept 4	Understanding Research	Using Research to Understand Children and Adolescents- PDF	
Week 3 Sept 11	Theoretical Approach to Course	Chapter 1: Ecology of the Child	
Week 3 Sept 18	Socialization	Chapter 2: Ecology of Socialization	
Week 4 Sept 25	Families and Children	Chapter 3: Ecology of the Family	
Week 5 Oct 2	Parenting	Chapter 4: Ecology of Parenting	
Week 6 Oct 9	<b>In Class Test (covering Chapters 1-4)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>In Class Test (covering Chapters 1-4)</b>
Week 7 Oct 16	Chapter 5: Non-Parental Child Care Discussion of We Need to Talk About Kevin	<i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i> Chapter 5: Child Care	
Week 8 Oct 23	Schooling and Teaching	Chapter 6: Ecology of the School; Chapter 7: Ecology of Teaching	<b>Kevin Response Paper Due</b>
Week 9 Oct 30	Peer Relations	Chapter 8: Peer Group	
Week 10 Nov 6	The Media	Chapter 9: Ecology of the Mass Media	<b>Mickey Mouse Monopoly (a film that the instructor will bring)</b>  <b>Book-Reading Assignment Due</b>
Week 11 Nov 13	<b>In Class Test (covering Chapters 5-9)</b>		<b>In Class Test (covering Chapters 5-9)</b>
Week 12 Nov 20	Emotion and Cognitive Socialization Outcomes		
Week 13 Nov 27	Work on Final EL Assignment out of Class		
Week 14 Dec 4	Social and Behavioral Socialization Course wrap-up/course evaluations	Chapter 11	<b>Final EL Assignment Due—In Class</b>

# INTS 316: Introduction to Childhood Studies

## Novel Response Paper

*Minimum of 3-5 pages, typed using 11 or 12 point font and one-inch margins, double spaced, and stapled. Be sure to cite the texts discussed in class to support your points.*

Discuss how Kevin's childhood experiences (as described in the novel, *We Need to Talk about Kevin*) exemplify two or three aspects or topics of development. The book spans multiple developmental phases and focuses on issues of self-concept, self-esteem, the growth of concrete and formal operational thought, parenting styles, family relations, friendship, identity formation, and the society of children and the effects of different environments on development. Use course materials (text, supplementary readings, class notes, films, handouts) to build a framework of theory and research to analyze Kevin's development. You may use quotes and cite passages from the novel to illustrate your ideas. In short, you are to use the course to describe Kevin's development and use Kevin's experiences to illustrate the course. In short, you are to use the course to describe the character's development and use the character's experiences to illustrate the course. The rubric for this assignment is posted below.

## Book-Reading Assignment:

To address the ecological perspective used in the course, I am assigning the book *Dreams of Freedom in Words and Pictures*. Please find a child between 5 and 7 to engage with you around the book. Please audiotape yourself reading the book on your phone. At the due date, you are required to provide a written transcript of the book-reading session and the students' answers to the following questions:

- What problem did the main character identify in the story?
- What feeling did this problem create for the main character and others in the story?
- How did the events in the story make you feel?
- What would you have done to help or be supportive?
- Would you have handled it differently?

Please also provide information about the child's age, race, and gender, and any other information that you think is relevant to the book reading session.

## Grading Rubric for the Response Paper

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
<b>Proper formatting and citations:</b>  12-pt. Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, double spaced, 3-5 pages (Inclusion of and correct use of APA format for citation(s))		1.0
<b>Thought and integration of content in body of paper:</b>  (Briefly describe the character in his/her environment and the specific emotional/behavioral difficulties the character is having. Integrate the character's symptoms and present a thoughtful analysis of what you believe is going on for the character. <b>Do not simply summarize the movie.</b>  Discuss how the individual's life has influenced their emotional/behavioral issues (i.e., how the person's context, life events, culture, and environment have influenced the presentation and course of the presenting developmental issue/problem)  Discuss the impact of the individual's difficulties/problem behavior on his or her life (i.e., how their emotional/behavioral difficulties have led to changes in behaviors, general functioning, and social relationships).  Highlight 2-3 (or more) aspects of transactional/bidirectional socialization that we have focused on in this class (e.g., parent/family processes, peer relations/influence, school, etc.). Reference the transactional/bidirectional component of socialization and how it plays out in the text.  Use the course materials (text, outside readings) to build a framework using theory and research to analyze the character's development in context.  Reference and incorporate the Bronfenbrenner model in your description of the bidirectional relationship between the individuals' life/context and their symptoms.		8.0
<b>Well-written and clear ideas:</b>  Ideas/sentences/paragraphs and overall paper are well-organized Ideas are well-developed and easy to follow Every sentence/paragraph make sense, written without run-ons or fragments Free of spelling/grammatical errors, free of typos		1.0

Total Points: 10.0

## EL Assignment

### **In-Depth Study (30 pts.)**

Choose a topic which holds a personal interest for you and which relates to the content of this course. Any of the ideas which we have discussed in class or are covered in the textbooks are suitable for study. **You can choose to do a research paper or a creative project.** Both of these options will include a written component. The research study will be a thoughtful analysis of a current issue. The paper should be at least 5 pages in length and no longer than 8 pages. The creative project will include designing and making a product. Some possible ideas for papers or projects are included below.

**The research paper will have five parts:**

1. Introduction -- Include your inquiry question, why this topic is important to study, the topic's relevance, and background information on the topic. (For instance, if you are studying the effects of video games on children's development, it would be interesting to include how much money is spent on games each year.)
2. Discussion of research -- Use at least 4 different resources in your research. What have other researchers, authors or practitioners said about this topic? Resources can include scholarly articles, mainstream articles, books, newspaper articles, interviews, etc. **At least two of the sources must be from scholarly writings (not including the textbook.) Only one source of the four sources can be from a general information website.** While you may use Wikipedia for your own background knowledge, do not use Wikipedia as one of the four sources. Make sure that you reference your sources using APA style
3. Conclusions -- Answer your inquiry question. Also discuss: what are your new understandings and insights into this subject? How can your new understandings be practically applied? What are your suggestions for how this subject can be addressed differently? What questions do you still have?
4. Works cited page using APA format.
5. Appendix of the research articles used – Submit hard copies of all your articles included in your research. If articles are over 6 pages, then print up the first 3 pages. If books are used in your research, copy the pages used and the title page; if over 6 pages, copy the title page with publisher information.

### **In-Depth Research Paper Grade**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Discussion of Research</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Work cited page</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Paper organization, clarity and voice</b>	<b>Total</b>
10 points	10 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	40 points

**The write-up for the creative project will have six parts:**

6. Introduction: Description of what your project is and why the project is important and relevant?
7. Discussion of research -- Use at least 2 different resources to help frame the scope and methods of your project. What is already known about your topic? Resources

can include scholarly articles, mainstream articles, books, newspaper articles, interviews, etc. At least one of the sources must be from scholarly writings. Make sure that you reference your sources in this section.

8. Summary of project – Describe what you did for your project and how you used your research to frame your project design.
9. Conclusions -- What are your new understandings and insights into this subject? How can your new understandings be practically applied? What are your suggestions for how this subject can be addressed differently? What questions do you still have?
10. Works cited page using correct format.
11. Appendix of the research articles used – Submit hard copies of all your articles included in your research. If articles are over 6 pages, then print up the first 3 pages. If books are used in your research, copy the pages used; if over 6 pages, copy the title page with publisher information.

<b>In-Depth Creative Project Grade</b>						
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Discussion of Research</b>	<b>Project and summary</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Work cited page</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Paper organization, clarity and voice</b>
10 points	10 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	5 points	40 points

**Ideas for in-depth studies:**

- treatment of ADHD
- single sex classes and schools
- effects of divorce on children
- transracial adoptions
- art education in school
- the Reggio Emilia approach
- second language acquisition
- participation in organized competitive sports
- educating gifted children
- strategies for teaching dyslexic children
- high school dropouts
- effects of advertisements on children
- achievement tests used in Virginia schools
- effectiveness of charter schools

**Ideas for creative projects:**

- compiling an annotated bibliography of children's literature
- compiling an annotated list of children's computer software
- conducting Piagetian conservation tasks with a variety of children
- surveying high school students about their concerns



- observing play patterns in a preschool setting
- creating a slide show about the depiction of children in art
- analyzing playground design
- observing parent/child interactions
- surveying how PE is taught in schools
- surveying how art is taught in schools
- surveying how character/moral education is taught in schools
- observing a variety of classrooms to see how educational theories are applied
- compiling a reference of health and safety resources for families

## **Written Assignment Grading Standards**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class as noted in the daily schedule and must be typed using 11 or 12 point font and one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled. You must correctly and consistently use a recognized citation style, such as MLA or APA.

### **Score of A: Superior**

- Addresses the topic fully and explores the issue thoughtfully.
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- Demonstrates clear, focused, coherent, and logical organization.
- Is fully developed and detailed. The point is clear and well stated.
- Good introduction with clear thesis statement, and an effective conclusion.
- Evidences superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition between paragraphs; only a few minor flaws.
- Integrates evidence from texts to support ideas and arguments.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### **Score of B: Strong**

- Clearly addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is effectively organized. Easy to follow and understand.
- Is well developed, with supporting detail. Logically coherent.
- Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition; may have a few minor mechanical flaws.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### **Score of C: Competent**

- Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity.
- Is organized. Can be followed with some difficulty.
- Is adequately developed, with some detail. Some logical fallacies or incoherent sentences/paragraphs.
- Demonstrates competent writing; shows some flaws in syntax and grammar.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

### **Score of D: Weak**

- May distort or neglect parts of the topic.
- May be simplistic or stereotyped in thought.
- May demonstrate problems in organization.
- May have generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; may be undeveloped. Logically flawed; several incoherencies.
- May reveal patterns of flaws in language, syntax or mechanics.
- Improper citation method.

### **Score of F: Inadequate**

- Demonstrates serious inadequacy in addressing the topic.
- Fails in its attempts to discuss the topic. Illogical.
- May be deliberately off-topic. Extremely difficult to follow.

- Is so incompletely developed as to suggest or demonstrate incompetency.
- Is wholly incompetent mechanically.
- Improper citation method.